

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD
OF LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION
HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2025**

Present:	Danielle Gillett (Chair) Vipul Bechar Shawn George Lesley Giles Shabir Ismail	Chan Kataria Zubair Limbada* Nicky Randall Neil McDougall Lee Soden
In Attendance:	Louise Hazel Amanda Scott Jane Parkinson Mukund Narshi Mark Dawson*	Director of Governance and Policy Director of HR Director of Finance Associate KPMG (item 3)
Observer	Rob Lawson	External Board Reviewer (AoC)

*Joined meeting online via Teams

1 WELCOME AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Kyle Cameron, Vipal Karavadra, Steve Munro, Robert Radford, Jackie Rossa, Sophie Strevens-Robinson, Tom Wilson, Kully Sandhu and Andy Cookson.

3 AUDIT COMPLETION REPORT

3.1 The Chair noted that this would be the last audit that KPMG would undertake as the College's external auditors.

3.2 The external auditors presented the audit completion report for 2024/25 year end. The following points were highlighted:

3.2.1 The report gave an opinion on whether the accounts provided a true and fair view and there was also a reporting accountant's view on regularity.

3.2.2 The audit was mostly complete and no major issues had been identified.

3.2.3 The audit had progressed well due to the good two-way communication with the College's Finance Directorate.

3.2.4 The pensions work had been completed and everything was found to be within the balanced range.

3.2.5 The final Going Concern statement would be subject to the forthcoming autumn reforecast.

3.2.6 The list of outstanding items included straightforward items which were

- outstanding due to timing issues.
- 3.2.7 The disclosures had been updated following discussions with the Director of Finance.
- 3.2.8 The Representations Letter included the standard wording as there were no specific representations.
- 3.3 **The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the report had been presented to the Audit Committee. The minor disclosure adjustments covered senior pay associated with the acting up arrangements. The Committee was comfortable to recommend the report to the Corporation.**
- 3.4 Governors made the following **comments** and asked a number of **questions** including:
- 3.4.1 **What were the adjustments in relation to senior pay?** There needed to be a disclosure about the Principal's salary but the Acting Principal's salary also needed to be included for the year.
- 3.4.2 **Was the pensions position positive or negative?** It was positive but was reduced to nil for the purposes of the accounts. There was no risk that the change would adjust the numbers in the accounts.
- 3.4.3 **Was the outstanding work on going concern routine procedural work?** Auditors were just waiting for the final version of the reforecast. Because the College had low gearing and given the overall strength of the balance sheet and the lack of bank covenant breaches, this was not likely to be present any issues.
- 3.5 **Members received the audit completion report and thanked Mark Dawson and KPMG colleagues for their work and support for the College over many years.**

4 STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2029

- 4.1 The Principal and CEO introduced a paper on the Strategic Framework for the next Strategic Plan. The following points were highlighted:
- 4.1.1 The Strategic Plan had a strategic framework including several components which fed through into the wider College plans, including Mission, Values, Vision, Strategic Objectives and KPIs. There was an opportunity to review the framework as the new Strategic Plan was developed.
- 4.1.2 The Senior Leadership team had had an initial discussion and was of the view that they statements remained relevant with a few minor changes proposed.
- 4.1.3 Student experience would need to be central to plans for the next three years.
- 4.1.4 Given the increased emphasis on local accountability and on meeting local and national skills needs, it was proposed that the objectives be renamed Strategic Commitments. The change in terminology was intended to demonstrate a different approach and signal a public commitment to students, employers, staff and partners for how the College wanted to be held accountable by stakeholders.

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

4.2.1 **How would it work if the SLT had already been consulted and given their views and these did not align with the Boards’?** It was governors’ role to set the strategic direction of the organisation. The SLT understood this but its initial feedback had been sought to provide a steer as to whether senior managers thought the current direction was still appropriate.

4.2.2 **The initial discussion at the away day had been helpful in identifying the importance of the government’s missions and the way in which the College could approach its new plan by taking a more sectoral approach.**

4.2.3 **At this stage, the Board needed to take a high level view. National policy was still crystallising and there would be better understanding of the detail and the impact on the College as the plans were developed.**

4.3 Governors split into groups to discuss the points highlighted in the paper. In summary, the following **comments** were made:

4.3.1 **Mission**

- **‘Partnering businesses’ rather than ‘supporting’, sounded more appropriate, formalised the relationship and implied an element of sustainability.**
- **This also reflected the idea of co-design which was a big theme at the AoC conference.**
- **Was the College being a great place to work reflected enough?**
- **‘Connecting communities’ was a less passive statement.**
- **The order of the statements was right.**
- **The statement needed to be something more memorable e.g. ‘changing people’s lives’.**
- **It needed to be understandable so that all partners would know what the College was about.**

4.3.2 **Values**

- **Equality was not the right word. Equity was about outcomes and a better descriptor but might not be well understood. For other sectors it meant something else and students might not fully understand it. Alternatives to equality/equity were suggested as ‘fairness’, ‘just’.**
- **Other suggested values were innovation, opportunity, ambition although it was questioned whether these were values or would be better covered in other statements.**
- **The Values needed to be understandable by all groups.**

4.3.3 **Strategic Commitments**

- **The term ‘strategic commitment’ was a better term, more**

outward looking and reflected the College's contribution locally and its wish to be held accountable.

- The statements were broadly appropriate but needed to be tailored more to Leicester/Leicestershire and have more personality.
- Agreed the statements needed to be punchy but had something been lost from the current set of objectives which provided more detail?
- There was repetition in the use of 'excellent', 'outstanding'. Was it clear what was meant by this? Would 'high quality' be a better term?
- References to skills, employers, economic growth, communities and curriculum were missing.
- The commitment referring to the College as an anchor institution role needed more clarification and possibly separating from leadership.
- This was an important statement in a policy context given the government's emphasis on colleges as critical to skills and economic growth.
- Was there enough focus on the student experience? Should the Board have a presentation from students to show that their views were being taken into account in developing the plans? There had been a presentation from the SU President to the away day in June at the start of the strategic planning discussions. The Student Council had been consulted and a discussion would also take place at the Student Liaison Committee the following week. There would be further opportunities to consult students as the strategies were developed. Governors were welcome to attend the Student Liaison Committee.

4.4 Members agreed with the proposed approach to having strategic commitments and requested revised statements be brought back to the December meeting for approval.

5 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 11 December 2025