



**CURRICULUM STRATEGY AND QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE**

26 February 2026

**AGENDA
REFERENCE**

A

TITLE	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 November 2025		
PURPOSE	To receive, agree and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 November 2025		
RECOMMENDATION	Governors are recommended note the minutes and agree their accuracy		
<i>No. of pages in main paper</i>	10	Appendices	n/a
<i>Student Experience Implications</i>	None		
<i>Financial Implications</i>	None		
<i>EDI Implications</i>	None		
<i>Sustainability Implications</i>	None		
<i>Other Risk Implications</i>	Failure to follow agreed and proper practices		
<i>Risk Register Ref.</i>	n/a	<i>Operating Statement Ref.</i>	n/a
<i>Paper previously considered by</i>	n/a	<i>Author</i>	Matt Widdowson

Executive Summary

n/a

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION:
MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM STRATEGY
AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2025**



Present: Jackie Rossa (Chair)
Shabir Ismail
Nicky Randall
Lesley Giles
Susan Hopewell
Kyle Cameron
Shawn George

In Attendance:	Louise Hazel	Director of Governance and Policy
	Kully Sandu	Vice Principal
	Andy Cookson	Assistant Principal
	Zoe Butler	Director of Student Services and Marketing
	Rachel Hall	Director of Apprenticeships and Commercial
	Helen Lewis	Director of Supported Learning
	Jody Kerrod	Head of Teaching Learning and Assessment
	Pete Thorpe	Personal Development Manager
	Mukund Narshi (Observer)	Associate
	Rob Lawson (Observer)*	External Board Reviewer
	Louise Doyle (Observer)*	MESMA

* Present for item 6

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 Introductions were made.

1.1.1 Louise Doyle had been supporting the SAR process.

1.1.2 Rob Lawson was conducting an external review of the board.

1.2 There were no declarations of interest.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies were received from Neil McDougall.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2025

3.1 The minutes of the meeting on 25 September 2025 were agreed as an

accurate record and approved.

3.2 MATTERS ARISING

3.2.1 Most of the matters arising would be picked up during this meeting.

3.2.2 With regards to the feedback from inductions, the Personal Development Manager had held further feedback sessions and this had also been discussed at a meeting of the Student Liaison Committee.

4 DRAFT SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR)

4.1 The Principal and members of SLT presented the Draft Self-Assessment Report. The following points were highlighted.

4.1.1 The purpose of the SAR was explained and details of the process were provided to governors. The SAR process had been based on feedback from the CSQI Committee

4.1.2 A collaborative approach had been taken and transparent and meaningful conversations had taken place with CLT which included managers from both curriculum and service areas. These initial conversations considered what had been working well and what required improvement.

4.1.3 Curriculum areas had presented their key strengths and areas for improvement. Scrutiny and challenge had been welcomed. The output of these included changes made to QIPs at a local level as it had been recognised that these were the key drivers of change. Curriculum areas had also been asked about the barriers their area faced, and this had been reflected in the SAR.

4.1.4 The Principal and Director of Governance had met Louise Doyle. The feedback from these meetings had been around how to make the QIP stand out and become the driving force in the College.

4.1.5 The overall effectiveness of the College was assessed as 'good' with a curriculum aligned with industry needs and strong achievement, particularly in GCSE which continued to be above the FE sector average.

4.1.6 QUALITY OF EDUCATION

4.1.6.1. A lot of work had been undertaken with employers to ensure that the curriculum met local and national priorities. The College had worked with over 2,000 employers and each curriculum area had its own Skills Advisory Board.

4.1.6.2. Key areas for improvement had been identified as inconsistent progress monitoring, formative assessments, feedback, and target setting.

4.1.6.3. It was acknowledged that there was still more work to be done for 16-19. There were also inclusivity gaps that remained too wide, and Level 1 required more work.

4.1.7 BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

4.1.7.1. Students demonstrated respect and professionalism. There

was mutual respect between students and teaching staff which had been noted by students at a meeting of the Student Liaison Committee.

4.1.7.2. There was a strong safeguarding culture at the College.

4.1.7.3. There had been a 28% reduction in behaviour incidents.

4.1.7.4. 94% of students reported that they felt safe.

4.1.7.5. Attendance and attendance monitoring required development. Attendance had been 81.3% against a target of 88%. Tracking and early intervention were not consistent across the College.

4.1.8 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1.8.1. There was a strong enrichment offer for students with good work experience opportunities and industrial placements.

4.1.8.2. Improvement work would need to continue on developing age-appropriate personal development and student resilience.

4.1.9 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1.9.1. The curriculum was strongly aligned with needs.

4.1.9.2. There had been a lot of development of the quality assurance process over the last year which had led to improved outcomes. There was now more of a culture of support and challenge as well as the ability to drill down into data.

