



Minutes of the Meeting of the
Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee
held at the College at 4.00pm on Wednesday 26 November 2025

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| Present: | Mr P Sullivan (PS) Mr T Hayhoe (TH) Mr S McGeoch (SM) Ms M Gajewska (MG) | Chair (From 40/25) |
| In Attendance: | Ms K Frost (KF) Mr M Cooper (MC) Ms L Stewart (LS) Ms L Owen (LO) | Head of Governance Executive Director Finance, HR and Development Interim Executive Director Resources Head of HR and Development (Until item 41/25) |

38/25 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. There were no apologies for absence. It was confirmed the meeting was quorate.

39/25 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest relating to the items on the agenda.

40/25 **Human Resources**

a) **Annual Human Resources Report**

The Committee received the 'Annual Human Resources Report' (Paper 5a) in advance of the meeting. LO summarised key points from the report.

SM entered the meeting.

Governors noted that the number of employees with disabilities had increased and asked whether the College was actively seeking to recruit more disabled people. LO explained that the aim was to maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce and confirmed that the College was a Disability Confident Employer. LO felt the increase was positive.

Governors commented that they wanted to recruit the best quality candidates while reconciling this with having a staff profile that mirrors the student population. They raised a concern about the higher conversion rate for white staff. LO responded that the College aimed to maintain a reflective workforce and would keep this under review, looking at different categories to ensure balance across the board.

Governors asked about the increase in long-term absence and whether there were any additional measures that could be taken. LO explained that these absences were often related to other performance management processes going on and needed to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Where related to casework, the College tried to keep staff engaged and limit time off.

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Governors queried the positions that had been advertised. LO reported that some roles had been advertised multiple times, with certain areas proving difficult to fill, requiring two or three rounds of advertising. The CEO added that the College was exploring partnerships with local organisations and upskilling existing staff to mitigate these challenges in the longer term.

Governors asked how long it typically took from making an offer to a candidate to their start date and whether this was a concern. LO explained that roles were advertised for a standard three-week period, and interview dates were secured promptly. The main barrier was candidates' notice periods, although the HR team could process offers within a couple of weeks.

MC summarized progress against HR KPIs on the Data Dashboard:

- Mix of agency and establishment staff: There had been a decrease in agency staff, now at 20%, which had a positive impact on the financial position.
- Staff utilisation: Largely on track with target.
- Sickness absence: 3.1%, compared to 6.7% at the same point last year.

b) **Health and Wellbeing Policy**

The draft 'Health and Wellbeing Policy' (Paper 5b) was received in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that KL had assumed responsibility as lead for the policy. The Health and Safety Committee had met to consider an action plan for 2025/26. The CEO had issued a staff survey to gather feedback, which had been collated and incorporated into the action plan. A new Health and Wellbeing Hub had been launched on the staff intranet.

Governors asked whether they should have more interaction with staff beyond link governor visits and staff governor representation. The CEO noted that interaction occurred during link visits and at college events, which provided opportunities for governors to meet staff. Governors also highlighted opportunities to attend Employer Advisory Boards.

Governors asked whether the College tracked the amount of time staff invested in managing student health and wellbeing, noting that this was increasing and reducing time available for curriculum delivery. MG confirmed that the College did not track the time teachers spent on mental health issues but acknowledged that students were presenting with more complex problems. Students had tutors, and issues were either addressed within the College or referred to specialist teams such as Student Learning Advisors or Counselling. Training had been provided to help staff recognise their role as teachers and when to escalate concerns. Governors asked the CEO to consider ways of tracking how much time staff were spending on curriculum work versus supporting student wellbeing, noting the risk to curriculum quality.

Action: MG to consider a way of tracking the amount of time staff spend on curriculum work versus supporting student engagement and wellbeing.

Governors asked how staff morale was measured following the survey. MG explained that the staff satisfaction survey included questions on workload and general satisfaction. The Executive Team met annually with every team, and the appraisal process fed into this, with an expectation that regular one-to-one meetings were held.

Governors asked for a copy of the questions used in the staff survey to be distributed.

Action: LO to distribute a copy of the questions used in the annual staff survey.

IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Health and Wellbeing Policy.

41/25 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Minutes from the meeting of the Committee held on 24 September 2025 had been circulated in advance (Paper 3).

IT WAS DECIDED the minutes were a true record of the meeting and they were approved.

42/25 **Matters Arising**

The following matters arising were discussed:

- 31/25: Governors queried whether the payment from Hounslow had been received and noted it hadn't.
- 31/25: A claim for £83k had been noted; this had not yet been received, but there were no issues or concerns.
- 32/25: The Committee hadn't heard back from CZ about joining the Committee.

