

# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2025

Present: Danielle Gillett (Chair) Zubair Limbada  
Vipul Bechar Steve Munro  
Kyle Cameron Robert Radford  
Shawn George Jackie Rossa  
Lesley Giles Lee Soden  
Shabir Ismail Vipal Karavadra  
Neil McDougall Tom Wilson\*

In Attendance: Louise Hazel Director of Governance and Policy  
Amanda Scott Director of HR  
Jane Parkinson Director of Finance  
Mukund Narshi Associate  
Gail Pringle Head of Student Inclusion (item 4)  
Jody Kerrod Head of Teaching Learning and  
Assessment (item 5)

\*Joined meeting online via Teams

## **1 WELCOMES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

- 1.1 There were no declarations of interest.
- 1.2 It was noted that this would be Zubair Limbada's last meeting as a governor. He was thanked for his contribution.

## **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Chan Kataria, Nicky Randall, Sophie Strevens-Robinson, Kully Sandhu and Andy Cookson.
- 2.2 The Principal provided an update on an incident that had taken place on Monday 8 December at the Abbey Park Campus. Two students who were known to each other were involved in a knife related incident with one student sustaining minor injuries. Staff had responded quickly, first aid had been administered and the police arrived within six minutes. The incident had been captured on CCTV and a police investigation was ongoing. A decision was made quickly that there had been no need to initiate a lockdown. The Chair and Vice Chair had been informed and a public statement had been made.
- 2.3 Governors made the following **comments** and asked a number of **questions** including:
  - 2.3.1 **How was the injured student?** They were ok, in some pain and nervous about returning to College. They would be supported remotely for the time being.

- 2.3.2 **How were staff?** Those involved in responding had done a great job. Reassurances had been provided to staff and the Principal had visited the site and spoken to staff.
- 2.3.3 **Given that this showed there was someone on site carrying a knife, what did the College need to do in response?** The College had good relationships with the Police. A Search, Screening and Confiscation Policy was used where there was intelligence of potential issues but it was important to balance actions against the level of risk. This was the first time there had been a knife-related incident on College sites.
- 2.3.4 **What had been said to students?** Similar communications had been sent to students as to staff, there was information on social media and separate responses had been sent to individual parents who had contacted the College. Students were told to speak to staff if they were concerned.
- 2.3.5 **Were there opportunities to work with other colleges to highlight the risks of carrying weapons.** This had previously been done and it would be beneficial to repeat the exercise.
- 2.3.6 **Was counsel being taken from the Police about how to respond?** It was; there was ongoing dialogue and the College acted on any intelligence it received.
- 2.3.7 **Most young people carried knives because they felt unsafe and this incident might mean more people felt unsafe. Was now the time to increase the activity in terms of searches?** It would be important to be more vigilant; doing nothing was not an option. Advice from the police would be sought.
- 2.3.8 **Students didn't know how to contact Campus Wardens and didn't know the number to call.** Students could contact any member of staff if they had concerns but this would need to be promoted more.
- 2.3.9 **It was disappointing that governors had not been informed of the incident before the statement had been made.** Noted; it was important to get the balance right and manage communications but if a public statement were issued in the future, this would be shared with governors.
- 2.3.10 **Other staff had highlighted concerns about security issues. There was work to do to tackle perceptions.** Agreed; further communications had been sent to staff and an update would be given once the investigation and any disciplinary processes had been completed.
- 2.3.11 **It would be important to find ways for people to talk about it.** Noted.
- 2.3.12 **If there was another incident, did staff know what to do?** Staff had training including on lockdown procedures but this would be repeated.

2.4 **Members requested a report back on report back on actions taken and lessons learned.**

### **3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 **Members of the Corporation received and approved the minutes of the meeting on 30 October 2025 subject to one minor amendment.**

3.2 As a matter arising it was confirmed that in the recent union ballot on strike action, the 50% threshold had not been reached and only 43% of members voted; no strike action would therefore be taken. Of those voting, 86% had

voted for action but overall numbers were small.

