

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION  
HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2025**

|                |  |   |
|----------------|--|---|
| Present:       | Danielle Gillett (Chair)<br>Vipul Bechar<br>Kyle Cameron<br>Shawn George<br>Lesley Giles<br>Shabir Ismail<br>Chan Kataria*<br>Zubair Limbada | Neil McDougall<br>Steve Munro<br>Robert Radford<br>Jackie Rossa<br>Lee Soden<br>Sophie Strevens-Robinson*<br>Vipal Karavadra<br>Tom Wilson                            |
| In Attendance: | Louise Hazel<br>Amanda Scott<br>Kully Sandhu<br>Jane Parkinson<br>Mukund Narshi<br>Zoe Butler  | Director of Governance and Policy<br>Director of HR<br>Vice Principal<br>Director of Finance<br>Associate<br>Director of Student Services and<br>Marketing (item 4.1) |
| Observer       | Rob Lawson   | External Board Reviewer (AoC)   |

\*Joined meeting online via Teams

**1 WELCOMES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

- 1.1 The Chair introduced and welcomed Shawn George and Kyle Cameron as new student governors, Vipul Bechar and Steve Munro as new independent governors and Mukund Narshi as an Associate. Rob Lawson was conducting the external board review and would be observing the meeting.
- 1.2 Zubair Limbada was congratulated on his appointment as Deputy Principal Finance and Corporate Services. He would continue to serve as a governor for the rest of this term; any conflicts of interest would be managed.
- 1.3 Staff declared an interest in agenda item 8.1; Shabir Ismail, Louise Hazel, Amanda Scott, Kully Sandhu and Zubair Limbada declared an interest in item 8.2.
- 1.4 It was noted that Jane Parkinson chaired the Finance Committee of the Board of the St Phillip's Centre which set Tom Wilson's pay.
- 1.5 It was also noted that Shabir Ismail was on the Board of East Midlands Housing.

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Nicky Randall and Andy Cookson.

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

3.1 **Members of the Corporation received and approved the minutes of the meeting on 3 July 2025 subject to a minor amendment.**

3.2 As a matter arising it was confirmed that actions under minutes 5.2.3 (partnerships report) and 8.9.1 (operating statement) would be addressed through future reports to Corporation.

3.3 **Members of the Corporation received and approved the confidential minutes of the meeting on 3 July 2025.**

3.4 **Members of the Corporation received and approved the confidential minutes of the Special meeting on 15 October 2025.**

### **4 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

4.1 The Director of Student Services and Marketing provided a safeguarding update and presented the safeguarding annual report. The following points were highlighted:

4.1.1 Student safeguarding referrals rose to 1,415 during 2024/25, reflecting increased complexity, especially in mental health cases.

4.1.2 The College's online safety measures, including Smoothwall monitoring, remained robust.

4.1.3 Staff and governors had completed mandatory training, with 97% staff compliance.

4.1.4 Notable trends and themes included a rise in sexual violence referrals and continued challenges around homelessness and care-experienced young people. There was now a protocol with external agencies in relation to homelessness. The rise in care experienced young people which was 280 last year was likely to continue. The College was seen as provider of choice for local councils as it was known to be very effective in supporting and retaining these young people. A lot of work had also been done to support young adult carers; a case study was provided.

4.1.5 There had been six Prevent referrals; these highlighted emerging concerns around incel and manosphere ideologies. The College had introduced a new programme for students on positive masculinity and had dedicated a staff safeguarding network session to provide information on these ideologies and how to identify issues.

4.1.6 The College's proactive approach included targeted enrichment, specialist mentoring, and collaboration with external agencies. There would continue to be continued vigilance, training, and support to ensure a safe, inclusive environment for all students.