The Committee received an update on progress towards actions agreed at the last meeting, which was noted. The following items were discussed:

- Annual Procurement Report: It was noted that the Annual Procurement Report was almost complete. MC highlighted concerns about potential non-compliance with low-value contracts. Training would be provided to key staff members, although many requirements were covered by the school's exemption. MC confirmed that many of the new, more onerous requirements of the Procurement Act did not apply.

Governors stressed the need to ensure that the Procurement Policy was compliant with DfE guidance, ECCTA, and relevant parts of the Procurement Act when it was next updated.

MC reported that there had been only two regulated procurements last year. The electricity contract had not been compliant, but there were mitigating factors.

- Financial Regulations: A meeting had been arranged with PS to go through the updated Financial Regulations and approve them.
- 31d/25: Terrorism Insurance Cover: The College had not held terrorism insurance for 10 years. Quotations had been requested, but feedback from most other colleges indicated that they did not have such cover. The Insurance Broker was Assured Partners. The Committee discussed plans under business continuity for major critical incidents, aiming to restore services as quickly as possible. It was noted that, in the event of a terrorism incident, the DfE would likely step in, and the College would work closely with the Local Authority. The Committee discussed why risks were considered lower now than 10 years ago and agreed that most colleges shared the view that, in a significant incident, the focus would be on business continuity and government intervention. However, Governors noted that

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the impact of acts of terrorism were not limited to physical damage but could be loss of life that could result in liability for the college.

Action: MC to check whether the college has liability cover in place in the event of a terrorism incident.

- 31d/25: Cyber Insurance Cover: Initial findings indicated that the College was at the low end of cover. Quotations for increasing the cover had been requested.
- 35/25: Failure to Prevent Fraud Offence: It was agreed KF would seek advice from Eversheds regarding the Corporation's responsibilities for fraud. Such advice would then be incorporated into the next review of the Fraud Policy.

Action: KF to seek advice from Eversheds regarding the Corporation's responsibilities for fraud.

43/25 **Health and Safety**

The Committee received the 'Annual Health and Safety Report' (Paper 6) in advance of the meeting. LS summarised key points from the Annual Health and Safety Report.

A new section on statutory compliance reporting had been introduced to the annual report in the form of a summary document. The Committee discussed whether compliance checks should be reported regularly. It was noted that the Health and Safety Executive Group met regularly to review compliance during the year. It was agreed that an annual review of the work of the Health and Safety Committee would provide assurance.

Governors suggested that the data dashboard include a traffic-lighted chart, updated on a termly basis, to indicate progress against the plan. The Committee agreed to retain the annual report but update the dashboard termly.

Action: Build qualitative progress monitoring of Health and Safety compliance into the dashboard.

Governors queried appendix 4 regarding fire risk assessments with a due date of December 2025. LS confirmed these had been completed.

44/25 **Finance**

a) **2024/25 Outturn and Financial Statements**

i) **Final Management Accounts (July 2025)**

The Committee received the 'Final Management Accounts, July 2025' Paper 7ai in advance of the meeting. It was noted that there had been very little movement from the last meeting. The year ended with an operating surplus of £24k.

ii) **Draft Report and Financial Statements (Year Ended 31 July 2025)**

The Committee received the 'Draft Report and Financial Statements (Year Ended 31 July 2025)' (Paper 7aii) in advance of the meeting. It was noted that there would be some further minor amendments before approval at the Corporation meeting but none that were significant.

The Report and Financial Statements included:

- Report of the Members of the Corporation.

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- Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control.
- Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance. It was noted that a signed copy of this had been received from the former CEO, Tracy Aust.
- Statement of Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation.

It was noted that the DfE had officially approved Marta as Accounting Officer.

Governors asked about the principal risks and uncertainties listed in the report and discussed whether these were the appropriate risks to include. It was agreed that the selection was fair.

Governors asked if a statement by the Chief Accounting Officer regarding compliance Governing Documents had been added. It was confirmed it had. The Committee asked MC to confirm that the College had provided all necessary data to the reporting accountant. MC confirmed that all required disclosures had been made.

IT WAS DECIDED to recommend the reports, the accounts and the notes to the accounts to the Corporation so that the Members can authorise the Chair and CEO/Principal to sign them on behalf of the Corporation.

iii) **Post Audit Management Report**

The Committee received the 'Post Audit Management Report' (Paper 7aiii) in advance of the meeting.

This was the draft Post Audit Management Report, which would be reviewed by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 3 December. On page 23, two observations and recommendations had been made regarding the accounting and internal control systems, specifically relating to deferred capital grants and the review of payroll. Both recommendations were expected to be resolved during the academic year.

iv) **Letter of Representation**

The Committee received the 'Letter of Representation' (Paper 7aiv) in advance of the meeting.