4.1.9.3. Students had been involved in a lot of activities including the recruitment of senior postholders.

4.1.9.4. There was still the need for all curriculum areas to ensure that they made use of live data. In addition to this the impact of CPD needed to be measured.

4.2 16-19 STUDY PROGRAMMES

4.2.1.1. Achievement had improved during the previous year and there had been sustained positive destinations. Some areas had very strong outcomes and there had been examples of good practice. However, there had been pockets of poor practice, and it was known where improvements needed to be made.

4.2.1.2. Attendance was a continued issue and correlated with achievement.

4.2.1.3. There also needed to be improvements to assessment practice and early intervention was not as good as it should be in some areas.

4.3 ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMMES

4.3.1.1. Adults made up 63% of the student population and the College provided a broad curriculum including ESOL, Access to HE, English, and Maths, SEND and vocational

training. Programmes were aligned with labour market priorities with the curriculum designed around labour market intelligence. There were various delivery models which catered for different types of students including those in work or with caring responsibilities.

4.3.1.2. The College had a number of strong partnerships including with the DWP and Ministry of Defence.

4.3.1.3. 82% of learners progressed to sustained employment and achievement was 1.5% above the NAR. GCSE English and Maths were also above the NAR.

4.3.1.4. The College had been able to address growing sectors with employer engagement shaping the curriculum.

4.3.2 APPRENTICESHIPS

4.3.2.1. There had been a significant improvement to achievement rates which were up 13.3% on the previous year. This improvement reflected strong teaching, early intervention, and monitoring.

4.3.2.2. 95% of employers were retained and there were 130 levy employers.

4.3.2.3. The curriculum aligned with local needs and the College's provision was economically impactful.

4.3.2.4. Improvements were required in tracking progress in electrical.

4.3.2.5. In carpentry, the bench joinery offer had not reflected local needs so this had been replaced with furniture making.

4.3.3 HIGH NEEDS

4.3.3.1. High needs students had a good experience at Leicester College. There was a good relationship with the local authority although there were still improvements to be made.

4.4 **Governors made the following comments.**

4.4.1 **Were achievement gaps in vocational areas or across the College?** These were across the College. The previous SAR had noted gaps for specific learning disabilities and minority groups.

4.4.2 **Was the current level of employer engagement consistent with previous years?** It was. Leicester had a large number of SMEs which always meant working with a large number of employers.

4.4.3 **What had been done differently to reduce the number of behaviour incidents?** The campus warden team had focused on promoting positive behaviours. There had been a lot of engagement from the campus warden team leader who had visited targeted classes. They were supportive but still drew a line at unacceptable behaviour. Behaviour had also been emphasised as part of induction, and there had been more involvement of staff from across the College to support positive behaviour, for example, departments such as HR had been involved in monitoring corridors.

4.4.4 Staff had welcomed students to the campus at the beginning of the

year, and Directors of Curriculum and PAMs had been allocated areas to get to know students. Where there had been 'pinch points' of students congregating there had been an effort to get to know these students and remind them about the social spaces.

- 4.4.5 **Behaviour measures needed to be embedded and strengthened in the SAR.** Noted.
- 4.4.6 **Attendance was still a major area of concern and had not been addressed during the previous year. The SAR discussed remedies, but it was about getting it right from the outset.** Noted.
- 4.4.7 **Students had reported that they did not know how to report their absence and that the telephone line did not work.** The Student Liaison Committee had also reported that there had been difficulties in reporting absences.
- 4.4.8 **It was highlighted that reported absences were still absences.** Noted.
- 4.4.9 **Student governors had previously provided feedback that indicated that personal development was not adequate. Had it improved last year, or would it be improved this year?** There was a lot of good work happening in curriculum areas and work was under way to capture this. While areas like ESOL and HAAB addressed personal development, there was an inconsistent offer across the College. It was recognised that a lot of adult students engaged in different ways to EPYP students which presented a challenge, for example some adult learners might only engage through an evening course.
- 4.4.10 **With regards to work-related learning, it felt like a big demand from a small pool of employers. This might cause issues with changes to vocational qualifications.** The College did really well at obtaining industry placements for T level students, but the Post-16 White Paper and the introduction of V levels could have an impact on this moving forward.
- 4.4.11 **It was important to know the difference that CPD was making.** Noted.
- 4.4.12 **This was a huge improvement on last year's SAR. It was more concise and well-structured with a focus on outcomes for learners. There was a consistent structure and themes with better use of data. The Committee wanted assurances that staff were aware more work is needed on 16-19 achievement rates.** Yes all staff are aware. This had been included in the Principal's end of year staff presentations including attendance. SLT monitor progress throughout the year.
- 4.4.13 **The repeated use of the word "inconsistency" might mask reality, and it would help to be clearer in the QIP.** Noted.
- 4.4.14 **It was great to see the improvement and there were clearly good outcomes in areas including English and Maths, high needs, and apprenticeships. The improvements in adults and EPYP were also welcome.** Noted.
- 4.4.15 **How could 'good' be justified for 16-19 when the College performed below the national average? Level 1 was 15% below the average which equated to around 300 young people who left the College without achieving a qualification? SLT had discussed this. Level 1 made up around 20% of what was delivered and there was a**

