MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION:

SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 MAY 2026

Present :	Danielle Gillett (Chair)	
	Shabir Ismail	
	Chan Kataria	
	Steve Munro	
	Jackie Rossa	
	Sophie Strevens-Robinson	
In Attendance:	Neil McDougall	Governor
	Louise Hazel	Director of Governance and Policy
	Matt Widdowson	Governance and Policy Officer (Minutes)

1. <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>

1.1. Chan Kataria had an interest in item 4

1.2. Jackie Rossa had an interest in item 5

1.3. Danielle Gillett had an interest in item 7

1.4. Neil McDougall joined the meeting as an observer.

2. <u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>

2.1. There were no apologies for absence.

3. <u>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2026</u>

3.1. <u>MATTERS ARISING</u>

3.1.1. No matters were arising.

3.2. The minutes of the meeting of 15 January 2026 were <u>agreed</u> as an accurate record and <u>approved</u>.

4. <u>SUCCESSION PLANNING INCLUDING GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT</u>

4.1. The Director of Governance and Policy provided an update on Succession Planning including Governor Recruitment. The following points were highlighted.

4.1.1. Daneille Gillett's term of office would be expiring on 13 June 2026, and Neil McDougall had been elected as the new Chair commencing on 14 June 2026. The Chair of Corporation was unable to sit on the Audit Committee, and it was proposed that Neil McDougall join the Search and Governance Committee as the new committee chair, and the Finance and General Purposes Committee as a member.

4.1.2. Tom Wilson's third term of office would expire on 12 September 2026. It was proposed that Lee Soden be asked to take on the role of chair of the Student Liaison Committee.

4.1.3. Chan Kataria's third term of office would be expiring on 12 September 2026. As the Chair and Vice Chair's terms of office were due to expire, creating a skills and knowledge gap, it was proposed that Chan Kataria be asked to serve one further year to provide continuity and support for the new Chair.

4.1.4. Mukund Narshi's term as an associate would be expiring on 27 October 2026. He had been an associate for seven months and had been very engaged with the process through completing training and meeting with his mentor. Mukund Narshi was still keen on the full governor's role, and it was suggested that he be asked to apply for an independent governor's role. A formal application and interview process would be required.

4.1.5. Robert Radford would be the new chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

4.1.6. Steve Munro would be the new chair of the Audit Committee. There was currently no vice chair.

4.1.7. Governors should be aware that the Board was currently male dominated. This would need to be a consideration during further recruitment.

4.1.8. There were currently vacancies on all committees except for the Search and Governance Committee.

4.1.9. Nurole had been engaged to find candidates for governor roles. They were asked to prioritise finance and audit experience, and to provide a diverse pool of candidates. There were also specialisms that the Board currently lacked that were asked to be considered.

4.1.10. Nurole were able to attract thirteen applications, of which four were shortlisted and three were interviewed. Out of the interviewees, two were suggested for further consideration: Steve O'Neill, a marketing professional, who was recommended for appointment, and Mark Jenkins, an accountant, who could be recommended for either a co-opted role on the Finance and General Purposes Committee, or an associate role.

4.2. **Governors made the following comments.**

4.2.1. **Steve O'Neill had a background in sales and marketing. At his interview he demonstrated a lot of passion and had done his research. He also had a non-executive background. Due to his marketing background, he would be able to bring a new perspective to the Board.**

4.2.2. **Mark Jenkins was an accountant, and, during the interview, he had demonstrated that he was motivated and wanted to develop himself. It would be best to offer him a 'soft landing' to familiarise him with the commitment required from governors.**

4.2.3. **Nurole had taken a different approach to the consultants used previously. Their shortlist had been off the mark and had not helped with the Board's diversity targets.** Agreed.

4.2.4. **Mukund Narshi was becoming more comfortable with the role and was contributing with some insightful questions. He had demonstrated his commitment to the College and wanted to add value.** Agreed.

4.2.5. **It was concerning that, although the majority of College staff were women, only a third of Board members were women. It was important to consider gender diversity. Nurole had not provided the diverse pool of candidates that had been required.** The Principal had met with two potential candidates and would be discussing this further with the Director of Governance and Policy. It would be important to continue to try to recruit a diverse range of governors.

