KIRKLEES COLLEGE CORPORATION

Minutes of a meeting held from 1430 to 1730 on 19 March 2026
Held in the Conference Room, Waterfront, Huddersfield

Present:	J Walters	Independent Governor (Chair)
	P Brennan	Independent Governor
	A Conn	Independent Governor
	S Cooke	Independent Governor
	J Firth	Independent Governor
	M Green	Independent Governor
	P Roberts	Independent Governor (Items 1– 9)
	C Robinson	Independent Governor
	M Smith-Connor	Independent Governor
	A Megbele	Student Governor (Items 1– 9)
	P Edwards	Staff Governor (Items 1–17)
	J Robinson	Staff Governor (Items 1–17)
	P Singh	Executive Governor (Items 1–18)
	14/17 = 81.25%	KPI 80% Quorum: 7 (40%)
In attendance:	J Arechiga	Deputy Principal of Curriculum & Innovation (Items 1-18)
	P Doherty	Deputy Principal of Finance & Resources (Items 1-18)
	L Buckley	Vice Principal, Curriculum & Performance (Items 1-17)
	P Hughes	Vice Principal, Quality & Student Experience (Items 1-17)
	D Rayneau	VP, Business Systems, Info & Technology (Items 1-17)
	A Wright	PA to the Principal (reserve clerk) (Items 1-17)
	M Rich	Curriculum Director, Maths & Digital (Items 7 & 8)
In virtual attendance:	W Bailey	Independent Governor
	P Lucarz	Vice Principal, People & Culture (Items 1-18)
	C Tague	Director of Governance (clerk) (Items 1-18)

Item		Action
1	**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
1.2	It was noted that C Tague, Director of Governance was attending the meeting virtually due to illness and A Wright, PA to the Principal was thanked for deputising as clerk in case there were any technical issues.	
1.3	The Chair highlighted that there were two key items on the meeting agenda for Corporation approval, namely the College's staff pay award for 2025/26 and the capital budget for 2026/27. Referring to the Director of Governance's briefing note, the Chair reminded everyone, that as charity trustees, statutory guidance must be followed when making significant decisions affecting the college. Trustees should act only in the interests of the college (the charity), make sure that there was enough information to make the required decisions and take that information into account when taking the decisions.	

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1a	**NOTICE AND QUORUM** C Tague (CT), Director of Governance confirmed that due notice of the meeting had been given and the meeting was quorate.	
1b	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Apologies for absence were received from Independent Governors J Daniels, C Jones and F Parvez.	
1c	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** There were no interests declared at this point in the meeting, but Staff Governor P Edwards declared an interest at Item 10 as he was presenting on behalf of a colleague. It was clarified that he was acting as Head of Apprenticeships & Business Development, not as a governor, during this item.	
2	**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** **RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting of the Corporation on 11 December 2025 be approved.**	
2a	**MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA** There were no matters arising from the minutes.	
2b	**UPDATE ON AGREED ACTIONS** There were no actions arising from the previous meeting.	
3	**CONSENT AGENDA APPROVALS**	
3.1	The Chair presented the Consent and Confidential Consent agendas for consideration.	
3.2	**RESOLVED:** **(i) To approve the use of the Consent & Confidential Consent Agendas as amended;** **(ii) No items should be moved from the Consent & Confidential Consent Agenda to the Main Agenda; and** **(iii) To approve all Items on the Consent & Confidential Consent Agendas.**	
3.3	**Items approved/noted via the Consent Agenda:**	

C01	To approve the following appointments for a term of four years, commencing on the date of the first meeting attended, or the date of any Kirklees College new Governor induction training attended,	Approved