- matter of proportionality and the SAR took into account improvement.
- 4.4.16 **Even with improvement the College was still below the NAR.** The College started at a lower position and this was more about looking forward. The College had high ambitions for its learners. What was offered to students was not just qualifications but also around personal development.
- 4.4.17 **The College now had more students with SEND and behavioural issues. This was not limited to students with EHCPs. There was a question over whether there were the resources to support them.**
- 4.4.18 **Leicester College was not the only college facing an increase in challenging students.** Leicester College offers students a safe and supportive environment.
- 4.4.19 **Would it be OK for students to carry on not achieving?** It was not and progression is critical.
- 4.4.20 **There needed to be more specific detail on what needed to be improved. It may be useful to look at trends to identify areas that have been consistently poor.** Noted.
- 4.4.21 **Retention was not an issue. However, there was an issue with students attending and not achieving.** Areas had been identified for support and Coaches had already been sent in to carry out walk-throughs and to speak with students, staff, and managers to identify root causes. This had initially been met with some resistance, but Coaches had since been welcomed by staff. The Quality Team were also identifying low attending students so that their attendance could be reviewed weekly.
- 4.4.22 **Were student destinations known?** There was a cycle of collecting destinations data.
- 4.4.23 **Was there a correlation between attendance and quality of teaching?** There was a degree of correlation. In some instances, the structure of sessions had been a problem and changing the structure had a significant impact. Some students also faced significant safeguarding and mental health challenges, and the Quality Team were challenging managers on what support was in place.
- 4.4.24 **What was attendance like now?** Last year's outturn showed an improvement in each provision type but still remains challenging.
- 4.4.25 **Were there opportunities to gain experience from other colleges who had also experienced working with disadvantaged communities?** A benchmarking exercise had identified several colleges. There was one college in particular that Leicester College would be working with to identify best practice.
- 4.4.26 **The 'good' rating needed to be challenged. There needed to be a focus on ensuring there was effective support.** This conversation had taken place at SLT. Louise Doyle had commented at the time that she was less concerned about the specific 'grade' and that for attendance and quality at Level 1, it was more important that programme level QIPs must include actions around teaching and learning, and attendance.
- 4.4.27 **There was a 92% completion rate for T levels. Was there a comparison available for this figure?** T level pass rates had risen compared to previous years. There had been an issue with employers employing T level students before completion of their qualification. This had an impact on retention.

4.4.28 **The College was underselling itself in some areas. The word “most” appeared frequently and there were other words that could be used to demonstrate strengths.** It was helpful to hear feedback that the College should be more confident in some areas.

4.4.29 **Some practice was embedded in the local area. In the future some of the funding streams were national so there needed to be some thought given to the College’s offer at different levels.** This would be a useful conversation to have as part of the process for drafting the new strategic plan.

4.5 **Governors noted the presentation and agreed to recommend the Self-Assessment Report to Corporation for approval.**

5 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES)

5.1 The Principal provided a presentation on the Quality Improvement priorities. The following points were highlighted.

5.1.1 The priorities for 2025/26 included:

5.1.1.1. Embedding consistent teaching and learning.

5.1.1.2. Addressing underperformance

5.1.1.3. Improving attendance

5.1.1.4. Enhancing inclusive practice

5.1.1.5. Strengthening the curriculum and leadership accountability

5.1.1.6. Promoting student well-being and resilience. There needed to be a more proactive approach to resilience and the College had a role to play in making it clear to students what was ‘normal’, for example it is normal to feel anxious before an exam.

5.1.1.7. Implementing age-appropriate personal development

5.1.1.8. Embedding literacy, numeracy, and digital skills

5.1.1.9. Having effective staff CPD

5.2 **Governors made the following comments.**

5.2.1 **With regards to well-being and resilience, there might still be some impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic.** The levels of anxiety among students this term had never been seen before. Resources had to be put in place just to enable some students to enter the building. There were 220 students in transition activities over the summer and Student Services had worked closely with curriculum areas to provide new students with a supportive environment to come into. This had initially been targeted at care experienced students but had been widened to others who would benefit from extended transition support.

5.2.2 **Accountability was important and management teams needed to know their data and be able to identify high risk learners early on.** The Fitness to Study Policy had helped with this and the process was now well embedded.

