Minutes

Corporation

Governance

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| Date | 20/05/2025 |
| Time | 16:00 - 18:00 |
| Location | TeamsRoomQG213 |
| Present | Debra Gray, Matthew Blowman, John Cook, David Flatters, Joey Greenwood, Barbara Howell, Robert Lawson, Colin Raban, Paula  Gouldthorpe, Nicholas Snaith, Lauren Dale, Helen Kemp-taylor, Danielle Oliver, Christopher Philpott |
| In Attendance | Catherine Sykes (Director of Governance), Gino Tommasi (Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Services “VPF&CS”), Lynette Leith (Vice Principal Curriculum “VPC”), Nicola Dimond (Vice Principal HR “VPHR”) Nurudeen  Adekola (Co-Opted member of Audit Committee), David Greenway (Designated Safeguarding Lead). |

# - Board Training Session: Safeguarding

David Greenway (Designated Safeguarding Lead “DSL”) provided a safeguarding training session – the slides are available here. The presentation began with a discussion on the responsibility of governors in maintaining safeguarding standards. Questions were raised about enabling students to understand where to seek help and the importance of embedding positive messages about character and behaviour throughout the year. The tutorial curriculum was highlighted as a key area for making safeguarding relatable to students, informed by the college's relationship with the police service.

The session covered various themes, including domestic abuse, free speech, and the balance between free speech and hate speech. Navigating this landscape was noted as incredibly difficult, and the need to revise and revisit all policies was noted. Updates to the FREDIE and Single Equality policies were mentioned, with revisions expected to be ready for the July meeting.

The importance of prevention rather than cure was discussed, with a focus on working intelligently on safeguarding issues. Free modules for staff training were mentioned, with agreement that these would be shared.

**Action:** Director of Gov

In response to a members question, it was confirmed that the revised safeguarding policy would be presented in July and the annual safeguarding report in September.

**Action:** DSL

*At this point David Greenway left the meeting.*

# - Opening Items

The meeting commenced with congratulations to the Director of Governance for her appointment as a national leader in governance (NLG). Her upcoming contributions to advising and helping other boards were highlighted as beneficial for both the college and the sector.

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# - Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were noted from Joanne Gibbons, Tina Lynam, Henry Taylor Toone, and Ranjit Singh.

# - Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

# - Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 25th March 2025

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 25th March 2025, including confidential minutes, were presented for approval. The minutes were taken as read and approved without any questions or queries from the attendees.

# - Matters Arising and Action List

The Director of Governance provided updates on matters arising and the action list. Two items were carried forward: the piece of land at Harrogate due for review by the Finance Resources Committee in June, and updates to senior post holders which had been completed.

It was confirmed that members of the team had been to the Harrogate land to assess the health and safety liabilities of the land and had a confidential conversation with the principal of Harrogate College as neighbour to the land.

# - Principal's Report

* 1. **- To receive an update from the Principal, including progress against the Operational Plan and KPI's for 20224/25.**

This matter is subject to a separate and confidential minute.

# - Goole Update

This matter is subject to a separate and confidential minute.

**Resolved:** The recommendation pursue the reopening of Goole College Campus with the proposed funding package from East Riding Council was approved, with further updates being considered by the Finance committee and Corporation.

# - Accountability Statement & Duty to Review Update

This matter is subject to a separate and confidential minute.

**Resolved:** Approval was granted for the new targets proposed for the next year, with the final updated version to be provided via written resolution.

# - Finance

This matter is subject to a separate and confidential minute. Approval of Finance System.

This matter is subject to a separate and confidential minute.

**Resolved:** The new finance system, Ex Ledger, was approved for implementation with a cost of £45,000 and a three-year licence cost of £120,000.

# - Higher Education

The Chair of the Higher Education Advisory Committee provided an update to the committee’s approach to Academic Freedom, referencing the recent Office for Students (OFS) case involving Sussex University. He noted the case highlighting the importance of balancing obligations under equality law with conditions of registration and the Freedom of Speech Act. Three proposed actions were outlined: reviewing policies related to freedom of speech and academic freedom, ensuring corporation approval of recommendations, and considering procedural issues for document approval, dissemination, and review.

The discussion emphasised the need for careful consideration of legal and procedural issues to balance academic freedom and free speech with equality policies. Members were assured that the judicial review of the Sussex case would not impact the college’s approach and members agreed on the importance of collaborative efforts to address these complex issues, with further discussions and legal opinions anticipated.

# - Standards Committee

* 1. **- To receive the draft minutes and verbal report from the Standards Committee meeting held on 29th April 2025.**

The Chair of the Standards committee provided a report from the meeting held on 29th April 2025. Key areas of focus included apprenticeships, English and maths strategies, curriculum development, and subcontracted provision.

It was confirmed that Apprenticeships has been discussed extensively, with ongoing staffing issues and endpoint assessment challenges. The target of 55% achievement was highlighted, with efforts to improve this figure. English and maths strategies were being managed effectively, with a new three-year curriculum strategy in progress. Positive developments included the Siemen’s Gamesa contract, which was seen as a pilot scheme with potential for expansion.

Members noted the review of Ofsted inspection proposals, to ensure the college met new indicators, with areas identified for improvement. The Space Expert Panel was established and working on relevant projects. Subcontracted provision with Blue Apple and Portal was reviewed, receiving positive feedback from the deep dive review processes.

Overall it was noted that the committee was reassured that the provision was well- managed. A notable statistic was the increase in business students applying to university, from 26% last year to 65% this year. Members expressed confidence in the management of challenging areas, assuring the Corporation of the controls in place.

# - Governance

The Chair introduced the Governance items, noting an update to members on an internal review of Hull College’s governance processes that will be undertaken reflecting on the lessons learned from the issues faced by Weston College. It was noted this will be reported at the next Governance committee.

# - To review and consider the Link Governor Reports:

Joey Greenwood presented a Link Governor Report, detailing a visit to the College. He noted that the visit included discussions on strategy and operational updates, a tour of the estate, and participation in a HR support to improve meeting.

He noted several positive interactions with learners and staff, noting improvements in special educational needs provision and performing arts. Governors were encouraged to engage as best possible in their link governor activities to support the triangulation of information received by the Corporation from the Executive.

# - Dates of Governor Meetings 2025/26

The committee reviewed proposed meeting dates for 2025/26, with a request to change the joint Finance Audit Committee meeting date to accommodate availability. This was agreed.

Additionally, the next corporation meeting was rescheduled from 8th to 10th July to allow for the Chair’s attendance.

**Decision:** The dates for the meeting 2025-26 were approved with one minor amendment, and the next corporation meeting was rescheduled from 8th to 10th July to allow for the Chair’s attendance.

# - Closing Items

* 1. **- Any Other Business**

No additional business was raised, and the meeting was adjourned with thanks to all participants.

# - Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 10th July 2025 at 4pm.