North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

Thursday 3rd July 2025 at 5.30pm - Conference Centre - Nuneaton Campus

Present: In person: Prof. Ray Linforth (Chair), Mrs Marion Plant (Principal), Mr Steve Dover, Mrs Jeannette Essex, Mrs Helen Holley, Mrs Michelle Kavanagh, Mrs Mannie Ketley, Mr Simon Kirby, Mr Anil Majithia, Mr Jeevan Marwaha, Mrs Natalie Prosser, Mr Clive Read, Mrs Rebecca Suart and Mr Andrew Turner.

Via Teams: Mr Chris Benham.

In attendance: Mr Paul Joyce (Deputy Principal), Mr David Poole (Chief Operating Officer and Deputy CEO) and Mrs Rachel Marshall (Clerk).

Members received two briefings firstly from Lowell Williams, Chair of Colleges West Midlands on the West Midlands and Warwickshire Green Skills Roadmap and then the annual cyber security update from Roberts Disbury-Mockett.

1. Routine and Standing Items

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs Susan Adcock, Mrs Sally Bennett, Miss Maisy Deakin, Mr Steve Maxey and Mr Luke Robinson.

Ray Linforth welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was quorate.

1.2 Declaration of Interests including Gifts and Hospitality

Declarations of interest from the following Members were noted:

i. Ray Linforth, Andrew Turner and Anil Majithia, and recommendations to re-appoint then as Chair and Vice-Chairs at agenda item 5.2.

ii. All Members being recommended for re-appointment (Sally Barnett, Chris Benham, Jeanette Essex, Michelle Kavanagh, Mannie Ketley, Natalie Prosser, Jeevan Marwaha and Helen Holley).

iii. Andrew Turner at Coventry University Update restated his declaration as a Coventry University employee and would therefore leave the meeting before discussion of the item 9.2.

iv. Marion Plant, David Poole, Paul Joyce and Rachel Marshall made declarations in respect of the proposed staff pay award.

There were no other further declarations of interest, and no declarations relating to the receipt of gifts and hospitality were received.

1.3 Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 10th April 2025

The minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 10th April 2025 were unanimously approved. (Proposer: Steve Maxey; seconder: Rebecca Suart).

1.3.1 Schedule of Actions

Members received the schedule of actions.

1.3.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

1.4 Chair's Action

Ray Linforth confirmed that he had undertaken no Chair's actions since the last meeting. He then proposed that section 4 of the agenda, financial matters and arrangements for internal control should be dealt with as the next items on the agenda, followed by section 6, the consent agenda.

4. Financial Matters

4.1 Confidential - Draft Annual Budget 2025/26 and Medium-Term Business Plan 2025/26-26/7

4.2 Performance Report including Management Accounts Period 9

David Poole introduced the paper which set out set out the College's financial performance as at 30th April 2025 and which had also been presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its last meeting. He then outlined the following matters:

i. The current operating position was behind the forecast 2 position; however based on the recent information regarding the availability of additional funding, the College was still expecting to meet the full year forecast.

ii. The risk to apprenticeship funding had been identified and as previously discussed, Paul Joyce and David Poole continued to have meetings with the apprenticeship team.

iii. The cashflow position remained tight; however the team was good at managing this situation and cash was now on an upward trend with a decrease in creditor days and increase in cashflow.

iv. The paper also included an update on the planned procurements and tenders scheduled for 2024/25 and where relevant, 2025/26, although the schedule presented was subject to change. This enabled Members to understand amounts being spent and what on and that the requirements of Managing Public Money were being adhered to.

Following discussion, Members received the paper.

4.3 Extension to the Internal Audit Service Contract

David Poole introduced the paper which presented a recommendation from the Audit Committee to extend RSM's internal audit services' contract with the College for two years whilst the College's proposed partnership with Coventry University was in progress. RSM continued to provide a good service to the College and as set out in the paper, had maintained its costs in line with its previous annual costs. The intention was to go out to tender for a long-term internal audit contract during academic year 2026/27.

Anil Majithia, as chair of the Audit Committee confirmed the recommendation highlighting that the proposed approach was the best way forward in light of the current circumstances and was fully supported by the Audit Committee.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the extension of the Internal Audit Service Contract for a period of two years (Proposer: Jeevan Marwaha; seconder: Steve Dover).

4.4 Annual Internal Audit Plan 2025/26

David Poole introduced the paper which presented the proposed internal audit plan for 2025/26, as recommended by the Audit Committee. He highlighted that the Committee, during its annual audit strategy meeting on 22nd May 2025, had adopted a risk based assessment of the College's current position and of emerging sector risks to enable the College to improve its internal controls and risk management processes, and to adopt best practice. This included, as usual, a key operational controls audit. RSM had a wide view of the FE sector and the external environment and together with the suggestions provided by the Audit Committee, had developed the Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26 for Members' approval.