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

4.2.1 **The report always provided reassurance and confidence in the team. The case studies also helped show the impact.**

- 4.2.2 **To follow up a discussion between the safeguarding governor and the Director of Student Services, what was the impact of AI likely to be in safeguarding terms?** There had been a flurry of activity which had initially caused some concerns but were not judged to be dangerous; there was the potential however for some AI-related activity to become safeguarding concerns and so the College had added information on deepfakes and other AI risks to the student induction and PD programme.
- 4.2.3 **There was clearly a continued upward trend in referrals; did this present any concerns about capacity for the team?** An additional safeguarding officer had been appointed in response to the increase in numbers; this would also enable the College to be more proactive. The wellbeing team had recently been restructured and ELT had approved additional resource for the team to provide extra capacity which was welcome.
- 4.2.4 **Education was an important way of enabling people with criminal records to re-engage in society and reduce criminal behaviour. To what extent were people being denied access to education through this process?** The College was very aware of the importance of education to enabling people to stay out of the criminal justice system. It reviewed the risk associated with the individual, not the crime they had committed and only three out of the many hundreds of people who had been through the process had been refused a place.
- 4.2.5 **What levers was the College able to pull in relation to homelessness?** The College was pulling all the levers it had available to it.

4.3 The Principal presented the latest version of Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE). Minor changes around online safety risks, generative AI filtering, recruitment checks, and new support links were highlighted.

4.4 The Principal presented the revised Safeguarding and Prevent Policy highlighting the minor changes to the Policy.

#### 4.5 **Members of the Corporation:**

4.5.1 **Received the Safeguarding Annual Report.**

4.5.2 **Noted the latest version of KCSIE and their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.**

4.5.3 **Approved the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.**

### 5 **STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**

5.1 The Principal presented the Student Voice Annual Report. The following points were highlighted.

5.1.1 This was a new way of presenting an overview of the student voice for the academic year 2024/25 and its impact on shaping the student experience.

5.1.2 Over 300 course representatives were active in 2024/25, receiving training and facilitating regular student surveys.

- 5.1.3 The Student Council had met three times in 2024/25 involving Super Reps. The Student Liaison Committee Chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body had also met three times to discuss cross-cutting themes from course rep meetings and the Student Council.
  - 5.1.4 There was an active Student Union affiliated with the National Union of Students.
  - 5.1.5 Various surveys were conducted throughout the year to gather student feedback on different aspects of their experience including enrolment, progress, personal development and wellbeing.
  - 5.1.6 Other projects and consultations had included Hear My Voice (HMYV) focussed on LGBTQ+ students, gathering feedback through surveys, one-to-ones, and group discussions; Leaders Unlocked, a national programme consulting students on their experiences from a racial justice perspective; and a Personal Development Student Group created to help shape the College's induction and personal development offer.
  - 5.1.7 Impact, outcomes and key improvements and actions from the various interactions included the need for better enrolment processes, addressing the lack of social space, addressing attendance and student behaviour, increased visibility and celebration of LGBTQ+ students, and more cultural awareness and race related content.
- 5.2 Governors made a number of **comments** asked the following **questions**:
- 5.2.1 **The Student Liaison Committee was attended by governors, not just senior leaders.**
  - 5.2.2 **The revised format of the Student Liaison Committee with governors working closely with students on specific issues was very effective.**
  - 5.2.3 **Student governors confirmed that the Committee's approach worked well, it looked at the big issues and it was very useful to be able to give student input directly to governors.**
  - 5.2.4 **Did things change as a result of the discussions?**
  - 5.2.5 **Student governors confirmed that they did. There was often rapid action.**
  - 5.2.6 **How inclusive did student governors feel the student voice was; were there groups or types of students whose voice was not being heard?**
  - 5.2.7 **Student governors confirmed that there were pre-meetings before the Student Liaison Committee with the Student Enrichment Team to provide a space for students to highlight what they wanted to say, so these could be picked up in the meeting. There was more the course reps could do to encourage all students in their groups to raise issues; some were better at this than others.**
  - 5.2.8 **Would this be picked up in QIPs?** It would, students had already raised the need for course reps to be more active at the Student Liaison Committee.
- 5.3 The Principal presented the Complaints Annual Report. The following points were highlighted.
- 5.3.1 During 2024/25, the College received 208 formal complaints, up 67 from

the previous year. This was against a context of 12,000 students and 20,000 enrolments. A lot of work was also undertaken to address issues at local level before they became complaints.

- 5.3.2 Key issues included course organisation, staff conduct, and the application and enrolment processes, with a notable rise in EHCP-related complaints.
- 5.3.3 Average response times had improved to nine working days, reflecting better accountability.
- 5.3.4 The largest increases were in complaints about courses, behaviours and attitudes, and joining the College. Of the closed complaints, 40% were upheld and 35% were unsubstantiated, indicating that robust investigations were undertaken.
- 5.3.5 Key actions taken included targeted staff training, mentoring, and improved response monitoring.
- 5.3.6 Priorities for 2025/26 to address the issues raised through complaints included enhancing EHCP support, refining enrolment communication, and exploring a digital complaints platform.