4.2.6. **Were statistics available to show the trends in governor diversity?** All data were held. There was a period when the Board was majority female, but this had changed to majority male. Additionally, the figure for non-white British governors was always around 25%-30%. It should be noted that, due to the size of the Corporation, one governor leaving could have a significant effect on diversity.

4.2.7. **Age was another factor that should be considered. It had always been difficult to recruit governors under the age of fifty due to time commitment issues. Perhaps co-option was a solution to this.** Noted.

4.2.8. **It was important to be careful around the number of meetings that were scheduled. Having a lot of meetings within a short period of time was difficult for working people and could be overwhelming.** 2025/26 had been an exceptional year with the Strategic Plan, the new Ofsted framework and the recruitment of senior postholders.

4.3. **Members:**

4.3.1. **Noted the Succession Planning report.**

4.3.2. **Approved the changes to committee membership and the approach to filling vacancies.**

4.3.3. **Approved the extension of Chan Kataria's term for one final year up to 12 September 2027.**

4.3.4. **Approved the appointment of Steve O'Neill as a governor.**

4.3.5. **Approved the appointment of Mark Jenkins as either an associate or co-opted member of F&GP.**

4.3.6. **Agreed to invite Mukund Narshi to apply for a full governor's role when his term as an associate came to an end.**

5. GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN / EBR ACTION PLAN

5.1. GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

5.1.1. The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Governance Improvement Action Plan. The following points were highlighted.

5.1.1.1. The Board Review actions had been combined with the Governance Improvement Action Plan.

5.1.1.2. The new actions included organising a refresher session on governor roles and responsibilities, and the Nolan Principles. This might take the form of a webinar that could be watched by governors. Governors would then need to confirm that they had watched the video.

5.1.1.3. Governor training and link roles were agenda items.

5.1.1.4. The action on Learning Walks also took into consideration the wider issue around how governors got to hear from staff and students. There had been curriculum area presentations to the CSQI Committee which might not be suitable for meetings of the Corporation.

5.1.1.5. The Director of Governance and Policy was involved in an FE Commissioner's project around board assurance frameworks that could be brought back to this committee.

5.1.1.6. The Director of Governance and Policy would be looking at the governor induction paperwork.

5.1.1.7. There would also be work undertaken to map governors' personal and professional networks. This would provide an opportunity to identify any gaps in stakeholder contacts.

5.1.2. **Governors made the following comments.**

5.1.2.1. **Could the Nolan Principles be covered on the governors away day?** There needed to be something more focused, and a recorded presentation would be more suitable.

5.1.2.2. **Familiarity with the Nolan Principles was now especially important since the College had been reclassified as a public sector organisation.** Agreed.

5.1.2.3. **Was there any training available from the AoC that covered the Nolan Principles?** This could be looked into.

5.1.2.4. **Would a refresher session cover governor roles and responsibilities?** It would.

5.1.2.5. **With regards to governors hearing from curriculum areas, mini showcase videos could be uploaded for governors to watch. It would be a great opportunity for areas to promote themselves.** The Student Awards had been videoed. This might be a good place to start.

5.1.2.6. **It was important to think about what curriculum areas got out of governor learning walks.** Curriculum areas welcomed governor learning walks.

5.1.2.7. **It would be good to draft a programme of all the opportunities there were for governor engagement.** Agreed.

5.1.2.8. **Were there areas that were being missed by learning walks?** Learning walks were being looked at, and it might be that certain weeks were set aside for visits.

5.1.2.9. **There had been a lot of work on student voice, but staff voice was also important, particularly since Ofsted had changed its focus to Leadership and Governance.** Noted.

5.2. INSTRUMENT AND ARTICLES

5.2.1. The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Instrument and Articles of Government. The following points were highlighted.

5.2.1.1. The recommendation had been to align elements of the Instrument and Articles with the Standing Orders.

5.2.1.2. This was also an opportunity to change the length of terms of office to align with sector best practice.
5.2.1.3. The Corporation currently permitted three terms of three years, and the proposal was to change to two terms of four years.
5.2.1.4. This would impact on some current governors, although new governors would be appointed for an initial four-year term.