Governors acknowledged the responsibilities regarding fraud and noted that the fraud questionnaire was one of the outstanding items. MC confirmed that this would be completed and explained that a long list of areas had been identified where fraud risk was recognised, along with actions the College would take to control and mitigate those risks.

MC confirmed that all necessary information had been provided and that the College had fulfilled all requirements under the auditor's terms of engagement letter dated 9 June.

Action: MC to circulate the auditor's terms of engagement letter.

IT WAS DECIDED to recommend to the Members of the Corporation that the letter of representation could be signed on behalf of the Corporation.

b) **Latest Management Accounts (September 2025)**

The Committee received the 'Management Accounts September 2025' (Paper 7b) in advance of the meeting.

Governors queried the capital expenditure figure of £2.4m against a budget of £1.4m, noting that the cash balance was £500k better than expected. MC explained that this was due to two main factors:

- A reduction in debtors of about £750k principally resulting from High Needs funding, which was not expected to recur this year.
- An increase of £750k in accruals.

The Committee noted the need to ensure confidence with debtors and accruals when reviewing the October management accounts.

The Committee reviewed the Going Concern assessment and was satisfied, on the basis of the figures, that the College could continue to adopt the Going Concern basis for the Accounts, subject to confirmation once the October management accounts were received.

c) **Contracts Due**

A 'Major Financial Contracts' Update (Paper 7c) was received in advance of the meeting.

The Committee reviewed the Kaleidoscope contract and **IT WAS DECIDED** that the College should continue working with Kaleidoscope. The value of the contract was confirmed as approximately £169k.

d) **Reporting Update**

The Committee noted that monthly management accounts were being received. Governors were invited to provide feedback if they identified any gaps in the information.

e) **Insurance Coverage**

The item had already been discussed under matters arising.

45/25 **Estates and Sustainability**

a) **Capital Expenditure Summary Report and Plan 2025/26**

In advance of the meeting, the Committee received:

- A capital expenditure summary for 2025-2026.
- Appendix 1: Schedule of 2025–26 Capital Projects.
- Appendix 2: Capital Programme Summary (Funding Sources and Expenditure Breakdown)
- Appendix 3: Tender Evaluation Summary – Desktop PC Procurement

LS summarised the key points in the Capital Expenditure Summary Report and Plan. The Committee was asked to:

1. Note the capital expenditure summary for 2025–26.
2. Approve the award of the Desktop PC contract to Office Express, following the completed tender process.
3. Endorse the proposed approach to implement remaining tenders during the 2025–26 academic year, with results and evaluations to be circulated to the Committee for approval.

Governors asked whether Office Express had the capability to deliver a tender of this size. LS confirmed that the supplier had been vetted through the CPC process, with no credit risk identified, and was considered credible. MC confirmed confidence in CPC due diligence. However, to reduce credit risk, payment would only be made to Office Express following delivery of goods and receipt of the invoice.

Governors asked whether CPC frameworks could be relied upon under the new Fraud Act. MC confirmed that the frameworks were compliant with the Procurement Act.

The proposed capital projects for 2025–26 were noted.

Decisions:

- It was agreed to approve the award of the Desktop PC contract to Office Express, following the completed tender process.
- It was agreed to endorse the approach to implement remaining tenders during the 2025–26 academic year, with results and evaluations to be circulated to the Committee for approval, which could be by email.

Governors noted that no work was planned for the Skills and Logistics Centre at this stage. MC confirmed that only small amounts of capital were allocated for equipment for motor vehicle and construction courses, with construction equipment funded from a grant. Feltham had been equipped with new computer equipment a couple of years ago.

An increase in condition improvement spend was noted, supported by the use of grant funding.

IT WAS DECIDED to approve the higher level of capital expenditure.

b) **Estates Strategy and Maintenance Plan Update**

An update on the Estates Strategy and the Maintenance Plan in advance of the meeting (Paper 8b).

It was noted that the property strategy would be updated next year to align with the completion of the strategic plan.

The planned maintenance programme had been itemised, showing what was covered and including a spreadsheet detailing expenditure for the current year. This was fully reflected in the existing budget.

Governors commented that the Property Strategy and Digital Strategy were not very visible in terms of progress tracking. They requested a qualitative tracking page for property and facilities and for the digital strategy, along with a management summary showing how these relate to the overall strategy.