#### 5.4 Governors asked the following **questions**:

- 5.4.1 **Given the upward trend in complaints about staff issues, was this a concern?** The number of complaints included several which were about the same course so the number of separate incidents was less than the total. For one of these, a counselling course, there had been some serious leadership and delivery issues which had been addressed. This case had been escalated to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- 5.4.2 **There was nothing under actions and areas for improvement about teaching quality which was clearly a factor in some cases. Was there anything that could be done to improve communications in the case of class cancellation?** Communication was managed within each directorate and classes were only cancelled as a very last resort. The College had high staff utilisation which was good but it also meant there was no slack when staff were absent and so occasionally classes were cancelled.
- 5.4.3 **Two thirds of complaints were upheld and there were complaints about staff attitudes and professionalism. To what extent were staff disciplinary policies used to address these?** The staff disciplinary process was used but the College was also looking to renew pledges about staff behaviour and attitudes and how staff held themselves accountable. There were capability cases although perhaps not as many as might be expected; people were given lots of chances to improve.
- 5.4.4 **The report did not give an indication of what actions had been taken since last year and the impact of these.** This would be added to the next report.
- 5.4.5 **The board needed to understand whether the level of complaints was acceptable and whether was it comfortable with the number. In some sectors, one complaint was a cause for concern.** For the education sector, this level of complaints was not unusual; there had been an increased in complaints particularly following the pandemic. Other sectors (such as retail) also had high numbers of complaints.
- 5.4.6 **The number of complaints could be seen in a positive light, in that**

**people felt able and safe to raise complaints.** The student's view on this was invited.

5.4.7 **Student governors commented that more use could be made of the student voice and again, course reps could be more active.**

5.5 **Members of the Corporation received and noted the Student Voice Annual report and the Complaints Annual Report.**

## **6 RECRUITMENT AND ENROLMENT UPDATE**

6.1 The Principal gave an update on student enrolment. The following points were highlighted.

6.1.1 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 and were likely to settle around 4,100.

6.1.2 T levels were below plan largely due to students not meeting entry requirements although an adjustment had been made in the budget for this. Some of these students were enrolling on alternative level 3 programmes so overall 16-19 numbers were healthy.

6.1.3 Adult enrolment took place throughout the year and was looking on track. A business case to request an increase in the Tailored Learning allocation had been refused and this was causing some local issues for the College. Areas which enrolled adults throughout the year were above the same position last year.

6.1.4 Apprenticeships were slightly down although January starts might be offered.

6.1.5 HE was at 92% of target; some expected DMU referrals had not come through.

6.2 In response to a **question** as to what the position was overall in financial terms, it was confirmed that there was confidence that the budget position should be hit despite some variances in some of the funding lines.

6.3 **Members noted the update on recruitment and enrolment.**

## **7 FINANCE REPORT (PERIOD 12)**

7.1 The Director of Finance presented the finance report (period 12). The following points were highlighted.

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

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

7.1.3 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%.

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



- clawback.
- 7.1.5 Apprenticeship income had exceeded £5m, in line with the forecast.
  - 7.1.6 The College had met all of its bank covenants for the year and had achieved a 'good' financial health rating based on these accounts.
  - 7.1.7 Work continued to be undertaken on the draft accounts and the final position was subject to the external audit review.
  - 7.1.8 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.
  - 7.1.9 The year end audit was almost complete; no issues or changes were anticipated.
- 7.2 **Governors congratulated staff on achieving the positive outturn; the financial position had been managed well. The Chair noted that F&GP and the Corporation had been tracking the position carefully throughout the year and it was positive that the outturn was a small surplus.**
- 7.3 Governors asked the following **questions**:
- 7.3.1 **Had the aeronautical building been completed on 22 September as planned?** It had. Some modifications were needed to make it more practical and appropriate for the current student intake. Student should be in the building by the end of next week.
  - 7.3.2 **The capital programme needed refocussing to allow this but there was money in the budget.**
  - 7.3.3 **What was the current year's position and when would an update be brought?** A reforecast would be brought to the December F&GP and Corporation meetings, once the key data returns had been completed.
  - 7.3.4 **Was there anything causing concerns?** Not at this stage.
- 7.4 **Members noted the period 12 finance report.**