David Poole explained that where an audit received low level assurance a follow-up audit would be undertaken and that RSM also followed up on the actions being undertaken to respond to

audit recommendations. He also indicated that the plan could be amended in-year if necessary to respond to any new or increasing risks.

Anil Majithia explained that at least one advisory audit would also be undertaken.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the Internal Audit Plan 2025/26). (Proposer: Manny Ketley; seconder: Michelle Kavanagh).

4.5 **Audit Committee Minutes & Assurance Report - 12th June 2025**

Members received the Committee minutes and assurance report from the Audit Committee meeting which took place on 12th June 2025.

4.6 **Finance and General Purposes Committee Minutes & Assurance Reports - 19th June 2025**

Members received the Committee minutes and assurance report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting which took place on 19th June 2025.

6. Consent Agenda Members

6.1 **Policies**

6.1.1 **Financial Regulations**

David Poole introduced the Financial Regulations confirming that they complied with Managing Public Money and included relevant recent statutory changes. Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the Financial Regulations on the recommendation of the Audit Committee. (Proposer: Helen Holley; seconder Clive Read).

6.1.2 **Reserve Policy**

David Poole introduced the Reserve Policy highlighting that the updated Policy was reviewed and updated annually and recommended by the Audit Committee. The External Audit Service was also happy with the Policy. Following discussion Members, unanimously approved the Reserve Policy on the recommendation of the Audit Committee. (Proposer: Jeanette Essex; seconder: Chris Benham).

2. Strategic Developments

2.1 **Principal's Briefing Update**

Marion Plant presented a number of slides highlighting national, regional and College updates providing the following overview of key matters for Members' information:

i. An update on national developments including:

- the welcome uplift to College funding;
- the changes in the FE Commissioner's advisory benchmarks, including the increase in cash days from 25 to 40 days;
- the introduction of Ofsted's new and quite radical report card which would include 21 grades;
- the publication of the new Department for Education strategy which was awaited;
- the removal of level 7 which would not impact on the College
- the investment of £500m in ten new construction technical excellence colleges, which would not be available to the College due to its current 'requires improvement' financial status, although it would be possible to work with other colleges;
- the Office for Students had frozen new registrations and degree awarding functions until August 2025;

- the Government had launched its Industrial Strategy at HORIBA MIRA which included eight high-growth sectors of focus. The Department for Education was responsible for two further areas, health and care. It was clear that the College would have to align its curriculum plan, partnerships and commercial business with these areas, and was already significantly aligned in many areas, being high up in the DfE's data dashboard for alignment although work I this area was ongoing.
- Christine Gilbert (former Chief Inspector) was to take up the role of Ofsted's Chair and the current FE Commissioner, Shelagh Legrave, was to step down in the autumn

ii. A regional update focusing on devolution consultations which were ongoing and the activities other colleges in the region.

iii. An overview on College matters including:

- the appointment of Paul Joyce and the restructure of the senior leadership team;
- the outcome of the Wise Owl's (Nuneaton) inspection, namely graded good 'Good';
- staff and student activities;
- an invitation to the staff conference taking place on 11th July at the Nuneaton campus;
- the increase in full time student applications for 2025/26;
- the positive progress being made on apprenticeship contractual discussions and ongoing commercial discussions; and
- an overview of the College's competitions activity

Members indicated that it was great to see the progress being made by the College and the development of College facilities. Marion Plant then gave an overview of the very good feedback that had been received at the most recent student Parliament. Student feedback had been consistently good from the beginning of the academic year and had included suggestions regarding a number of improvements. Rebecca Suart highlighted that she had met with students including the well-being ambassadors.

Following discussion, Members received the presentation.

2.2 **Strategic KPI Dashboard**

Paul Joyce introduced the paper, highlighting that the KPI dashboards had recently been presented to the Students, Learning and Quality and Finance and General Purposes Committee Committees. In respect of the teaching, learning and assessment, the dashboard showed the latest mid-year position which had improved, moving from a red RAG rating to an amber RAG rating. The target were the College's own internal stretch targets and whilst the position had improved significantly in all areas there was still much to do. The results from a number of KPIs were awaited with Student Voice, satisfaction and attendance all looking in a good position.

Members asked why attendance was RAG rated red.