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	whichever is the sooner:- 1. M Haywood as Independent Governor and Audit Committee Chair Designate (taking up the position of Chair on the retirement of the current Chair); The following appointments are pending satisfactory references:- 2. M Wood as Independent Governor and Finance & Resources Committee Chair Designate (taking the position of Chair on the retirement of the current Chair); 3. L Pryor to the College Quality, Performance & Standards Committee as a Co-optee; 4. A Longden the College Quality, Performance & Standards Committee as a Co-optee; and 5. M Ingrams to the College Audit Committee as a Co-optee	
C02	Committee work schedules 2026/27	Approved
C03	2024/25 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report	Approved
C04	2026/27 Fees Policy	Approved
C05	Financial Regulations	Approved
C06	Finance & Resources Committee Terms of Reference	Approved
C07	2025/26 Strategic Priority Action Plans	Noted
C08	Strategic Risk Report	Noted
C09	EDI Committee minutes 12/11/2025	Noted
C10	Health & Safety Committee minutes 12/02/2026	Noted

Items approved/noted via the Confidential Consent Agenda:

CCA1	Revised Director of Governance job description	Approved
CCA2	Director of Governance mid-year performance review	Noted
CCA3	Deputy Principal mid-year performance reviews	Noted
CCA4	Principal mid-year performance review	Noted

There were several changes to the agenda order from this point during the meeting and therefore the minute numbers do not match those on the agenda.

Item		Action
	The agenda order of items 4 – 6 was amended to enhance the flow of the information presented.	
4	**FINANCIAL REPORT TO 31 JANUARY 2026**	
4.1	P Doherty, Deputy Principal Finance & Resources presented a summary report on the College's financial performance for the half year ended 31 January 2026, together with a forecast outturn for 2025/26.	
4.2	It was noted that the College's financial position had been scrutinised by the Finance & Resources Committee, but it was important that all governors were aware of the current financial standing. The key financial headlines and points of discussion are detailed below: 1. Financial performance remained strong for 2025/26 but there was no room for complacency. The challenge would be sustaining strong performance in the medium and longer term, for 2027/28 and beyond. 2. Financial Health was assessed as Outstanding as at January 2026 and forecast to be Outstanding for the year (as per budget). EBITDA was forecast to outturn significantly above budget. 3. Cash reserves were healthy, though they included unspent capital grants and other obligations. While these reserves could support ongoing operations and respond to various situations, it was noted that new estates strategy investments might require funding beyond available reserves. 4. The 16-18 student numbers increase in 2025/26 should lead to additional funding for 2026/27 under the lagged funding model. Although not included in forecasts, it could result in exceptional in-year growth funding in 2025/26, but DfE confirmation was not expected until March 2026. 5. Staff pay costs had been budgeted prudently. The initial phase of business planning had been completed and no significant recruitment issues or substantial staffing gaps had been identified. Although certain support roles had been challenging to fill, necessitating multiple advertisements, overall staff turnover remained manageable across the College. The College's vacancy rate was more favourable than the sector average and continued to show improvement over the previous year. 6. The College's debt was high, but its percentage of income decreased each year as repayments lowered the burden and improved financial health. 7. The significant overspend on the Student Services Hub capital project was raised. It was noted that a lessons-learned review of the project had been considered with the Finance & Resources Committee and it was agreed that this would be shared with all governors.	
4.3	In concluding the discussion, the strong financial position was welcomed as was the fact that the College was generating sufficient income to meet its obligations and re-invest back into the College infrastructure, in order to	

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	continue to provide an excellent student experience.	
4.4	**Action: the Student Hub lessons learned report which went to the Finance & Resources Committee on 5 March to be circulated to all governors.**	**CT**
4.5	**RESOLVED: the Corporation welcomes the College's strong financial position which provides an opportunity to invest in infrastructure, supporting an excellent student experience.**	
5	**KIRKLEES BUILD**	
5.1	L Buckley (LB), Vice Principal for Curriculum & Performance, and D Rayneau (DR), Vice Principal for Business Systems, Information & Technology, presented a report outlining capital funding proposals for the expansion of construction training at Springfield. *The minutes in relation to this item are considered confidential at this time and are recorded in a confidential and restricted annex marked Annex 1, 19/03/2026.*	
	The Capital budget was reviewed alongside the draft minutes from the Finance & Resources Committee.	
6	**2026/27 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET & DRAFT FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES, 5 MARCH 2026**	
6.1	P Doherty (PD) presented a report seeking approval of the College's capital budget for 2026/27.	
6.2	Key points from the discussion are highlighted below: 1. The total value of requests reflected a positive change in culture and the ambition of capital submissions from teams across the College. Aspirations were being appropriately managed and teams were encouraged to bring forward new ideas, which were subsequently reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team. 2. There remained a significant digital element within the proposals, with ongoing investment in IT infrastructure and device replacement cycles. Additionally, the proposals included the replacement of laptops initially provided through government funding during the pandemic, which now required replacing from internal capital resources. 3. Efforts were underway to improve sustainability, especially in heating and cooling systems at Pioneer and Brunel, with the intention of implementing the most effective solutions rather than opting for straightforward replacements. This would ensure that investments were both efficient and future-proofed	

