

CORPORATION MEETING

PART 1

NON-CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES



Wednesday, 9 July 2025

16:00 - 18:00

Learning Suite Immersive Space, Ground Floor, Longley II, Crawley College, College Road, Crawley, RH10 1NR

PRESENT:

Chris Bennett, Dr Roy Bowden, Steve Cooper (Chair), Andrew Green (CEO), David Jones (Vice-Chair), Helen Kilpatrick CB, Sue Lal (Staff Governor), Ian Larkham, Richard Moore, David Parfitt, Ryan Sallows, Dr James Sarmecanic, Tom Simmonds, Steven Skinner.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Coulthard (CFO), Vicki Illingworth (Executive Principal & Deputy CEO), Helen Loftus (Principal, Chichester College), Dan Power (CCO), Jon Rollings (COO), Helena Thomas (Principal, Worthing College & Northbrook College), Catherine Vinall (Clerk to the Corporation), Sarah Box (Governance Officer)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Standing item

Speaker: Chair

Time: 4.00pm

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Steve Bassam, Gayathri Ganesan, Paul Lansdowne and Dean Spears.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Standing item

Speaker: Chair

Governors were reminded that they have a personal responsibility to declare any interests they may have in items under discussion and to know that they might be required to withdraw from the meeting during such discussions.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 2 APRIL 2025 AND THE SPECIAL MEETING ON TUESDAY, 20 MAY 2025

Decision item Speaker: Chair

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 2 April 2025 and the special meeting held on Tuesday, 20 May 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

3.1 MATTERS ARISING

Standing item Speaker: Chair

It was confirmed that room utilisation would be a focus once the capital projects across the Group had been completed.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S TERMLY REPORT

Information item Speaker: Andrew Green Time: 4.05pm

4.1 FE SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS AND KEY ISSUES FOR CHICHESTER COLLEGE GROUP

Information item

Andrew Green presented his termly CEO briefing. Governors were updated on key policy and sector changes.

It was explained that economic growth was at the heart of strategies being developed by government to support skills and industry. The FE sector was centrally placed to help deliver the strategies and it had recently been announced that there would be investment in Colleges of Excellence with £1.2b to be spent developing skills in construction and defence, further details on this were awaited. The Post-16 Strategy was now due, it would set out a critical role and a clear mandate for FE to transform the UK economy and deliver opportunities for its workers.

It was expected that Ofsted's new inspection regime would be introduced in November, but it had been announced that the details would not be circulated until September.

In terms of changes in government funding, an increase in 16-18 funding of 3.78% had been announced. It was reported that the additional NI costs were only part funded. £50m had been allocated for FE and CCG had paid a £200 non-consolidated amount to all staff. In addition to this, £190m had been announced for FE at same time as the teacher's pay award at 4% (CCG allocation was an extra £3m). The Group had now received £5.2m of capital funding and the introduction of Skills Bootcamps were underway.

The Chief Executive provided a RAG rated overview of the Group's performance at Q3 performance. Adults and Apprenticeships were looking very strong at this point in the year. 16-

19 applications and adult enrolments were strong. HE applications and Q3 results for international had both been rated red.

Governors were updated on the ongoing and newly emerging challenges faced by the Group, which included cyber security and maths and English attendance and achievement. The emerging opportunities were outlined and plans to focus on these in the year ahead were discussed, along with the strategic objectives.

In response to a query on the detail of the decline in HE applications, it was confirmed that there were about 80 less than the previous year and as a result the income for 2025/26 had been reprofiled. The team were working on a plan for HE, and although the decline was a national issue, the strategy's intent was to stabilise and move towards growth. It was reported that internal progression was improving and the conversion rate from application to new starts was increasing.

Governors also asked for an update on the challenges with maths and English and it was confirmed that the Maths and English Strategy continued to have an impact with improving attendance in lessons and in exams. CenturyTech's adaptive learning had been an important aspect of the strategy and had improved results. The changes to the Maths and English delivery hours were noted, increasing from 60 hours in the current year to 100 hours in 2025/26.

In response to a query on the progress with workload reduction it was explained that AI tools such as TeacherMatic were being utilised for lesson planning support. Examples of where Century Tech was assisting teachers included in Maths and English. In addition, some curriculum teams such as Motor Vehicle at Crawley were using CoPilot to assist with their work, harnessing it to generate lesson plans, create stretch and challenge activities and support students with additional needs. It was also confirmed that the Group were investing in a post to focus on digital development.