Paul Joyce indicated that this question had been raised at the last Students, Learning and Quality Committee meeting and he explained that a number of the internal performance measures were to be reviewed with internal stretch targets would be set for English and maths. There was more to do in this area. This year's English and maths exam attendance was the best ever. The Department for Education would be producing a progression report for English and maths. The College had identified that not enough students were achieving a grade 4 and he gave an explanation as to why this was. A number of national progress measures were being introduced and he anticipated this would be a positive step. In the meantime the College continued to improve and move in the right direction. There was a need to review, simplify and cross reference appropriately with the strategic plan which was work which be done going forward.

Marion Plant highlighted that the paper was not the end of year report as data was lacking.

Andrew Turner explained that these matters, including the relaunch of the English and maths strategy had been discussed in depth at the Students, Learning and Quality Committee meeting. The Committee had reviewed the KPIs throughout the year and had confidence that relevant actions were being taken.

Following discussion, Members received the paper.

2.3 **Update of Strategic Estates Development**

David Poole introduced the paper and indicated that not a lot had changed since his last update and that he had updated Members on the partial disposal earlier in the meeting. Her went on to give an overview of the work taking pace on the Town Centre project which was on track for completion and hand over at the end of April, beginning of May 2026 and opening in September 2026.

Members asked whether it would only be open during term time.

David Poole explained that it wouldn't as it was a fully funded commercial venture as well as a teaching space and there were a number of small businesses on its doorstep. He then confirmed that the Salix and T-level projects were now complete. The transformation fund had enabled the workshops to be improved and he gave an overview of the works undertaken with the significant funding the College had received. Other areas across the College's campuses were being looked at with a view to their improvement. Funding would be available for in the next year although it was not as significant as the funding receive in the current year.

Members who had seen the work undertaken urged colleagues to view the updated motor vehicle area which was impressive as well as the immersive area which was fully utilised and the Salix work.

Following discussion, Members received the paper.

3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

3.1 **Annual Skills Accountability Statement**

Paul Joyce introduced the paper which presented the Annual Skills Accountability Statement which had been updated following the issuing in in January 2025 of new guidance for 2025-26 published at Accountability Agreement Guidance. The Students, Learning and Quality Committee had reviewed the updated statement and recommended it to the Corporation for approval. The statement had been revamped in light of Department for Education requirements as to the meeting of skills needs in its funding agreement, and the Department for Education template had been used. The Statement would be used by the Department for Education and others as a performance measure.

Paul Joyce then gave an overview as to the changes which had been made and confirmed that it sat alongside the curriculum plan and included employers, targets and milestones. There was a requirement for the Corporation to approve the Statement. The Statement also included references to new curriculum development activities for 2025-26, at the suggestion of Members of the Students, Learning and Quality Committee. Once the document has been approved, it would be supplied directly to the DfE at their request.

Paul Joyce thanked Students, Learning and Quality Committee Members for their suggestions which had been incorporated into the Statement.

Members raised the following matters:

i. How would the College measure its performance against the Skills Accountability Statement?

   Paul Joyce indicated that this point was part of the discussion which had been held with the Department for Education. The Department for Education template requirements

needed to be align with the College strategic objectives and the College KPIs so when reporting took place it would include the KPIs in the Accountability Statements

Marion Plant confirmed that everything should be in included in the strategic plan and KPI monitoring. One plan looking at all the work undertaken across all areas was needed and work to align this was required. **ACTION 33 EXECUTIVE**

ii. The Accountability Statement was a great document but there was a need to make links or signpost so that there was an understanding of the overall picture with all KPIs being in one place.

Marion Plant suggested that all the KPIs should be included in the dashboard so that they would be in one place and aligned.

Following discussion, Members approved the updated annual statement. (Proposer: Andrew Turner; seconder: Steve Dover).

3.2 **Office for Students (Office for Students) New Requirements**

Paul Joyce introduced the paper and explained that the Office for Students had introduced a new condition relating to harassment and sexual misconduct. A review of what was required with this change had been undertaken and all relevant actions which were required had been undertaken. Most of these matters were already in place. A full report would be taken to Students, Learning and Quality Committee at its first meeting in the new academic year when the position was 'live' to give relevant assurance.

Following discussion, Members noted the new Office for Students condition E6 - Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, the purpose of the new condition, the actions being taken to ensure compliance, next steps and their responsibilities under the condition.

