



Minutes of a Meeting of the Corporation held on Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 5.30pm in room FO26 of the College with online participation.

Present: Nigel Holliday (Chair); Yvonne Bannister; Peter Ellwood; Elizabeth Hull; Phil Jardine; Michael Proudman; Alistair Mason; Chris Nattress; Valerie Pallister; Denise Rollo

Online: Claire Dunn; Michael Priestley; Professor Jill Stewart

Apologies: Elaine Clinton; Elaine Jordan; Robert Milburn

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

### **52/25 Minutes**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held in open session on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **53/25 Delcarations of Interest**

None received

### **54/25 KPIs**

The Deputy Principal presented the outturn KPIs. Much was as anticipated. Staff absence was under target, however with the level of turnover in the past two years, this did present a strain on remaining staff.

In the course of discussion of attendance, noting that targets were not met (and this was not recoverable beyond a certain point in the year) it was asked about setting realistic targets. Attendance had been particularly poor for English and maths which dragged down overall attendance, with main aim attendance being 86%. In response to some challenge in respect of setting setting targets which were difficult to achieve, it was felt that, with respect to attendance, there would be an expectation of an ambitious target by Ofsted.

In the course of further explanation in respect of attendance, the example of school refusers was given, whereby it could be that an attendance rate of 50-60% would be a real success.

It was asked whether some further analysis of those on level 1 could be carried out to see the profile of attendance, to include school refusers, coupled with a suggestion that a separate target might be set for level 1 learners.

It was asked about benchmark targets for attendance and it was thought that there were no comparable benchmarks as there were for retention for example.

The ambition was to make sure that all learners had the best possible experience in class to ensure their attendance sustained. There are triggers and intervention points with behaviour agreements and parental engagement. More students have been accessing online learning for English and maths, yet there has not been significant improvement in performance.

It was suggested that it was important to review targets and to keep talking about performance, particularly when it was so far adrift from that which had been set, and that where performance was adrift that there was some narrative about what was being done to address this.

### **Agreed –**

- 1) to provide further analysis of attendance at Level 1 and for school refusers.
- 2) to review KPIs in the coming year to give greater commentary.

On other matters, unfunded apprenticeships were still relatively high in spite of closer monitoring. There were a plethora of reasons from getting behind from portfolio evidence to life events, but closer monitoring should have some impact on getting learners through. There would be greater emphasis made at sign up, both for learner and employer that commitment is fully recognised.

### **55/25 Curriculum Update**

The Vice Principal noted that achievement rates on vocational qualifications were strong, particularly so on Level 1 outcomes demonstrating significant social impact. He noted 92% on level 1 construction which was particularly noteworthy. Apprenticeship rates were improving and there was confidence that 60% could be achieved, up by 6% on the previous year. National average for the standards that we offer is at 58%.

Strong performance was highlighted in hospitality and catering, in art and engineering and T-Levels. It was noted that behaviour strategies had seen withdrawals halved.

He noted that attendance on study programmes, English and Maths high grade outcomes and functional skills, in addition to some apprenticeship standards such as adult care require improvement, and within the report, highlighted the advanced input on teaching for areas requiring improvement.

He noted that 16-19 applications were strong again this year. Apprenticeship new starts were down and it was thought that employers were taking on fewer apprentices leading to the increase in study programme learners. It was noted that EHCP learners this year numbered 132 and there would be

conversations with the Council about increased funding (noting that not all were fully funded).

It was asked about retention and what impact staffing changes had on retention, quoting an issue the previous year in brickwork and it was felt that while there had been an issue and it could cause issues of retention, retention had been overall strong the previous year and staffing was strong at the start of the year, the main issue being electrical.

Congratulations were offered to catering and hospitality on their 100% pass rate.

Some concern was raised about inconsistent progress tracking, bearing in mind that some time had been spent on this in the past year and it was acknowledged that this would be a focus of attention again in the coming year.

It was asked again about the drop in apprenticeship starts and it was felt that this was owing to cutbacks in the funding to the SL supply chain and was likely to have contributed to the rise in study programme learners.

The halving of early withdrawals was welcomed and it was requested to look at the achievements of those at risk learners over the year, which was agreed.

**Agreed** – to provide analysis of the achievements of at-risk learners.

## **56/25 Health and Safety Annual Summary**

The Deputy Principal presented the Health and Safety Annual Summary. It was noted that there had been a new team this year, with an external contractor supporting on Health and Safety on the Sellafield contract. There had also been external review with some actions, which had been implemented and embedded (in response to questioning, an apprentice had not had their hair tied back, resulting in improved signage and reinforcement of health and safety issues through lessons more widely).

It was asked about health and safety training and assurance given that some training is annual and some 3-yearly. Provision is made within the week to make sure that teaching staff can participate.

It was noted that the response rate to the Health and Well-being survey was too low and the Board was informed that there were common themes, with the external well-being survey coming to the November Board. There were some themes emerging and responses would be shared with governors.

It was asked whether the Board could be confident that the college knew everything about learners this year and it was felt that learners were asked at onboarding of any medical issues and this was held centrally for first aiders, pastoral and health and safety staff to access.

The Annual Summary was received and noted.

**57/25 Confidential Session and Minutes**

**Resolved –**

To move into confidential session

- 1) To approve the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session of the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and sign as a correct record.
- 2) To approve the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session (independent members only) of 28<sup>th</sup> August 2025 and sign as a correct record.
- 3) To approve the minutes of the meeting held in confidential session (independent members only) of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and sign as a correct record.

**58/25 Strategic Update – Confidential**

The :Principal advised the Board of local and national developments and partnership opportunities.

**59/25 SL Contract – confidential**

An update of performance was given to the Board.

**60/25 Finance Update - confidential**

The board received an update of financial matters.

**61/25 Open Session**

To re-open the meeting.

**62/25 Governance**

The Board was presented with a number of key documents, subject to annual refresh, most of which had been considered and recommended by the audit committee.

**Resolved –**

On the audit committee's recommendation that

- 1) The draft audit committee minutes from 2 September 2025 be received and noted.
- 2) The regularity audit questionnaire be approved for signature by the chair and principal as accounting officer.
- 3) The financial regulations 2025-26 be approved.
- 4) The fraud response plan be approved

(action since: the internal audit plan was approved by written resolution)

- 5) That the standing orders 2025-26 and code of conduct be approved.
- 6) Outturn of written resolutions E02 and E03/25 were received and noted (to approve the updated freedom of speech policy and to amend the instruments and articles following approval by the DfE)
- 7) That the Apprenticeship framework agreement with Cumberland Council be approved.

Staff and staff governors withdrew

### **63/65 Confidential Session**

**Resolved** - to move into confidential session

### **64/65 Senior Staffing Changes**

The Board was informed of the changeover with the incoming Principal starting on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 and plans for a handover.

The Board received the draft job description for a governance professional (the current postholder being due to retire in February) and it was noted that this would go to advertisement the following week.

**Resolved** – that the Governance Professional Job Description be approved.

**The meeting closed at 1945h.**