5.2.2. **Governors made the following comments.**

5.2.2.1. **It made sense to align with best practice.** Agreed.
5.2.2.2. **Was there a 'cliff edge' when two or more governors would come to the end of their terms at the same time?** Yes, but this had always been the case and should not present a problem.
5.2.2.3. **There should not be an automatic transition from one term to the next. There needed to be a formal process.** The process for renewing terms of office was carried out through the Search and Governance Committee.
5.2.2.4. **Had there ever been a governor who had been refused a second term?** There had not. However, there had been governors who did not wish to serve a second term and some governors had been asked to leave before the end of their first term.
5.2.2.5. **Should there be a pre-meeting before the meeting of the Search and Governance Committee to decide on whether governors' terms of office should be renewed?** This was already picked up through the annual appraisal process and there were always conversations with the Chair of the Corporation in advance.
5.2.2.6. **It was important that the process for renewing terms of office stood up to external scrutiny.** Agreed.
5.2.2.7. **A governor's skills could change over time. Should there be a review of what skills were required now, compared with the beginning of their term of office?** There was always an ongoing discussion around governor skills between the Chair, Principal and Governance Professional.

5.3. TRAINING PLAN

5.3.1. The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Training Plan. The following points were highlighted.

5.3.1.1. The previous year's self-assessment had flagged awareness of and participation in training and development as an issue.
5.3.1.2. Much of the plan was linked to ETF training modules which were of variable quality. The associate had completed a lot of the modules and could advise on which were the most useful.

5.3.2. **Governors made the following comments.**

5.3.2.1. **What were the different codes for the training modules?** The codes could be found in the table in the paper.
5.3.2.2. **Safeguarding training was mandatory but cyber security was not. This was a risk.** It was not mandatory for governors to

complete the Boxphish training, although completion could be requested. The Director of IT was considering the approach to cyber security training.

5.3.2.3. **Cyber security training for College staff and governors was quite light touch. However, it was appropriate.** There used to be mandatory cyber security training for staff at the beginning of each year, but using Boxphish meant that it had been condensed into shorter, more regular modules, meaning it was more up-to-date and relevant.

5.3.2.4. **Training required some flexibility as governors might have completed it elsewhere.** It was important to obtain the evidence of completion. With the safeguarding training, it was also important that the training was relevant to the College.

5.3.2.5. **Training had come up during the recent round of governor recruitment. Candidates had asked about training.**

5.3.2.6. **This list of training courses should be kept as short as possible, as governors would not want to be presented with a long list. It also needed to be clear what was mandatory and what was not. It was useful to have this structure as a starting point.** Agreed.

5.3.2.7. **There had also been in-house training throughout the year.**

5.3.2.8. **What were the next steps?** This paper would go to Corporation as an information item and could be discussed during governor 1:1s with the Chair. It could also be included with the governor induction documents.

5.4. VISIT FORM

5.4.1. The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Visit Form. The following points were highlighted.

5.4.1.1. A few ‘dos and don’ts’ had been added, mirroring what had been included in the link governor descriptions

5.4.2. **Governors made the following comments.**

5.4.2.1. **The form felt more open since the references to Ofsted had been taken out.** Noted.

5.4.2.2. **Was there another medium that could be used to provide this feedback, such as an online form?** MS Forms could be used.

5.4.2.3. **Were completed forms sent to the host curriculum areas?** Yes.

5.5. CURRICULUM LINK GOVERNOR ROLE DESCRIPTION

5.5.1. The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Curriculum Link Governor Role Description. The following points were highlighted.

5.5.1.1. The inclusion of a Curriculum Link governor followed on from a recommendation from the External Board Review.

5.5.1.2. Jackie Rossa had confirmed that she would be happy to fulfil this role.

5.5.2. **Governors made the following comments.**

5.5.2.1. **How did this role differ from that of the chair of the CSQI Committee?** There was some overlap, although this role provided a specific remit for the link governor to come into the College to speak with students and staff.
5.5.2.2. **Paragraph eleven referred to 'risk' which might be daunting.** The word 'risk' had been included in all the link governor role descriptions.
5.5.2.3. **Did the Curriculum Link governor need to be the chair of the CSQI Committee? If so, that should be included in the role description.** The governor would need to be a member of the CSQI Committee but not necessarily the chair.