3.3 **Student Parliament and Learning Walk Feedback**

Members provided the following feedback on their experiences when undertaking learning walks, observing Student Parliaments and attending College events:

i. A Student Parliament held at the Hinckley campus had been extremely warm and inviting and there was a clear sense of belonging with students indicating that they were proud to be there. The openness of the students was overwhelming and there was a sense of vibrancy with everyone being fully engaged. Students felt able to tell their stories and their life experiences and had highlighted that the College provided support to them and increased their confidence. One member of staff had been continually mentioned as making a massive contribution. The College very student centric. The quality of the students works at the fashion show was also incredible.

ii. The articulacy of the students at Student Parliament was amazing and the Chair's skills had been outstanding. The learning walk at the Wigston campus following the Student Parliament had been interesting and the surprising thing had been the levels of deprivation of that catchment area and the challenges this brought. A stand out moment had been observing some workshops when students were undertaking their final assessments. What they were doing was impressive and a testament to the levels of education and the professional teaching they had received. It had been outstanding and impressive.

iii. Staff and students had provided a warm welcome and student behaviour had been outstanding with staff showing a passion not just for education but also for developing the future workforce. The current and new student presidents were incredible.

iv. Katy Urwin had conducted a tour with a student who had explained that students had been proactive in setting up a first aid incident room. Students had also praised their maths and English tutors for the support they had received from them.

Paul Joyce confirmed that this had been the case and that they had also mobilised staff and David Poole into supporting this activity.

Members highlighted that this demonstrated citizenship by benefitting the whole community and that improvements in English and maths had been mentioned at a recent meeting with the Department for Education.

It had been great to hear the reports from Members about their experiences in attending Student Parliaments and undertaking campus tours, enabling them to speak to and hear from students.

3.4 **Students, Learning and Quality Committee Minutes and Assurance Report - 17th June 2025**

Members received the Committee minutes and assurance report from the Students, Learning and Quality Committee meeting which took place on 17th June 2025.

5. Governance

5.1 **Re-appointment, Co-option and Committee Membership 2025/26**

The Clerk introduced the paper highlighting a number of recommendations from the People, Strategy and Governance Committee, relating to the re-appointment and co-option of Members and the Committee membership for 2025/26

Following discussion, Members approved the following matters:

i. The re-appointment for 4 years to the 31st July 2029 of Sally Barnett, Chris Benham, Jeanette Essex, Helen Holley, Michelle Kavanagh, Mannie Ketley and Natalie Prosser. (Proposer: Andrew Turner; seconder: Ray Linforth).

ii. The re-appointment for 1 years to the 31st July 2026 of Jeevan Marwaha.(Proposer: Anil Majithia; seconder: Rebecca Suart).

iii. The co-option for a period of 12 months to 31st July 2025 of Leanne Newitt to the Students, Learning & Quality Committee and Nick Simkins to the Audit Committee. (Proposer: Andrew Turner; seconder: Ray Linforth).

iv. Committee Membership approved as set out in the paper. (Proposer: Clive Read; seconder: Steve Dover).

Members were also asked to note that a process to appoint a new Student Member would take place at the start of the new academic year, following Maisy Deakin's confirmation that she was stepping down as Student Member at the end of the current academic year.

5.2 **Appointment of Chair and Vice-chairs**

The Clerk introduced the paper and explained whilst it was the Corporation's usual practice is to seek nominations for the roles of Chair and the two Vice Chairs before the final Corporation meeting of the year, it was proposed instead that in light of the proposed partnership with Coventry University, and to maintain stability and continuity, the current Chair and Vice-chairs, Ray Linforth, and Andrew Turner and Anil Majithia be re-appointed and that on the recommendation of the People, Strategy and Governance Committee that the current Chair, Ray Linforth and Vice-Chairs, Andrew Turner and Anil Majithia are re-appointed for 12 months.

Following discussion, Members approved:

i. The appointment of Ray Linforth as Corporation Chair for 12 months to 31st July 2026. (Proposer: Jeanette Essex; seconder: Steve Dover).

ii. The appointment of Andrew Turner as Vice-Chair for 12 months to 31st July 2026. (Proposer: Anil Majithia; seconder: Simon Kirby).

iii. The appointment of Anil Majithia as Vice-Chair for 12 months to 31st July 2026. (Proposer: Helen Holley; seconder: Chris Benham).

5.3 **Annual Review of Committee Terms of Reference**

The Clerk introduced the paper which asked Members to approve the amended and updated Committee terms of reference on the recommendation of the People, Strategy and Governance

Committee, and gave an overview of the small number of amendments which were proposed. The terms of reference were introduced following significant consideration and discussion by the Committees and the Corporation.

During discussion, it was highlighted that the Corporation should own the strategic risk register and have oversight of the College's strategic risks, although the terms of reference indicated that this was the role of the Audit Committee.

