

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION:
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 2 OCTOBER 2025**



Present: Danielle Gillett (Chair) Lee Soden (Chair – agenda item 7.2)
Lesley Giles Robert Radford
Shabir Ismail

In Attendance: Louise Hazel Director of Governance and Policy
Amanda Scott Director of HR
Jane Parkinson Director of Finance
Shaun Curtis Director of Estates and Campus
Services (item 5)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 1.1 Staff declared an interest in item 7.1; Shabir Ismail and Louise Hazel declared an interest in item 7.2.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Alex Stacey-Midgely and Chan Kataria.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2025 were received and agreed.
- 3.2 The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2025 were received and agreed.

4 ENROLMENT UPDATE

- 4.1 The Principal gave an update on student enrolment. The following points were highlighted.
- 4.1.1 Overall, the position looked positive. 16-18 enrolment had gone well with several curriculum areas exceeding plan. There would be some drop out but current potential numbers were around 4,244, above the allocation of 3,999.
- 4.1.2 T levels were below plan largely due to students not meeting entry requirements; some of these students were enrolling on alternative level 3 programmes. The entry requirements for T levels would not be reduced as they were challenging qualifications.
- 4.1.3 Adult enrolment took place throughout the year and was looking on track. Apprenticeships were slightly down although January starts might be offered. HE was currently enrolling.

4.2 Governors asked a number of **questions** including:

- 4.2.1 **Did the figures include first and second year students and was it possible to see how many T levels were enrolled on the first year?** This figure did include all students but could be split into first and second year. Retention for year 2 T level students was an issue across the sector.
- 4.2.2 **Were schools promoting T levels?** Not well; some headteachers were still not fully aware of them. Where the College's marketing team was able to get into schools, the College was having more success in promoting them.
- 4.2.3 **Who else did T levels in the City?** There was little other provision; the College was by far the largest provider.
- 4.2.4 **What was the College's view on the announcements this week around the Youth Guarantee and apprenticeships?** These were welcome and the College would have a major part to play although as always it would come down to what it meant in practice.
- 4.2.5 **It was not clear that sufficient work had yet been done by government in making sure that there would be enough work experience opportunities offered.** Agreed; the quality of the experience would be an issue and partnerships with employers would continue to be critical.

4.3 **Members noted the update on enrolment.**

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REVIEW

5.1 The Director of Estates and Campus Services presented the annual health and safety statement for 2024/25. The following points were highlighted.

- 5.1.1 138 work related accidents were reported in 2024/25, a reduction on 168 last year. As in previous years, FPC had the most accidents where more manual subjects were taught but there had been a significant reduction at that site; this was attributable to the success of toolbox talks and awareness raising within curriculum areas.
- 5.1.2 Two RIDDOR reportable accidents occurred: one involving a student falling from height and another involving a student being struck by falling timber.
- 5.1.3 The focus for staff training was on accident reporting, risk assessments and search training.
- 5.1.4 The Estates team managed a robust programme of service and maintenance for equipment and installations. External inspections were carried out by the College's insurers.
- 5.1.5 The number of other incidents in 2024/25 was 183, down from 254 in the previous year. More incidents were seen at APC reflecting the higher number of students on that site. Reasons for the reduction included the addition of CCTV, removal of doors in toilets, and the introduction of fencing at APC.
- 5.1.6 Objectives for 2025/26 were outlined.

5.2 Governors made a number of **comments** and asked the following **questions**

including:

- 5.2.1 **The Health and Safety Committee continued to work well with better attendance and members sending deputies if they were not able to attend. Members took their responsibilities in respect of health and safety seriously.**
- 5.2.2 **Who attended the H&S Committee?** Directors of curriculum and support areas, staff union and student union representatives.
- 5.2.3 **The H&S team would also be looking at new building developments to make sure they were compliant.**