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	4. The programme would include robust governance arrangements, with ongoing reporting and governor involvement. This would ensure that all projects were monitored and evaluated effectively and any follow-up actions managed appropriately.	
6.3	The Finance & Resources Committee Chair presented the minutes of the 5 March 2026 meeting and the items of report were duly noted. The Committee recognised the strength of the current financial position, with strong cash balances which provided some headroom to increase capital expenditure. However, the College was still servicing a large loan and whilst the DfE had opened up capital budget applications there was there was no clear line of sight to capital funding.	
6.4	The appointment of experienced personnel and ongoing support from external partners provided reassurance regarding the achievability of project timescales and the Committee was confident in the College's ability to manage and deliver the proposed capital programme, while remaining agile in response to funding opportunities and strategic priorities.	
6.5	The Committee supported the proposed budget, but reiterated concerns as to the absence of an estates strategy, particularly given that key strategic considerations, capital investments and plans for capital development may emerge once such a strategy was established.	
6.6	**RESOLVED: Corporation approves the capital budget 2026/27 as set out within the report.** *The financial detail in relation to this item is considered confidential at this time and is recorded in a confidential and restricted annex marked Annex 1, 19/03/2026.*	
1555	*A 10 minute comfort break was taken and the meeting resumed at 1605*	
1615	*Michelle Rich, Curriculum Director, Maths & Digital joined the meeting*	
7	**BUSINESS CRITICAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (BCPIS)**	
7.1	P Doherty presented a report which set out the BCPIs position as at 31 January 2026.	
7.2	Members noted the significant increase in electricity usage at Waterfront, which was under review to assess whether operations or estate issues were affecting demand.	
7.3	The dip in English and Maths attendance raised and discussed in the following item (Strategic priority update: Improve the progress students make in English and Maths)	
7.4	**RESOLVED: The BCPIs position as at 31 January 2026 is noted.**	

Item		Action
	The order for agenda items 8 and 9 was changed to accommodate some technical issues with one of the presentations.	
8	**STRATEGIC PRIORITY UPDATE PRESENTATION**	
8.1	J Arechiga, Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Innovation and Michelle Rich, Curriculum Director, Maths & Digital, delivered a presentation which provided an update on the 2025/26 strategic priority: *Improve the progress students make in English and Maths* and the objectives and in-year progress related to this strategic priority.	
8.2	The Committee was informed that initial assessments were conducted using the Century system. Results were now accessible to all Heads of Department via the dashboard and processes had been established to monitor learners' progress in English and Maths throughout the year. Both tutors and students could view their progress status immediately, facilitating ongoing course reviews.	
8.3	Retention rates for vulnerable groups remained high and within the KPI threshold of below the main programme. Staff CPD initiatives were rigorous, and reporting standards in relation to the Teaching Excellence Framework were described as exemplary.	
8.4	The decline in English and Maths attendance, as well as the increasing gap between these subjects and the main study programme, was discussed. Attendance continued to be closely monitored, with recent performance management reviews addressing this concern. Enhanced interventions and targeted support had been introduced, particularly for vulnerable learners.	
8.5	**RESOLVED: The strategic priority update was noted.**	
9	**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**	
9.1	P Singh (PS), the Principal, presented the Principal's report which outlined key developments, achievements, and strategic initiatives at Kirklees College since the last meeting of the Corporation in December.	
9.2	Members were advised of a recent incident where a college trip had been caught up in international events, with 27 staff and students unable to fly home from Bali as planned. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of staff, additional accommodation was secured and the group were able to return home on an alternative flight. Members expressed their appreciation to all those in involved in the safe return of the group.	
9.3	In closing, PS referred to the upcoming strategy morning on 30 April, which was designed as a follow-up to the conversations held during the January away day, as well as subsequent discussions among the senior leadership team. The primary aim was to build upon these earlier dialogues to clarify and determine the strategic priorities for the college for 2026/27. The outcomes of the session would be used to inform the finalised strategic priorities, which were scheduled to be presented for approval in July 2026.	