3.3 **Members of the Corporation received and approved the confidential minutes of the meeting on 30 October 2025.**

3.4 **Members of the Corporation received and approved the minutes of the Special meeting on 20 November 2025.**

#### **4 EDI UPDATE**

4.1 The Head of Inclusion presented the EDI Annual Report for 2024/25. The following points were highlighted.

4.1.1 The College served a diverse student body.

4.1.2 Extensive welfare and financial assistance had been provided to students including bursaries, free school meals and equipment. Additional Learning Support supported 672 students, and mentoring services supported over 1,500 students, including care leavers. Mental health support was also delivered to hundreds of students.

4.1.3 Careers and SEND advisory services facilitated positive destinations for students with disabilities, care experience, and other needs, with nearly 5,000 interactions recorded.

4.1.4 Other outreach initiatives included community roadshows targeting food banks and hubs to raise awareness of free courses and support services.

4.1.5 The College website had been updated to meet accessibility standards.

4.1.6 Student consultations on racial justice and LGBTQ+ inclusion informed College policies and activities. Enrichment events had celebrated cultural diversity and international work placements included students with disabilities and from minoritised backgrounds.

4.1.7 Departments had adopted inclusive teaching practices, diverse materials and adaptive assessment methods.

4.1.8 Staff had received training on adaptive teaching, anti-racism, gender inclusivity, mental health, and safeguarding.

4.1.9 Proposed objectives for 2025/26 included recruiting an EDI officer, expanding staff working groups, delivering inclusive employment training and appointing an EDI link governor.

4.2 Governors made the following **comments** and asked a number of **questions** including:

4.2.1 **There was reference to a workshop on knife crime. How had this been received and should this be repeated?** This had been well received; there was a rolling programme delivered with the Police although this was not currently mandatory.

4.2.2 **How many people were in the EDI team?** There was one person but another member of staff had just been recruited; other support had been provided by three staff on a part-time basis.

4.2.3 **It was a good report. How had the implications of the Supreme Court ruling been addressed?** The College was keeping an eye on this; guidance from the DfE was still awaited. The last Hear My Voice project had focussed on LGBTQ students and staff, and as a result of

feedback from this, gender neutral toilets had been introduced. Trips and accommodation were an issue but the College was dealing with each circumstance as it arose.

- 4.2.4 **It was a comprehensive and useful report. It was noted that there was a request for an EDI governor Champion.** Vipul Bechar would be taking this on. This had worked well in the past and the previous champion had been impactful and had engaged with external activities.
- 4.2.5 **Leicester College was being looked to as a model for good practice in EDI.** Noted. The College would be hosting the AoC's equity exchange in January which was a helpful peer network.
- 4.2.6 **Around £2 million had been spent on support, how was this managed?** This was managed through the Learner Support Fund.
- 4.2.7 **Where would the report go now?** It would be published and a summary infographic would be produced. This would be shared with governors.

4.3 The Head of inclusion presented the revised Equality and Diversity Policy.

4.4 Governors **commented** that it would benefit from some redrafting.

4.5 **Members of the Corporation:**

4.5.1 **Received the EDI Annual Report.**

4.5.2 **Approved the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy subject to suggested drafting changes.**

## **5 SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2024/25 AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES**

5.1 The Principal presented the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2024/25 and the Quality Improvement Priorities for 2025/26. The following points were highlighted.

- 5.1.1 The draft SAR had been discussed in detail at CSQI.
- 5.1.2 A different approach had been taken this year which was more inclusive and involved members of the SLT in developing the SAR.
- 5.1.3 The quality framework introduced for 2024/25 had made an impact with increases in achievement rates, however more work was still to be done. 2024/25 National Achievement Rates (NAR) were still awaited but outcomes were still below the NAR for 16-18 with Level 1 a particular issue, as well as some other areas of underperformance.
- 5.1.4 Quality improvement priorities were outlined and included implementing high quality teaching, learning and assessment; addressing areas of underperformance; improving attendance; enhancing inclusive practice; strengthening curriculum leadership and accountability; a proactive approach to student wellbeing and resilience; implementing an age appropriate personal development framework; and targeted impactful CPD.