5.2.3 **A student governor reported that colleagues in their own curriculum area were performing well, but that this was not something that was experienced across the board. For example,**

- digital design students reported that there had been a lot of staff illness with cover not arriving. This QIP would address this.
- 5.2.4 **A student governor noted that staff in their area were respectful and understanding. This meant that they were able to provide support.** Noted.
- 5.2.5 **A student governor highlighted the importance of having engaging lecturers who made students want to attend College.** Noted.
- 5.2.6 **Student governors played an important role by talking with other students and highlighting examples of what worked well and what needed to be improved.** Noted.
- 5.2.7 **The wording in the QIP could be more exciting using words like 'high quality'. The QIP could inspire staff.** The word 'excellence' was included in the QIP.
- 5.2.8 **Was Level 1 16-19 covered?** The Quality Team was already looking at digital, ESOL, food, hairdressing, beauty, and sport. Curriculum Development Leads were already working on these areas. Staff CPD was being focused on in these areas. Functional Skills would be looked at as part of a deep dive. This work had thrown up a few surprises. In hairdressing it had been found that the 'Do Now' activity at the start of sessions was not being used as intended which led to students becoming disengaged from the lesson. The structure of the sessions had been changed to rectify this.
- 5.2.9 **More experienced staff had been moved to deliver Level 1 in food as these students required more support and consistency. There was also a high needs key working now working in food.** There was a tendency to have newer staff teaching L1 which had been found to be difficult for them.
- 5.2.10 **What had conversations with staff been like?** Management had initially been resistant. However, after sitting down and going through the data, staff had been more receptive. Some areas had asked the Quality Team to stay as long as possible and other Curriculum Directors had asked for support in their areas.
- 5.2.11 **The Quality Team had a mandate from the CSQI Committee to go ahead with their work.** Noted.
- 5.2.12 **Was there a similar process for HE?** There were CQIPs and PQIPs for HE which were aligned with DMU. HEQSEC was the committee that monitored HE and was similar to the CSQI Committee. The Director of HE would be able to attend the CSQI Committee to discuss CQIPS and PQIPS.
- 5.3 **Governors noted the presentation and agreed with the proposed quality improvement priorities.**

6 REVIEW OF RISKS

- 6.1 The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Review of Risks. The following points were highlighted.
- 6.1.1 These risks had been allocated to the CSQI Committee, and it was being presented as an opportunity for governors to review the risks and planned actions.

- 6.1.2 The committee needed to consider whether the controls were actually controls.

6.2 **Governors made the following comments.**

- 6.2.1 **Where did this paper come from?** This came out of a workshop undertaken with governors.
- 6.2.2 **Monitoring would be a control and not an action. There could be more clarity around actions stemming from monitoring.** Noted.
- 6.2.3 **The residual risks were in red because the actions had not yet been taken.** Governors may feel comfortable reducing the residual risk once there had been progress reports on the QIP.
- 6.2.4 **The only action linked to teaching and learning – 'top and bottom courses' could be clarified.** Noted.
- 6.2.5 **Within the stakeholder engagement plan it might be good to map out key relationships.** Noted.
- 6.2.6 **Devolution was not mentioned as a risk, but the College needed to consider it as some of the national funding would be devolved.** Noted.
- 6.2.7 **Would there be any business planning for curriculum reforms?** This would fall under risk 3 and CLT would start to have these conversations.
- 6.2.8 **Collaboration and partnerships were generally quite strong.** The risk was that the College failed to leverage partnerships and misses out.
- 6.2.9 **What was happening with the development of a collaborative partnership with the University of Leicester?** The Vice Principal had met with the university's Pro-Vice Chancellor and mapped out the potential for year zero development. Leicester University had lowered the tariffs, and the College had proposed preparing first year students. It may be that the university might also be interested in validation.
- 6.2.10 **Was the College making use of the Migration Advisory Committee's Critical Vacancies List to identify training needs?** The Principal would find out how the LSIF was linked in with this.

6.3 **Governors noted the Review of Risks.**

7 **AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

- 7.1 The Chair requested suggestions for agenda items for the meeting of the CSQI Committee.
- 7.1.1 **It had been a while since a curriculum area had been invited to present to the CSQI Committee. Construction may be a good first area, although it would be good to hear more about the transition programme including Food and some of the areas that the Quality Team were working with.** Noted.
- 7.1.2 **Construction would be the next area to invite to a meeting of the CSQI Committee. Governors would want to meet with the Director of Curriculum, a member of staff and students. The purpose of inviting Construction would be to understand the improvements in the area. Additionally, the area taught all levels and had the**

largest Level 1 provision. Noted.

7.1.3 **The Transition programme would be considered in the session after that. Noted.**

7.2 **Governors agreed to invite Construction to present at the meeting on 26 February 2026.**

7.3 **Governors agreed to look at the Transition programme at the meeting of 26 March.**

8 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 26 February 2026
- 26 March 2026
- 14 May 2026
- 18 June 2026