

Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, 4th December 2025 in Room FO84 at 1700h with participation by teams.

Present: Nigel Holliday (Chair); Yvonne Bannister; Claire Dunn; Mark Fell (Principal); Elizabeth Hull; Phil Jardine; Elaine Jordan; Michael Priestley; Michael Proudman; Alistair Mason; Robert Milburn; Val Pallister; Ingrid Richardson; Val Pallister; Ingrid Richardson; Professor Jill Stewart
Online: Elaine Clinton (Vice Chair)

Apologies: Peter Ellwood; Denise Rollo

Also present: Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal); Iain Glendinning (Vice Principal); Jane Murray (Clerk)

77/25 Minutes

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held in open session on 13th November 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

78/25 Declarations of Interest

None received

79/25 Governance Re-appointments

The Clerk informed the Board that, owing to a set of personal circumstances which had occurred since his appointment in November, the resignation of the FE Student Governor had been received. The Board agreed that an approach should be made to the other candidate who had been interviewed and it was agreed that, if this was a solution, that the appointment take effect from January.

As outlined in the report, there had been significant refresh of the Board in the past few years and in the interests of a balanced board which had the right mix of knowledge and experience and fresh thinking, it had been recommended by the Board to re-appoint a member for longer than recommended best practice.

In respect of appointments and resignations, it was

Resolved -

- 1) That Denise Rollo be re-appointed for a further two years from 1st January 2026 to 31st December 2027.
- 2) That Robert Milburn be re-appointed for another six months from 1st January 2026-31st July 2026.
- 3) That co-opted member of the Audit Committee Norma Boyes be re-appointed for a further year from 1st January 2026-31st December 2026.
- 4) That the resignation of Thierry Mvalo, effective from 4th December 2025, be received and noted.
- 5) That the three new governors, Alistair Mason, Yvonne Bannister and Elaine Jordan, who were approaching the end of their first year, be re-appointed for a further 3-year term of office, from 29th January 2026 – 31st December 2028, equivalent to a four-year term of office.

80/25 Self-Assessment Report

The Report had been revised following concerns about context and wording and was re-presented to the Board. Clarification was sought on the formatting and advised that it would be in brochure form.

The issue of data was raised, given that it appeared in several parts of the self-assessment report as an issue, and assurance was offered to governors that there had been a review and that it would be likely that there would be some re-organisation but that greater vigilance over the accurate inputting of data would be actioned.

Resolved – that the Self-assessment report be approved.

81/25 Equality and Diversity Annual Report

The EDI Annual Report was presented by the Vice Principal and showed progress in some areas, with persistent challenges in others. There continued to be a challenge in respect of attendance by those on FCM as had been previously discussed. Increasing the uptake of FCM would be of benefit to learners and their learning. This category of learner was of most concern, showing the largest gaps in GCSE English and functional skills, and was a priority of the EDI Committee.

It was noted that University of Cumbria were doing some work on socio-economic issues and it was confirmed that the college was involved and contributing to a road map.

It was asked how much marketing we did for SEND students and assurance offered that the College worked very closely with schools, from as early as Year 9 and this also included engagement with parents too.

It was asked about maternity/pregnancy analysis in respect of staff, noting in particular that 48% staff are over 50 and therefore the generous entitlement in respect of maternity might be an attraction to a younger workforce. This was acknowledged; noting that there was a recruitment and retention strategy under development, where this could be promoted.

It was asked about the gender pay gap report and noted that this was indeed attributable to the TUPE transfer of staff with the Sellafield contract. It was asked where the report was published and noted that it was currently included in the Annual Report and financial statements, but could also be published separately if it was felt necessary.

It was asked about marriage and civil partnership and noted that this category had been excluded from Higher and Further Education in legislation (Education Act 2010, Part 6, Chapter 2, Clause 90).

The Board received and noted the report and looked forward to in-year updates of progress made.

82/25 Strategy Session

In the course of the preceding strategy session:

LSIP

Suzanne Caldwell noted the development of a new LSIP, noting that the views of the College would be sought during the process. Assurance was sought that the new plan would build on existing best practice. This was due to be published in June 2026.

Agreed - that high-level (anonymised) research be shared with the College in early February.

Risk Register

The Deputy Principal continued to present the College **risk register**. It was noted that:

- That the risk for learners not achieving their potential/targets had been increased due to low attendance and lower than anticipated performance in maths and English GCSEs, resulting in EPYP pass rates being down. Apprenticeship performance had been improving, but still below national targets. Improvement actions in the Continuous Improvement Plan.
- that the SL contract had been extended and the Chair noted that he had received some very positive feedback from SL earlier that day. It was noted that while the College enjoyed that advantage, that they

should take advantage in respect of income to consider what investment in resources was needed.

- that the same terms and conditions had been applied and the college would be looking at efficiencies and innovation as part of the programme of renewal.
- That the risk around a lack of innovation in the curriculum was increased was owing to little take up of new offers, such as the blended HE offer.
- That the risk around staff recruitment had not been changed, but pleasing to note that the Chamber had noted this challenge for service providers in this issue in their planning of a new LSIP.
- That the external review of Governance was to take place in the Spring term and the risk remained stable, although updated to reflect a new Principal and Clerk (the latter going back to advert).
- That the risk in respect of health and safety had been brought back down to amber given the work of the new Health and Safety Manager.
- That the failure of the IT system continued at red, as all agreed that this would always be a high risk. The college held a cyber essentials plus certificate and had recently had a fairly clean audit report. In questioning the robustness of the processes in place, the link Governor was also able to add that she had reviewed with the service manager and found that his plans were what might be expected. It was asked and agreed to explore, what the potential was for corrupting other people's systems if the College was to become part of a cyber attack (for example if someone logged on from another organisation).

It was noted that changes to the 16-19 framework had the potential for fraud unless well managed.

It was asked that management systems be built into the risk register. Assurance was offered that the Deputy Principal could generate meaningful data at the right time, but the issues was whether every department was working together in the right way.

Agreed – that management systems be worked into the risk register.

Performance Against Strategic Targets

It was noted that performance was regularly monitored, but this report gave a high-level overview which was helpful.

Income was better than expected and there were no nasty surprises in the course of the year.

Strategic Plan Development

The Principal gave his overview of development of a new 5-year strategic plan (though likely to be reviewed every year bearing in mind the pace of current change in national policy).

There was a greater risk of inspection with a new Principal and therefore the plan would clearly set out the College aspirations, with input from governors on their appetite on a range of issues, such as expansion, skills pathways; alternative provision; investment in the estate in respect of capital development.

It was agreed that there would be a strategic plan development group including some Board members.

Several governors added that the financial sustainability of the College was of particular importance to them, that there continued to be a sound College servicing local need.

It was anticipated that the Strategic Plan could return to the Board meeting around Easter for approval.

Review of agreements:

Agreed –

- 1) That high-level (anonymised) research by the Chamber be shared with the College in early February
- 2) That management systems be worked into the risk register.
- 3) That a strategic plan development group be established with governor participation.

83/25 Confidential Session and Minutes

Resolved

- 1) To move into confidential session
- 2) That the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session on 13th November 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.
- 3) That the staff confidential minute of 13th November 2025 be approved (by independent members) and signed as a correct record.

The meeting closed at 1730h.