

## West Herts College Corporation Board Meeting

Wednesday 10 December 2025

Watford (D114)

5pm – 7pm

### MINUTES

#### Attendees:

Governors	Role:	Other Attendees	Role
Tony Breslin	Chair of Corporation	Sarah Knowles	DP – Corporate Services
Gill Worgan	Principal & CEO	Nidha Patel	Group Director - Finance
Phil Berry	External Governor	Amanda Washbrook	DP – Business Development
Charles Chidom	Staff Governor	Anne-Marie Kinsella	Governance Professional
Laura Dawson	External Governor	Shachi Blakemore	External Auditor – Buzzacott (L 5.26pm)
Rachel Fox	External Governor	<b>Apologies</b>	
Chris Gentle	External Governor	Wendy Donovan	External Governor
Chris Nicholls	External Governor	Jadan Kaliq	Student Governor
Stuart Ord	External Governor	Ash Wilson	Student Governor
Gary Phillips	External Governor		
Chris Rowe	External Governor		
Martin Sidders	External Governor		
David York	Staff Governor		

#### Ref Agenda Item

#### 25/09 1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

##### 1.1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed attendees and introduced Chris Gentle, noting that this was his first meeting.

##### 1.2. Apologies for absence and quoracy

Apologies were received and accepted. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

All reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting for the consideration.

##### 1.3. Declaration of pecuniary interests

It was noted that Chris Rowe was the Director of Navigate a system used by WHC Group (WHCG).

##### 1.4. Requests for urgent business

One item of urgent business was requested (please see agenda item 9)

#### 25/10 2. PREVIOUS MEETING

##### 2.1. Approval of Minutes (08 October 2025)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and approved for electronic signature.

##### 2.2. Matters Arising and Action Log Review

There were no matters arising not on the agenda and there were no outstanding actions.

Ref	Action Log	when
52/24/6.1	Review of the Cash Reserve Policy and contingency budgets to be carried out for the post-enrolment budget.	Completed
06/25/6.3.2	Executive to give an update at the next meeting on a new regulatory requirement introduced by the Office for Students (OfS) regarding Harassment and Sexual Misconduct (E6). Which came into force on 1 August 2025 and applies to all higher education providers registered with the OfS.	Agenda item 4.1

06/25/6.3.2	LD to conduct a Learning Walk on the 21st October at Hemel Hempstead. Verbal report to be given at the next meeting	Agenda item 6.1
-------------	---	-----------------

## 25/11 3. FINANCE & RESOURCES

### 3.1. Post Audit Report 2024-25 (confidential)

*Please see confidential minutes (part 2)*

### 3.2. Annual Report & Financial Statements 2024-25 (confidential)

*Please see confidential minutes (part 2)*

### 3.3. Feedback & Recommendations for Approval from the Audit Committee

The Chair of the Audit Committee gave an update on the discussions and decisions made at the last Audit Committee meeting on the 25 November and asked the Corporation to approve their recommendations.

**DECISION:** The Corporation approved the following:

- Appointment of Auditors
- Audit Committee Terms of Reference
- Role of the Audit Committee Chair

### 3.4. Audit Committee Annual Report

The Audit Committee annual report provided the Corporation with assurances that the Audit Committee has fulfilled its responsibilities for financial reporting, internal and external audit oversight, risk management, and compliance during the year. The report summarised key activities and, confirmed the adequacy of internal controls and governance.

The report was noted

*The External Auditor left the meeting at this point (5.26pm)*

### 3.5. Corporate Risk Register

The report provided the annual full Risk Register for the College.

The Risk Register included a summary of high-level risks and detailed register.

The Audit Committee reviewed the register in detail in their meeting on the 25 November 2025.

The updates had been highlighted in the report and included a summary table to compare current risks with those reported in July 2025.

In summary, there are currently 4 High Level Risks on the College Risk Register. One risk has been added to the High-Level Risk Register.

The Corporation reviewed the risk relating to infractions in detail and confirmed that it is appropriate. The Corporation were satisfied that the College has implemented effective measures to manage and mitigate this risk and that student and staff well-being is being managed effectively and safeguarding arrangements are monitored regularly.

The Corporation additionally considered the Business Continuity Plan and confirmed that robust internal controls and processes are in place to address potential incidents, including but not limited to cyber security.

The risk register was noted.

### 3.6. Finance Report (confidential)

*Please see confidential minutes (part 2)*

## **25/12 4. STRATEGIC ITEMS**

### **4.1. Principals Report**

Key points noted from the Principal's report:

Policies and practices have been adapted to meet new Office for Students (OfS) conditions on harassment and sexual misconduct.

The Performance Indicator Dashboard has been updated to reflect areas for improvement identified in the 2024/25 annual self-assessment.

The Curriculum and Assessment Review (CAR) Report has been published, and its recommendations for post-16 education are being implemented as far as is practicably possible.

Local government reforms in Hertfordshire have finally settled on a 2-council model (East and West), which means, if approved by Government, the College will work with local government arrangements based within the West of the county.

The November Budget, reaffirmed support for further education colleges and allocated additional funding to key areas.

The Corporation received assurances that low attendance is limited to small pockets across most schools and primarily relates to students with barriers to learning. Attendance in English and maths remains a challenge. The Ofsted toolkit is requiring a more nuanced approach for specific groups, and the College is making necessary adaptations to its working practices to provide support to a greater number of students than previously.