5.3 **Members noted the health and safety annual report.**

6 HR UPDATE

6.1 The Director of HR presented a report on pay gaps. The following points were highlighted.

- 6.1.1 The College was required to publish gender pay gap data but had decided to also report on the ethnicity pay gap from March 2021 and the Disability pay gap in March 2022 using the same methodology.
- 6.1.2 The mean and median pay gaps for gender had both decreased this year by 3.2% and 5.8% respectively. National minimum wage increases and scale mergers had narrowed differentials, although female predominance in lower-quartile roles continued to influence the gap.
- 6.1.3 The mean ethnic pay gap had increased by 2.8%; the median ethnic pay gap had increased by 5.1%. The rise reflected inclusion of all staff categories in 2025 reporting as well as new starters typically being appointed at lower scale points. Non-white managers earned more than their white peers but there was still under-representation in the top quartile roles.
- 6.1.4 The mean disability pay gap had decreased by 0.48%; the median disability pay gap had increased by 2.7% but was still a negative one. Disabled lecturers earned slightly more than non-disabled peers; the small numbers of managers meant that group variations were less reliable.
- 6.1.5 The College's pay gaps compared well with other colleges.

6.2 Governors asked a number of **questions** including:

- 6.2.1 **What was the College aiming for, could there be a 0% gap?** This was unlikely but that was a national issue. The College needed to target certain areas and roles such as increasing the number of non-white staff in higher paid roles. Pay scales would need to be looked at carefully to make sure there was no adverse impact in terms of gender. It would also be useful to review the data more than once a year.
- 6.2.2 **Were there supplements paid in any areas?** There were market supplements paid, mainly in construction and the IT team. Sixty-eight percent of those receiving market supplements were white which was a factor of the types of roles and the demographic of staff in those roles who tended to be white and male.
- 6.2.3 **How was the data used with staff?** The EDI Committee considered the

data and then the staff networks would look at it further.

6.2.4 **Was the Director of HR pleased with the results?** Yes, it showed a steady trend of improvement.

6.2.5 **What was the College supposed to do with the data other than publish it?** It was used to help identify issues and target actions and interventions. Reviewing the College's data against benchmarking information would also help identify any areas of concern.

6.2.6 **It would also be helpful when thinking about future leadership and succession planning.** Agreed; black staff tended not to apply for roles and promotions so this would need to be a focus.

6.3 **Members noted the pay gaps report.**

6.4 The Director of HR presented a report on HR KPIs. The following points were highlighted.

6.4.1 The workforce was now at 1,150 staff (750 FTE), a 4.5 % increase year-on-year. Turnover was the lowest in recent years.

6.4.2 Workforce composition remained stable with 67% women, 39% non-white, 7% declared disability and 46% aged 50+. Over 52% of staff had more than five years' service, indicating strong retention.

6.4.3 The faith profile was 27% Christian, 10% Hindu, 11% Muslim. Three percent identified as LGBTQ+ although 20% of staff had not disclosed.

6.4.4 Sickness Absence had increased slightly to 6.7 days per person (from 6.5). Long-term absence was now driven primarily by psychological causes, overtaking musculoskeletal issues. Short-term absence was largely due to colds and flu.

6.4.5 2,801 applications had resulted in 177 hires (a 6.3% success rate). Fifty-nine percent of applicants and 51% of appointees were non-white. Nine percent of applicants disclosed a disability but only 7% of hires did so. Gender appointment ratios closely mirrored the applicant proportions.

6.4.6 All appraisals had been completed and mandatory training completion was very high, with 97% for safeguarding modules.

6.4.7 The casework numbers remained low and had declined; most were associated with long term sickness which was time and resource intensive.

6.5 Governors asked a number of **questions** including:

6.5.1 **Were the KPIs sufficiently targeted to help manage risks? For example, was the low turnover and age profile likely to become a concern?** The College would need to prioritise workforce planning over the next couple of years. The KPIs provided useful data and highlighted areas for attention such as the number of non-white staff and the aging workforce. The HR team was also looking at how it also drew in qualitative data to inform planning.