4.2 STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-26 MONITORING SUCCESS MEASURES

Discussion item

Speaker: Andrew Green

Progress against the strategic plan success measures was noted.

5. CHICHESTER COLLEGE GROUP CURRICULUM & QUALITY SUMMER TERM 2024/25

Time: 4.15 pm

5.1 UPDATE ON THE CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING

Information item

Speaker: Richard Moore.

19 June.

Richard Moore provided an update on the recent Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting. Attendance continued to be a focus and there had been discussions on the attendance rates at Brighton MET and Crawley as these were lower than the other Colleges. The Committee had discussed the strategies that had been put in place for the 2025/26 academic year. GCSE attendance had increased in both subjects and work to address attendance gaps in LAC and FSM groups continued. Both Apprenticeship and retention data showed a positive picture, the latter with an increase at most campuses of 2%.

The Safeguarding and Behaviour Report had been received and discussed along with the Destinations report for students who had left in the summer 2024. An overview of strategic curriculum planning at each campus had been provided, although an update was still required for Crawley & Brinsbury. The outcome of the residential care Ofsted inspection was confirmed as outstanding, and it was confirmed that Christine Bianchin had been appointed as Principal of Crawley College and Brinsbury College and that Matt Vaughan had been appointed as Principal of Brighton MET and Haywards Heath College during the recent recruitment exercise.

5.2 CHICHESTER COLLEGE GROUP PERFORMANCE REPORT AND QUALITY UPDATE 2024/25

Information item

Speaker: Vicki Illingworth

Vicki Illingworth confirmed that retention of all Colleges across the Group was above the national average of 89.7%.

Attendance was broadly in line with 2023/24 levels and continued to be an area of focus, although classroom-based attendance was higher. Predicted achievement ranged between 85.8% for 16-18 learners to 81.9% for 19+ learners. Apprenticeships achievement currently stood at 72.5% which was 12% above the national average and could potentially increase depending on how many EPAs were completed by the end of July.

In response to a query on how attendance rates were influenced by factors outside of College, it was advised that this was increasingly a challenge. The complexity of need was increasing, however management confirmed that there was an aspiration around student attendance. It was asked if there was a correlation between student satisfaction and attendance and it was confirmed that this information was tracked but was not a trend. In addition, the impact of the intensive care process was reviewed by the Curriculum & Quality Committee and there was evidence of the impact of this work in driving improvement and student satisfaction.

5.3 2025/26 ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

Information item

Speaker: Vicki Illingworth

The final version of the 2025/26 Accountability Agreement was noted, following approval at the Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting on 18 November.

COMMITTEE UPDATES AND ITEMS FOR APPROVAL/INFORMATION

6. FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Time: 4.30pm

6.1 UPDATE ON THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING.

Information item

Speaker: James Sarmecanic

James Sarmecanic provided an update on the recent Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting. It was confirmed that many of the items had been submitted for Corporation review, but additional business had included confirming Chris Bennett as Vice Chair of the Committee. The Management Accounts had been received and were very positive following the post merger work to settle the finances and reach EBITDA targets.

There had also been a commercial update, and it had been explained that revised plans had been built into the 2025/26 budget.

6.2 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS 2024/25

Information item

Speaker: Steve Coulthard

The Corporation received the Group Management Accounts to 31 May 2025. Steve Coulthard reported that at the end of month 10 there was a positive variance against forecast. In particular, the adults and apprenticeship income streams had performed well and both pay and non-pay were being well managed. Steve stated that although costs were being well managed in the commercial areas, it appeared unlikely that the forecast year end position would be achieved. Overall, it was looking positive that the Group would achieve the £6m EBITDA target at the end of 2024/25.

7. AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Time: 4.35 pm

7.1 UPDATE FROM THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE MEETING.

Information item

Speaker: Roy Bowden

Roy Bowden gave an overview of the recent Audit & Risk Committee meeting. It was confirmed that no major problems were identified in the Internal Audit reports and that the Committee

continue to track the progress of follow up actions until they were complete. There had been a demonstration of the new risk system currently being implemented. The External Audit Planning Memorandum had also been approved.

7.2 RISK MANAGEMENT AND ASSURANCE REPORT

Decision item Speaker: Steve Coulthard

Chichester College Group's Risk Registers were received. Steve Coulthard confirmed that the latest review showed a largely unchanged risk profile with two areas showing an increase in risk perception. There had been an increase in the financial management and controls risk due to the implementation of the new finance system, but the risk had now reduced, and the system was on schedule to go live within the next few weeks. In addition, the commercial and growth risk relating to the under performance against the 2024/25 commercial budget targets. There was still some uncertainty, but the risk had settled, and it was expected that both these risks would reduce going forward. It was

Resolved

That the CCG Risk Management and Assurance Reports be approved.