5.2 **The Chair of CSQI commented that this had been discussed in detail at**

**CSQI. This was the best version of the SAR the Committee had seen and it was clear and evidence based. The Principal was thanked for a clearer and more transparent approach. The Committee was happy to recommend approval of the report but it was important to highlight that 16-18 outcomes were below the NAR. There was a question as to whether this could be considered 'Good' under the previous inspection framework. However an important consideration was whether the issues were recognised and whether the QIP identified the right issues. The College would need to be held to account for the improvements which were needed and under the new inspection framework, there was a potential risk in relation to the inclusion strand and vulnerable students' experiences.**

5.3 Governors asked the following **questions**:

5.3.1 **What assurance could be given that underperforming areas were being tackled?** These areas had been identified and better data now allowed a drill down to individual students. 16-18 Level 1 maths was a concern and so a deep dive would be conducted in the new year. Members of the Quality team were conducting several walk throughs a week; it was clear attendance was low but they were trying to identify the root cause by attending sessions and talking to students.

5.3.2 **What did attendance look like this year compared to last year for Level 1 students?** It was showing a slight improvement. Data was much better this year.

5.3.3 **This year's cohort would be the one that transitioned from junior to high school during the pandemic and so effective strategies to support them were needed.** Noted.

5.3.4 **Why were there different sets of student number data presented in various reports?** It would depend on how the data was analysed and at what point the analysis was done. For example, the numbers of 16-19s might include sometimes 24+ high needs students with EHCPs. It also depended on whether they were in-year recruitment numbers or total numbers. Claims made were taken directly from the student records system and run through extensive validation checks before being submitted for funding purposes. However it was acknowledged that greater consistency in how data was reported in documents was needed.

5.4 **Members of the Corporation approved the Self-Assessment Report for 2024/25 and noted the quality improvement priorities for 2025/26.**

## **6 STRATEGIC PLAN: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

6.1 The Principal gave a presentation on the strategic framework for the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan. The following points were highlighted.

6.1.1 There had been discussion at the Away day in June and subsequently at the Special meeting on 20 November about the Mission Values and Strategic Commitments.

6.1.2 Consultation had taken place with the Student Council and the Student Liaison Committee.

- 6.1.3 Staff consultation on various versions of the Mission statement had also been conducted; the results were given. Feedback had been that the Mission should be simple and easy to explain. There were differing views as to the use of 'employers' or 'businesses' and 'connecting' or 'strengthening' communities. A revised statement which reflected feedback was proposed.
- 6.1.4 The Values were understood and recognised and it was proposed to retain them. While there had been discussion about 'equity' as a value rather than 'equality', it was felt this was not well understood and so more work was needed before this could be adopted.
- 6.1.5 The use of the term 'commitment' rather than 'objective' was liked; revised versions of the Strategic Commitments were presented.

**6.2 Members discussed the proposed statements and made suggestions for minor revisions.**

**6.3 Members of the Corporation approved:**

**6.3.1 The Mission Statement as: Developing Skills, Partnering Employers, Connecting Communities, Transforming Lives**

**6.3.2 The College Values as: Respect, Inclusion, Sustainability, Equality, Excellence**

**6.3.3 The Commitment Statements as:**

**Deliver High Quality Teaching and Learning**

Provide engaging and forward-looking education and training that achieves excellent student outcomes and equips them with the skills and confidence to reach their potential

**Create an Exceptional, Inclusive Student Experience**

Foster a vibrant, supportive environment where every student thrives and contributes to a diverse and welcoming community.

**Align our Curriculum to Local and National Priorities**

Shape our education and training to meet the evolving needs of Leicester and Leicestershire's economy and address national skills gaps.

**Attract, Retain and Empower Engaged and Motivated Staff**

Build a culture of excellence and belonging by investing in staff development, wellbeing and leadership growth, inspiring our people to deliver transformative education

**Invest in Future-Ready Spaces, Resources and Technologies**

Create cutting-edge learning environments that reflect industry standards, promote sustainability and deliver excellent student experiences.

**Help to Drive Regional Growth as a Leading Anchor Institution**

Demonstrate bold, collaborative leadership that strengthens our role as a catalyst for social mobility, economic development and community engagement across Leicester and Leicestershire.