Ray Linforth indicated that this point had been raised at the last Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting and therefore he had raised it with the all the Committee Chairs. Each Committee reviewed its own terms of reference and the Committee Chairs were of the strongly held view that the current terms of reference were working well. There had been extensive reviews of the Corporation structures, as well as a positive Ofsted outcome. The Corporation had spent a considerable amount of time looking though the detail and ensuring that the right people were members of the right Committees.

Members raised the following points:

i. Risks were being brought to the Corporation and robust discussions on those risks were being held.

ii. There was a hierarchy of processes in place. The risk register was presented to the Audit Committee for review and challenge at each of its meetings and risk owners attended Committee meetings to present on their risks. Each Committee also provided an assurance report which was presented at Corporation meetings, which RAG rated to the level of assurance that Committee was able to give over risks. Serious risks would also be escalated via the assurance process and brought to the attention of the Corporation.

iii. The right people were on the Audit Committee, which was trusted to have oversight, scrutiny and challenge of the risk register.

iv. Risk were also discussed by the Corporation at the annual Creative meeting and Strategy Day.

Following discussion, a majority of Members approved the updated and amended terms of reference. (Proposer: Ray Linforth; seconder: Andrew Turner).

5.4 **Outcomes from Written Resolutions and Sealing of Documents**

The Clerk introduced the paper which presented the outcomes of a number of written resolutions and highlighted the sealing of one document for Members to note:

i. The appointment of Simon Kirby to the Corporation and Students, Learning and Quality Committee for a period of 4 years until 31st July 2029, and the increase of the determined number to 20 Members, on Friday 24th January 2025 at 4pm by a majority of Members with no abstentions and no dissentions.

ii. The appointment of Susan Adcock as the Corporation Staff Member until 31st July 2029, on Friday 11th April 2025 at 4pm by a majority of Members with no abstentions and no dissentions.

iii. The appointment of Ray Linforth to the Corporation for a period of 12 months until 31st July 2026, or until the College becomes a designated institution on Monday 30th June 2025 by a majority of Members with no abstentions and no dissentions.

iv. The appointment of Andrew Turner to the Corporation for a period of 4 years until 31st July 2029, or until the College becomes a designated institution on Monday 30th June 2025 by a majority of Members approved with no abstentions and no dissentions.

Members also noted that a Deed of Variation to the Multiply Agreement was authenticated by Ray Linforth and Marion Plant and sealed on 9th April 2025.

5.5 **Corporation Meeting Schedule 2025/26**

The Clerk introduced the paper which presented the calendar of meetings for 2025/26 for Members' information.

7. Other Matters

7.1 **Release of Papers**

Members agreed to the release of papers with the exception of:

i. Agenda item 2.1 Principal's Briefing Update as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

ii. Agenda item 2.2 Strategic KPI Dashboard 2024/25 including Published Achievement Rates 2024/25 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

ii. Agenda item 2.3 Update on Strategic Estates Developments and Current Capital Projects as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

iii. Agenda item 3.2 Students, Learning and Quality Committee Minutes and Assurance Report 17th June 2025 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

iv. Agenda item 4.1 Draft Annual Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term Business Plan as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

v. Agenda item 4.2 Performance Report incl. Management Accounts Period 9 and Annual Procurement Timetable for 2025/26 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

vi. Agenda item 4.3 Internal Audit Service Contract Extension as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

vii. Agenda item 4.5 Audit Committee Minutes and Assurance Report 12th June 2025 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

viii. Finance and General Purposes Committee Minutes and Assurance Report 19th June 2025 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

ix. Agenda item 6.1.1 Financial Regulations as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

x. Agenda item 6.1.2 Reserve Policy as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

xi. Agenda item 8.1 Confidential Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 10th April 2025 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

xii. Agenda item 9.1 Confidential Minutes for External Members Only of a Meeting held on Thursday 10th April 2025 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

xiii. Agenda item 9.3 People, Strategy and Governance Committee Minutes and Assurance Report of a Meeting Held on Thursday 24th June 2025.

7.2 **Date of Next Meeting**

Members agreed the date of the Creative Meeting would be Monday 10th November 2025 at 6pm at the Wigston Campus.

8.1 **Confidential Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 10th April 2025**

The confidential minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 10th April 2025 were unanimously approved. (Proposer: Steve Dover; seconder: Jeanette Essex).

Andrew Turner then left the meeting at 8.20pm with thanks.

Matters on the Confidential Agenda for External Members Only were then dealt with.

Ray Linforth thanked Members and in particular the new Members, who had fitted in incredibly well, for all the work they had undertaken and the support they had given during the year.

Marion Plant, on behalf of the Executive Team also thanked Members for their encouragement and Ray Linforth for all the time he had devoted to the College, as Chair.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9pm.