6.5.2 **Who else would see the data and what impact would it have?** The HR team looked at the data and analysed it in detail, following up areas of concern or interest with the relevant departments.

6.6 **Members noted the HR KPIs.**

6.7 The Director of HR presented a Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy. The following points were highlighted.

6.7.1 It was good practice to have such a policy.

6.7.2 The policy would also tie in with the appraisal process for existing staff.

6.8 In response to a **question** it was confirmed that there was no longer a requirement to re-do DBS checks after three years but the question as to whether there was any change to DBS/criminal convictions status was asked at every appraisal and when staff changed role, a new DBS check was completed.

6.9 **Members approved the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.**

7 PAY - confidential

8 FINANCE REPORT (PERIOD 12)

8.1 The Director of Finance presented the finance report (period 10) and summer reforecast. The following points were highlighted.

8.1.1 The year to date operating result was a surplus after restructuring costs of £496k compared to the forecast surplus of £441k.

8.1.2 The EBITDA after restructuring costs was £2,104k compared to the forecast EBITDA of £2,182k.

8.1.3 16-18 student numbers were above allocation overall and the College had received additional in year funding for this although growth was only funded at 67%.

8.1.4 Although the College had fallen short of its ASF target, it had achieved over 97% of the allocation and would therefore will not be subject to clawback.

8.1.5 Apprenticeship income had exceeded £5m, in line with the forecast.

8.1.6 The College had met all of its bank covenants for the year and had achieved a 'good' financial health rating based on these accounts.

8.1.7 Work continued to be undertaken on the draft accounts and the final position was subject to the external audit review.

8.1.8 Figures did not include FRS102 pension adjustments relating to enhanced pensions and the Local Government Pension Scheme. These adjustments were not included within the calculations for bank covenants and financial health.

8.2 **Governors congratulated staff on achieving the positive outturn; despite some variance during the year, the financial position had been managed well. Getting to and staying in good financial health was the target.**

8.3 **Members noted the period 12 finance report.**

8.4 **Members then raised concerns about the aeronautical building, its fitness for purpose and the levels of scrutiny over capital projects. The following points were highlighted:**

8.4.1 **It appeared that the new aeronautical building did not provide what**

the College needed and had been briefed by a director who was no longer with the College. There was the potential for additional spend of around £150k being needed to make the building fit for purpose. There had also been spend on other items which was not good value for money.

8.4.2 A report was needed on the issues and what had been learned.

8.4.3 There was also a backlog of maintenance that needed addressing. Another view of how the College was investing in the estate was needed.

8.4.4 The Committee required more detailed reports on capital projects; the information currently provided in finance reports and capital updates was insufficient. It was not clear who made decisions about capital spend and whether estates utilisation data was looked at in allocating capital funding.

8.4.5 Should the Committee's terms of reference be reviewed?

8.4.6 It was about governors being able to give the proper level of scrutiny to capital spend and understanding more about the capital board.

8.4.7 There were also concerns about the attention to detail and completion of projects.

8.5 The Principal responded with the following points:

8.5.1 Two individuals involved in the specification for the aeronautical building no longer worked for the College. There had been a whistleblowing report related to the department and this had been thoroughly and independently investigated and reported to the Audit Committee including lessons learned. The Whistleblowing annual report would also come to the Corporation.

8.5.2 The specification of buildings relied on the expertise of staff within the area which, in this case, had been provided. The design and build met the original bid requirements in relation to the provision proposed, however, this had not turned out as expected resulting in further modifications being needed to maximise the usage. It was acknowledged that, in certain aspects of this project, the College had not got it right and lessons had been learned particularly in relation to possibly value for money and the approach to waivers.

8.5.3 Several other capital schemes had been completed successfully and to a high specification.

8.5.4 The College had to look at how it made best use of resources. A capital board met regularly and assessed potential capital spend, linked to financial resources but also to curriculum planning and other priorities. Choices always had to be made about where to allocate the limited capital funding; this included planned maintenance which had been curtailed in previous years because of funding constraints, however, where possible this had often been made up through project funding.