**7 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

7.1 Chair of the Audit Committee presented the Committee's annual report. The following points were highlighted.

- 7.1.1 The approach taken was similar to previous years with internal audit provided by RSM and external audit by KPMG. KPMG's contract had come to an end and so a retendering process had taken place.
- 7.1.2 No formal internal audit opinion was provided but the approach taken enabled the Committee to have more flexibility in its work and use the risk register and risk assurance map to identify areas of focus. Risks were now being cascaded to other committees for discussion.
- 7.1.3 The Committee had a good and diverse range of skills and this helped to provide robust challenge. Succession planning for the committee was needed.
- 7.1.4 Assurance had been taken from the outcome of the work of internal and external audit, external reviews and management monitoring, and review and challenge in ensuring the quality of data submitted to regulatory bodies. Auditors also provided insights and information to the Committee.
- 7.1.5 FE Commissioner reports and other benchmarking reports had been reviewed and provided assurance that the College was following good practice.
- 7.1.6 There had been a clean audit report with no management recommendations.
- 7.1.7 In view of the range of reviews and the assurance provided by the internal and external audits and the external reviews, and its own self-assessment, the Committee took that view that it had been given assurance of the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's systems and arrangements for risk management, control and governance processes and, for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness and the safeguarding of assets.

**7.2 Members of the Corporation thanked the Audit Committee for its work and the comprehensive report and noted and received the Audit Committee Annual Report.**

**8 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2025**

- 8.1 The Director of Finance presented the Financial Statements for year ended 31 July 2025, the Audit Completion Report and the draft letter of representation. The following points were highlighted.
  - 8.1.1 There were no changes to the management accounts since previously presented, other than that they now included pensions adjustments.
  - 8.1.2 The College achieved a surplus of £2.1 million EBITDA, with an operating surplus of £553,000, reflecting improved efficiency, and a 'Good' financial health rating.
  - 8.1.3 Total income rose to £55.4 million, driven by strong 16-18 student recruitment and higher High Needs funding.
  - 8.1.4 Staff costs had increased to cover additional student numbers.
  - 8.1.5 The College invested £8.1 million in facilities and maintained strong reserves (£13.6 million) and cash balances (£7 million).
  - 8.1.6 Bank covenants were met.
  - 8.1.7 The Audit Completion Report had previously been discussed by the Audit Committee and Corporation. There were no concerns, audit

misstatements, control deficiencies or issues identified in the regularity audit. The only outstanding work now was to send the signed accounts to the auditors who would issue a new completion report.

8.1.8 The letter of representation was standard wording.

8.2 **Members of the Corporation commented that the College was just in the Good financial health category but the Corporation could not be complacent. The Director of Finance and Finance team, were thanked for their rigour in completing the accounts.**

8.3 **Members of the Corporation**

8.3.1 **Approved the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2025.**

8.3.2 **Noted the Audit Completion report.**

8.3.3 **Approved the letter of representation for signature.**

## **9 FINANCE REPORT (PERIOD 3) AND AUTUMN REFORECAST**

9.1 The Director of Finance presented the finance report (period 3) and autumn reforecast. The following points were highlighted.

9.1.1 The year to date operating result was an EBITDA surplus after restructuring costs of £2,669k compared to the budgeted surplus of £2,655k.

9.1.2 16-18 learner responsive learner numbers were above allocation overall by around 43 students, however, under-recruitment to T level courses would result in an in-year clawback of funding. The estimated clawback included in the budget had been reviewed and decreased by £200k in the autumn reforecast.

9.1.3 Indications were that the College was on track to achieve its ASF target.

9.1.4 Apprenticeship starts were slightly below target. An allowance of £100k for underperformance against the budget had been included in the autumn reforecast.

9.1.5 HE recruitment was below target and was expected to result in a decrease in fee income of £108k.

9.1.6 An autumn reforecast had been undertaken. Key movements included an increase in income for high needs students due to an under-calculation of the average funding per student in the original budget; a net increase of £54k against other income streams; additional pay costs of £220k; a reduction in the LGPS pension contribution rate; and an increase to the exams fee budget of £100k.

9.1.7 Overall, the expected EBITDA surplus after restructuring costs had increased by £45k, from a surplus of £2,521k to a surplus of £2,566k.

9.1.8 The College would meet its bank covenants and achieve a 'good' financial health rating following the autumn reforecast.