**Collaborations and Local Engagement**

The Corporation discussed potential collaborations in light of the new two-council model for Hertfordshire. Members noted the College's proactive involvement in local developments, including Luton airport, Luton train station, and Luton Town football stadium. The College is also working with Bedford College to ensure there is sufficient capacity across the region to support the development of the new Universal studios and an amusement park planned in Bedford

**Dashboard and KPIs**

The Dashboard and KPIs were reviewed and clarified for new governors. It was confirmed that destination data is collected and reported annually to the Corporation.

The Corporation congratulated the College on retaining Matrix Accreditation.

The report was noted

### **4.2. Capital Project Update**

The Corporation received updates on two major capital projects:

**NBR Phase 3:** the Corporation considered the layout changes and progression to the next design stage.

**HH Plot A:** The Corporation discussed the development status and funding implications, and it was noted that the development will be paused until there is confirmation of the availability of new government capital funding. Information regarding funding is expected within the coming months. It was noted that no further budget approvals are required to progress these recommendations at this time.

The Corporation discussed the impact of no longer having an elite-standard sports hall. It was agreed that providing accommodation to meet the needs of teaching, learning and assessment should be prioritised.

The College assured the Corporation that the new buildings were designed with environmental standards as a priority within affordability. The Corporation was also assured that all necessary land surveys have been conducted e.g. floodplain at the Hemel Hempstead site

**DECISION:** Option 3 layout will be progressed to RIBA Stage 3.

The report were noted.

## 25/13 5. QUALITY & STANDARDS

### 5.1. Feedback from Quality & Curriculum Committee

The Quality and Curriculum Committee (QCC) met on 24 November 2025. The Chair provided positive assurances regarding the quality of the curriculum. His verbal report highlighted the introduction of new qualifications; the Self-Assessment Report; the Quality Improvement Action Plan and staff training and development.

The Safeguarding Governor also gave assurances on the College's responsiveness to change, particularly in safeguarding and inclusion training.

The College confirmed that it welcomes the new Ofsted grading approach and views it as a significant and positive challenge.

**DECISION:** On recommendation of the QCC the Corporation approved the following:

- Quality and Curriculum Terms of Reference
- Role description for the Chair of the Quality and Curriculum Committee

## 25/14 6. GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE

### 6.1. Feedback from Learning Walks

LD and RF reported on their recent learning walk at the Hemel Hempstead campus, covering car mechanics, welding, and engineering areas. They spoke with students and noted very positive discussions overall. The facilities were described as well-organised, offering students exposure to a variety of environments. Some classrooms were noted as being a bit cramped and the Executive agreed to review these classrooms. There were no significant concerns raised by students.

### 6.2. Update on Corporation Membership

There are currently no governor vacancies.

The Audit Committee has 2 new members (RF & CG). The Quality & Curriculum Committee also has 2 new members (CR & GP).

It was noted that David York's term of office ends on 13 February 2026. A staff election will be held in February/March, ahead of the Corporation meeting on 25 March 2026.

The Search & Governance Committee will consider new appointments for 2026–27 for Chair of the Quality & Curriculum Committee and the Chair of the Search & Governance Committee.

The Corporation membership was noted.

### 6.3. Update on Corporation Action Plan & External Board Review

The updated Corporation Action Plan was reviewed and agreed.

The External Board Review will commence in February 2026 with a final report being presented at the July Corporation meeting.

### 6.4. Policy Approvals:

The following policies were reviewed by the Audit Committee on the 25 November and recommended for approval by the Corporation.

- 6.4.1. Risk Management Policy
- 6.4.2. Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy

**DECISION:** The Risk Management and Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policies were approved by the Corporation.

**25/15 7. URGENT BUSINESS**

**7.1. Remuneration Committee**

Recent legislation mandates that Colleges establish a Remuneration Committee. The key requirements were outlined to the Corporation and a proposal put forward for the Corporations agreement.

**DECISION:** The Remuneration Committee will be set up and meet in January 2026. Its composition will be: Vice-Chair (Chair of Committee); Chairs’ of Sub-Committees and Chair of Corporation.

**25/16 8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Wed 11 February 2026, 5pm, Barnfield College.**

Meeting closed:

**Minutes approved by the Corporation on 11 February 2026**

Ref	Summary of Actions	when
25/11/3.2	The Chair to sign off the Financial accounts and the Letter of Representation	11/12/25

Ref	Summary of Decisions
25/11/3.2	Approved the WHC Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024–25 Approved the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2024–25 Approved the WHC Letter of Representation 2024–25
25/11/3.3	The Corporation approved the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of Auditors</li> <li>• Audit Committee Terms of Reference</li> <li>• Role of the Audit Committee Chair</li> </ul>
25/12/4.2	Option 3 layout will be progressed to RIBA Stage 3.
25/13/5.1	Approved the Quality and Curriculum Terms of Reference Approved the Role description for the Chair of the Quality and Curriculum Committee
25/14/6.4	The Risk Management and Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policies were approved by the Corporation.
25/15/7.1	The Remuneration Committee will be set up and meet in January 2026. Its composition will be: Vice-Chair (Chair of Committee); Chairs’ of Sub-Committees and Chair of Corporation.