Action: Management to provide qualitative tracking and summary of the property and digital strategy.

c) **Skills and Logistics Centre Lease**

The Committee received an update on progress regarding the Skills and Logistics Centre. A positive meeting had been held with the Borough of Hounslow, which had committed to granting a long lease. The Borough was keen to secure a longer-term future for the Centre but expected some value in terms of rent. Negotiations would be required, and the agreement would be drafted before a joint approach was made to the DfE.

The October management accounts had been updated to reflect payment for back rent of approximately £800k, although this was still under negotiation.

It was noted that the Data Dashboard KPIs had been reviewed under each relevant item on the agenda.

47/25 **Risk Register**

The 'Risk Register Nov 25 FRCP Extract' (Paper 10) was received in advance of the meeting.

The Committee reviewed the risk relating to insufficient demand and agreed that the current impact score of 2 was too low. Both relevant entries should have an impact score of 3.

Action: Update the Risk Register to reflect the revised impact scores for insufficient demand.

48/25 **Confidential Items**

a) **Confidential Minutes from Last Meeting**

The Committee received the Confidential Minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 24 September 2025 in advance of the meeting.

IT WAS DECIDED the minutes were a true reflection of the meeting and they were approved.

b) **Staff Pay Award**

The CEO reported that there had been no negative comments from staff members regarding the pay award. Individual responses had been positive, and the general view among staff was very favourable.

It was noted that a meeting of the Committee to discuss a further pay award would take place next week, and the agenda for that meeting was discussed.

49/25 **Objective for Deep Dive**

The Committee agreed that it would be useful to have sector policy direction summarised, along with its implications for finances. Governors noted the importance of understanding demographic trends and acknowledged that adult provision was driven by demand. It was agreed that these matters would be discussed as part of the strategy.

Action: Produce a document that summarises future sector policies, funding implications and potential trends and impacts. Establish review points to monitor progress.

50/25 **Key Points to Bring to the Attention of the Corporation**

- **Staff Pay Award:** The CEO reported positive staff feedback on the pay award, with no negative comments received. The FRCP Committee would be meeting on 3 December 2025 to discuss a further award.
- **Tracking Staff Time:** Governors raised concerns about the increasing time staff spend on student health and wellbeing, reducing time for curriculum delivery. The Committee agreed to explore ways to track this and assess impact.
- **Tracking Digital and Property Strategy:** Governors requested improved visibility and qualitative progress tracking for both the Property Strategy and Digital Strategy, including management summaries showing alignment with strategic objectives.

- **Deep Dive Review of Strategy:** The Committee agreed to include a deep dive review of policy direction and its financial implications as part of the strategic planning process, with actions to summarise funding routes, trends, and review points.
- **Increase in Capital Expenditure:** The Committee approved a higher level of capital spend for maintenance and endorsed the approach for implementing tenders during 2025–26, approving the award of the Desktop PC contract to Office Express.

51/25 Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next regular meeting of the committee was Wednesday 4 March 2026 at 4.00pm. However, an extraordinary meeting will be held on 3 December 2025.

Summary of Actions

| No. | Action | Lead | Target Date |
|--------|--|-------|-------------|
| 5/25c | Update the Financial Regulations ready for approval at the March Corporation meeting. | MC | Mar 25 |
| 21/25b | Provide a more detailed report on planned maintenance that links to the recent condition survey and the 2025-26 budget. | LS | Nov 25 |
| 32/25 | Provide a strategic overview of student numbers in relevant categories to help identify trends. | MC | Nov 25 |
| 35/25 | Review the fraud policy to ensure alignment with sections 6.6 and 6.14 of the College Financial Handbook. | MC | Mar 26 |
| 40/25 | Distribute a copy of the questions used in the annual staff survey. | LO | Mar 26 |
| 40/25 | Consider a way of tracking the amount of time staff spend on curriculum work versus supporting student engagement and wellbeing. | MG | Mar 26 |
| 41/25 | Check whether the college has liability cover in place in the event of a terrorism incident. | MC | Mar 26 |
| 41/25i | Seek advice from Eversheds regarding the Corporation's responsibilities for fraud. | KF | Mar 26 |
| 43/25 | Build qualitative progress monitoring of Health and Safety compliance into the new data dashboard. | LS | July 26 |
| 44/25 | Circulate the auditor's terms of engagement letter prior to signing the Letter or Representation. | MC | Dec 25 |
| 45/25 | Provide qualitative tracking and summary of the property and digital strategy. | LS/MG | July 26 |
| 47/25 | Update the risk register to reflect the revised impact scores for insufficient demand. | MC | Mar 26 |
| 49/25 | Produce a document that summarises future sector policies, funding implications and potential trends and impacts. Establish review points to monitor progress. | MG/MC | Mar 26 |

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