9.2 **The Chair of F&GP noted that F&GP had been reassured that this was a prudent view to take at this stage. The main risk was around the £300k threshold which would move the College into Requires improvement financial health. The Committee had also asked for and received a more detailed paper on capital expenditure which had previously been included in the management accounts; the new report was helpful and enabled**

greater scrutiny.

9.3 **Members of the Corporation noted the period 3 finance report and approved the autumn reforecast.**

## **10 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS**

10.1 The Chair of the Audit Committee presented a report setting out a proposal for the appointment of external auditors. The following points were highlighted.

10.1.1 It was the responsibility of the Audit Committee to advise the Corporation on the appointment, reappointment, dismissal and remuneration of the external auditor and reporting accountant.

10.1.2 KPMG were appointed in April 2022 to act as the College's external auditors for three years up to the year ending 31 July 2025, with an option to extend for a further two years. However, KPMG had made it clear that they were gradually withdrawing from the FE external audit market and would not be looking to take up the two year extension, therefore triggering the requirement for a formal tender process for external audit services.

10.1.3 An external tendering process has been initiated through the Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC) framework.

10.1.4 Seven tender responses were received and the top three were invited to present their bids to a special meeting of the Audit Committee.

10.1.5 The Audit Committee unanimously recommended MHA Audit Services LLP. The total cost for the three-year appointment was £156,090, which was within the budget set for external audit services.

10.1.6 There were some risks associated with working with a new audit provider but these would be mitigated by ensuring effective communication and support during the transition period.

10.2 In response to **questions** it was confirmed that Bishop Fleming and Menzies had been the other two firms shortlisted and that the four main audit firms were no longer offering audit services to the FE Sector.

10.3 **Members of the Corporation accepted the recommendation of the Audit Committee and approved the appointment of MHA Audit Services LLP as the College's external auditors for a period of three years, with an option to extend for a further two years, subject to satisfactory performance.**

## **11 GOVERNOR VISIT REPORTS**

11.1 **Members of the Corporation noted the governor visit reports.**

## **12 MODERN SLAVERY ACT TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT**

12.1 The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement. The following points were highlighted.

12.1.1 The College was required to publish a statement annually.

12.1.2 There were no cases reported in 2024/25.

12.1.3 The main changes for this year's statement was the addition of new Domestic Abuse and Sexual Harassment policies; involvement in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Strategic Partnership Board; and more detail on the online monitoring through Smoothwall.

12.1.4 The College maintained close links with local police and the City Council for prompt reporting and response to any cases.

12.2 In response to a **question** it was confirmed that the supply chain was an area of potential risk although due diligence took place with new partners which included checks on modern slavery processes.

12.3 **Members of the Corporation approved the Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement.**

## **13 POLICIES**

13.1 The Director of HR presented two policies for approval. The following points were highlighted.

13.1.1 The Local Recognition and Procedural Agreement effectively provided the terms of reference for the Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee (JCNC). No changes were proposed for this year but it would be reviewed after a year and amended to reflect any changes arising from the Employment Rights Bill.

13.1.2 The Procedure for Collective Disputes followed ACAS guidance; a minor addition had been made.

13.2 In response to a **question** as to whether the term 'reasonable additional release' in the Local Recognition and Procedural Agreement should be reviewed as being too loose, it was confirmed that that this was wording in the ACAS Code of Practice and should not be changed.

13.3 **Members of the Corporation approved:**

13.3.1 **The Local Recognition and Procedural Agreement.**

13.3.2 **The Procedure for Collective Disputes.**

## **14 TERRORISM (PROTECTION OF PREMISES) ACT 2025 (MARTYN'S LAW)**

14.1 **Members of the Corporation received and noted the report on Terrorism (Protection Of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law).**

## **15 PAY GAPS**

15.1 **Members of the Corporation received and noted the report on pay gaps.**

**16 PROGRESS REPORT ON OPERATING STATEMENT**

16.1 Members of the Corporation received and noted the progress report on the Operating Statement.

**17 ITEM FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE: RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

17.1 Members of the Corporation received and noted the risk management update.

**18 COLLEGE OVERSIGHT**

18.1 Members of the Corporation received and noted the DfE Guidance on College Oversight.

**19 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 29 January 2026 (special – EBR report)
- 16 April 2026