5.6. **Members:**
5.6.1. **<u>Noted</u> the Governance Improvement Action Plan.**
5.6.2. **<u>Agreed</u> to recommend the amended approach and revised Instrument and Articles, and Standing Order to Corporation for approval.**
5.6.3. **<u>Noted</u> the Training Plan.**
5.6.4. **<u>Noted</u> the Governor Visit Form and Guidance.**
5.6.5. **<u>Approved</u> the Curriculum Link Governor Role Description.**

6. <u>SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS 2025/26</u>

6.1. The Director of Governance and Policy presented the draft Self-Assessment Questions for 2025/26. The following points were highlighted.

6.1.1. These were the same questions that had been used for the past two years.
6.1.2. The self-assessment would inform the SAR and governance improvement plan.

6.2. **Governors made the following comments.**

6.2.1. **Had these questions previously provided the information that had been sought?** Yes, especially the 'How do you know?' questions. The information gained through these self-assessment questions had been very useful.
6.2.2. **This should probably be included in the College QIP due to the Ofsted focus on Leadership and Governance.** Noted.
6.2.3. **Governors might not want to be overly critical of the College if these results were reported externally.** Answers to the self-assessment questions remained confidential.
6.2.4. **Could something be added around the Nolan Principles?** This could be included next year after governors had received the training.

6.3. **Members <u>approved</u> the Self-Assessment Questions for 2025/26.**

7. <u>CHAIR'S PERFORMANCE REVIEW</u>

7.1. The Director of Governance and Policy presented the results of the Chair's Performance Review. The following points were highlighted.

7.1.1. The results had been very positive.
7.1.2. There had been a suggestion around ensuring that there was a good handover to the incoming Chair of Corporation.
7.1.3. The results indicated that there was some concern around governors not being kept up to date with the committees. While governors could read committee minutes, speak with the Director of Governance and Policy, or attend as an observer, it was still important to ensure that governors were not missing out on important information.

7.2. **Governors made the following comments.**

7.2.1. **It would be important for governors to be able to answer Ofsted inspectors' questions about the quality of education.**
7.2.2. **A Principal's Report could be presented to Corporation to provide an update on committee work. The report could also include updates from internal committees and the wider external environment.**
7.2.3. **A one-page bullet-pointed summary might be the most effective way of informing governors.**
7.2.4. **The fact that the Corporation agenda included items arising from the Finance and General Purposes Committee meant that issues from this committee regularly came to the attention of governors. This was not the case for the CSQI Committee and the Search and Governance Committee.**
7.2.5. **An update from every committee would not be required at every meeting of the Corporation. A Principal's Report could focus on the business that the Principal felt was important to highlight.**
7.2.6. **A Principal's Report would give committee chairs the opportunity to raise issues at Corporation meetings. However, it would be important that the headings of previous reports did not carry over. It needed to be a live document that required fresh thought for each Corporation meeting.** It would also be important to avoid repeating discussions that had already taken place in committee meetings or on Corporation meeting agendas.

7.3. **Members <u>noted</u> the Chair's Performance Review.**

8. <u>TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORKPLAN 2026/27</u>

8.1. The Director of Governance and Policy presented the Terms of Reference and Workplan for 2026/27.

8.1.1. References to the Governance Improvement Action Plan and External Board Review had been included.
8.1.2. References to compliance with the FE Code and Nolan Principles had also been added.
8.1.3. The work plan was the same as previous years. However, the plan was always flexible.

8.2. **Members:**

8.2.1. **<u>Agreed</u> to recommend the amended Terms of Reference to Corporation for approval.**
8.2.2. **<u>Approved</u> the Committee Workplan for 2026/27.**

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1. It was noted that this would be the chair's final meeting. Governors thanked the chair for her work on the Search and Governance Committee.

10. <u>DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u>

- 3 September 2026
- 14 January 2027
- 20 May 2027