*Chan Kataria left the meeting.*

*Jane Parkinson, Kully Sandhu, Sophie Strevens-Robinson, Zubair Limbada, Kyle Cameron and Shawn George left the meeting.*

*Shabir Ismail and Louise Hazel left the meeting for item 8.2 (Senior Postholders and ELT Pay Award).*

## **8 PAY AWARD - CONFIDENTIAL**

*All staff and students rejoined the meeting*

## **9 STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE**

- 9.1 The Director of Governance and Policy presented a paper on the timeline for the Strategic Plan. The following points were highlighted.

- 9.1.1 The new Strategic Plan would be developed over the current academic year ready for publication in September 2026. The timeline for the various stages in the process were outlined. There were opportunities throughout the process for governors to be involved and for stakeholders to be consulted.
  - 9.1.2 The main changes to the way in which strategy was being developed were around the development of some of the supporting strategies including sector-based curriculum strategies, an inclusive education strategy and a capital and infrastructure investment strategy.
  - 9.1.3 EDI would not exist as a separate strategy but would be embedded in all supporting strategies.
- 9.2 In response to a **comment** that the Board should be looking at what kind of student experience it wanted and involving students in that discussion, it was confirmed this would be done through the Student Liaison Committee and other opportunities to do this would be looked at.
- 9.3 **Members approved the timeline for the Strategic Plan.**

## **10 CORPORATION SELF-ASSESSMENT, GOVERNANCE SAR AND GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN**

- 10.1 The Director of Governance and Policy presented the results of the Corporation self-assessment, the Governance SAR and Governance Improvement Action Plan. The following points were highlighted.
- 10.1.1 The Corporation self-assessment was very positive. Key areas of strength included the effectiveness of the Board and Committees, the culture of openness and transparency, prompt action being taken in response to issues raised, regular reports on risk, understanding of strategic roles, and opportunities for training and development.
  - 10.1.2 The governance SAR highlighted further strengths and areas for improvement. Themes for improvement involved increasing board diversity, enhancing stakeholder engagement, involving more staff in Board presentations, making reports and presentations more concise, encouraging participation in training and development and refreshing strategy documents.
  - 10.1.3 The Governance Improvement Action Plan drew on both the self-assessment responses and Governance SAR. Actions would be monitored by the Search and Governance Committee.
  - 10.1.4 Additional actions arising from the external board review (EBR) would be incorporated into the action plan. A separate EBR Action Plan would also be produced.
- 10.2 **Members:**
- 10.2.1 **Noted the outcomes of the self-assessment process.**
  - 10.2.2 **Agreed the Governance SAR**
  - 10.2.3 **Agreed the Governance Improvement Action Plan, subject to any further actions arising from the EBR.**



## **11 GOVERNOR VISIT REPORT**

11.1 The Chair invited comments on a governor visit report. The following points were highlighted.

11.1.1 The visit had opened the governor's eyes to the hidden work undertaken by the marketing team and the importance of this to the College's student recruitment and its reputation.

11.1.2 It would be useful to receive more reports on the work of different teams in student services and the impact on the student experience.

11.2 Members noted the governor visit report.

## **12 WHISTLEBLOWING ANNUAL REPORT**

12.1 Members of the Corporation received and noted the Whistleblowing Annual Report.

12.2 It was noted that governors should be advised of what changes had been made as a result of the incident and assured how this would not happen again. This was being picked up by the Audit Committee.

## **13 ITEMS FROM SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

13.1 Members of the Corporation received and noted the Search and Governance Committee Annual Report.

13.2 Members of the Corporation received and noted the Governor Engagement Report.

13.3 Members of the Corporation received and noted the Chair's Report for 2024/25.

13.4 Members of the Corporation received and noted the Action Record for 2024/15.

## **14 GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS**

14.1 Members of the Corporation received and noted the Governor appointments report.

## **15 DFE ANNUAL STRATEGIC CONVERSATION OUTCOME LETTER**

16 Members of the Corporation received and noted the DfE annual strategic conversation outcome letter.

## **17 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 20 November 2025 (special)
- 11 December 2025