8.5.5 The utilisation data was reviewed and was indeed used to make decisions about capital and estates works.

8.5.6 The terms of reference of the capital board would be reviewed to ensure there was appropriate reporting through to F&GP. More detailed reports would be brought to F&GP to provide more information on capital projects and budget spend.

- 8.6 **Members requested an update at the next meeting and that revised capital reports to be brought to future meetings.**

9 REGULARITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The Director of Finance presented the regularity self-assessment questionnaire. The following points were highlighted.

- 9.1.1 The questionnaire was published annually by the DfE and looked at the policies and procedures in place to fulfil the accountability requirements.
- 9.1.2 There had been a lot of changes in the previous year following reclassification. This year's questionnaire was similar to last year's.
- 9.1.3 The questionnaire was used to underpin the External Auditor's work, and no concerns had been raised at this stage.
- 9.1.4 The Audit Committee had reviewed and commented on the responses.

- 9.2 In response to a **question** as to whether there was anything further to add as a result of the discussion about engineering and capital spend, it was confirmed that both internal and external auditors were aware of the situation in respect of engineering and no further amendments were needed.

- 9.3 **Members agreed to recommend the Regularity Self-assessment Questionnaire for signature.**

10 BAD DEBT WRITE-OFF

- 10.1 The Director of Finance presented a paper requesting authority to write-off debts that were considered uncollectable. The following points were highlighted:

- 10.1.1 It was proposed that one debt totalling £3,230 was written off.
- 10.1.2 The debt had been chased as far as possible and was now considered to be uncollectable.

- 10.2 **Members approved the write-off of uncollectable debt of £3,230.**

11 REVIEW OF RISKS

- 11.1 The Director of Governance and Policy presented the risks relevant to the Committee. The following points were highlighted:

- 11.1.1 As previously agreed, the risks relevant to the Committee would be considered at each meeting.
- 11.1.2 The Risk Register was as agreed in July; a review and update would be taking place in readiness for the next Audit Committee meeting.
- 11.1.3 Members were recommended to review the planned actions and comment on whether any further action might be needed to mitigate the risks.
- 11.1.4 The wording around the controls was being reviewed to ensure they properly described realistic controls.

- 11.2 In response to a **question** as to where partnerships was being monitored, it was confirmed this was through CSQI. **Governors requested that this be added to**

the F&GP risks as there would be funding implications from partnership activity.

11.3 Members noted the risks.

12 COMMITTEE SELF ASSESSMENT

12.1 The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Committee's self-assessment. The following points were highlighted:

- 12.1.1 Positive impacts were identified and evidenced by the quality of papers and presentations made at the Committee and appropriate challenge and support from Governors.**
- 12.1.2 Areas for improvement and suggested actions included more use of dashboards, recruitment of new members with specific skills sets and greater financial sensitivity analysis with more focus on maximising commercial opportunities.**
- 12.1.3 A few comments were made in relation to the awareness of quality issues. While not within the remit of this Committee, there was increasing scrutiny of quality issues at Board level.**

12.2 Members noted the Committee Self-Assessment report.

13 STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES REPORT

13.1 Members received and noted the staff development activities report.

14 TRADE UNION FACILITIES TIME REPORT

14.1 Members received and noted the Trade Union Facilities Time report.

15 EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS

15.1 Members received and noted the Employment Tribunals report.

16 DfE DASHBOARD

16.1 Members received and noted the DfE Dashboard

17 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

17.1 Members received and noted the Treasury management report.

18 WAIVERS OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

18.1 Members received and noted the report on waivers of financial regulations.

19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 2 December 2025**

20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 20.1 The Principal reported that Derby College had been successful in its application to become a construction technical excellence college (CTEC) and would run a hub and spoke model. Leicester College would be the Leicester and Leicestershire spoke. There was some associated funding although this was not expected to be significant given the number of colleges involved in the project; involvement was a strategically helpful development.