Item		Action
1645	*Independent Governor P Roberts and Student Governor A Megbele left the meeting*	
10 10.1 10.2 **10.3**	**STRATEGIC PRIORITY UPDATE PRESENTATION** Paul Edwards, Head of Apprenticeships & Business Development tabled a presentation which provided an update on the 2025/26 strategic priority: *Improve timely achievement rates for apprenticeships.* The following key points were noted:- 1. Apprenticeship data was consistently monitored and reviewed in monthly performance meetings, with potential barriers to completion addressed during regular discussions with Heads of Department. Key KPIs were tracked and progress against all apprenticeship accountability measures was currently rated as green. 2. There had been no withdrawals due to financial hardship, reflecting a comprehensive college-wide initiative to support apprentices facing economic challenges. 3. Enhanced tracking systems for apprentices' progress in English and maths had been implemented and attendance continued to remain strong. **RESOLVED: The strategic priority update was noted.**	
11	**QUALITY, PERFORMANCE & STANDARDS COMMITTEE REPORT** The Committee Chair presented the minutes of the 10 March 2026 meeting and the items of report were noted.	
12	**AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT** The Committee Chair presented the minutes of the 11 March 2026 meeting and the items of report were noted.	
13	**PEOPLE, CULTURE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT** The Committee Chair presented the minutes of the 11 March 2026 meeting and the items of report were noted.	
14 14.1 **14.2**	**APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR** C Tague presented a report which set out the proposed timescales for nominations for the position of Vice Chair. Members were advised that P Brennan had put himself forward for the position and were asked that if anyone else would like to volunteer or nominate another governor, to do so by the closing date of 14 April 2026. **RESOLVED: Nominations for the position of Corporation Vice Chair to be submitted by 14 April 2026.**	

Item		Action
15	**Corporation & committee meeting dates**	
15.1	In presenting the 2026/27 meeting schedule, C Tague advised that the Strategic Half Day currently scheduled for 14 May 2027, would have to move as GCSE examinations were now scheduled on that date. It was agreed that the session would be held on 7 May 2027.	
15.2	**RESOLVED: The 2026/27 Corporation meeting schedule is approved, subject to the amendment of the Strategic Half Day to 7 May 2027.**	
16	**Governor training & activities** No activities were reported.	
17	**PUBLICATION OF AGENDA PAPERS** **RESOLVED: Items marked confidential on the meeting agenda shall not be published.**	
	OPEN SESSION - THANKS AND CLOSE The meeting moved into the closed session for Independent Governors to consider the confidential items. The Chair thanked the Staff Governor and Executive Leadership Team for their contributions and they left the meeting at 1700.	
18	**STAFF PAY AWARD 2025/26** *The details of the Staff Pay Award are considered confidential and therefore the discussion is recorded in a confidential and restricted annex marked Annex 2, 19/03/2026.*	
	THANKS AND CLOSE There being no other business, the Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and the meeting closed at 1730.	

AGREED ACTIONS				
	Who?	**Action**	**Min**	**By**
1	CT	The Student Hub lessons learned report which went to the Finance & Resources Committee on 5 March to be circulated to all governors	4.4	20/03/26