7.3 RSM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

Information item

The following RSM Internal Audit Reports were noted:

- Human Resources
- Funding Rule Compliance
- Office for Students Data Quality
- Key Financial Controls
- Follow Up work

7.4 RSM INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2025/26

Decision item Speaker: Roy Bowden/Steve Coulthard

It was explained that the plan reflected a focus on compliance. There had been changes in the Economic Crime and Transparency Act and a fraud risk assessment would be carried out in response. It was

Resolved

That the RSM Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26 be approved.

8. GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE

Time: 4.55pm

8.1 UPDATE FROM THE GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

Information item

Speaker: Steve Cooper

The summary from the meeting was noted and the majority of items had been included on the Corporation agenda.

8.2 CORPORATION APPOINTMENTS

Decision item

Speaker: Catherine Vinall

Catherine Vinall explained that the Governance & Search Committee had been looking to appoint to three vacancies and had met with six candidates as part of the recruitment process. As a result, the appointment of three governors and one Co-opted Member, who would sit on the Finance & General Purposes Committee, was recommended. In response to a query on increasing the diversity of the Governing Body it was explained that this had been a key objective of the process, however the challenges of recruiting to voluntary roles had made this difficult to achieve. The FE sector as a whole struggled to recruit leaders from diverse backgrounds, and this was also the case for governor roles. The use of recruitment partners who specialised in this area was discussed and would be considered for the next round of governor appointments.

Resolved

That the following appointments be approved:

- i) To appoint Helen Everitt for a four-year term of office from 1 August 2025. It was confirmed that Helen would also take on the role of designated safeguarding Governor.**
- ii) To appoint Ian Moore for a four-year term of office from 1 August 2025.**
- iii) To appoint Peter Thompson for a four-year term of office from 1 August 2025.**
- iv) To appoint Katherine Woodrow as a Co-opted Member of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, for a four-year term of office from 1 August 2025.**

8.3 FE CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Information item

Speaker: Catherine Vinall

The minor changes to the updated Code of Good Governance were noted.

8.4 CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT

Information item

Speaker: Catherine Vinall

Catherine Vinall explained that an assessment had been undertaken to determine how CCG demonstrated the principles within the Code and to identify any gaps and actions to sustain or improve governance practices. The assessment was noted. Progress against the actions within the report would be presented to the Governance & Search Committee.

8.5 FE SECTOR GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Information item

Speaker: Catherine Vinall

The update on governance in the FE sector had been circulated specifically concerning practices at Weston College. The aim of the report was to provide the board with assurance around the practices, checks and balances in place at CCG. Progress against the actions identified would be reported to the Governance & Search Committee.

8.6 STAFF VOICE AND ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNORS

Information item

Speaker: Andrew Green

Andrew Green provided a verbal update on staff voice at Chichester College Group. Governors were reminded that there had been various methods of staff engagement across the Group in the past. Following a review the Group Leadership Team supported a proposal to reinstate local College Staff Committees or Forums. These would report into a central Group-wide Staff Committee/Forum which would include staff representation from each of the College Forums. It was confirmed that the Group-wide Forum would include representation from the Corporation.

9. RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Time: 5.05pm

9.1 UPDATE FROM THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Information item

Speaker: Steve Cooper

Steve Cooper gave an update on the recent Resources Committee meeting where there had been comprehensive IT and H&S updates. In addition, a review of the Appraisal & Development Scheme 2024 and the People Strategy had been received.

It was confirmed that the headline results from the pulse staff survey have been shared in the update on progress against success measures.

9.2 RESOURCES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Decision item Speaker: Catherine Vinall

The Resources Committee had recommended the approval of the updated Terms of Reference and included the required references to Managing Public Money. It was

Resolved

That the Resources Committee Terms of Reference be approved.

10. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Information item Speaker: David Jones Time:
5.10pm

David Jones confirmed that the Committee had considered a report on succession planning for senior post-holders. Support to develop the succession plan was being provided by the HR Team and an update would be provided in the autumn term.

11. STUDENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Information item Speaker: David Jones Time:
5.15pm

David Jones confirmed that the summer term Student Committee meeting had been cancelled due to exams and assessments taking place. A BBQ had been arranged where student reps shared details of the SU successes over the year including a marked increase in the number of reps, charity and fundraising work.

A confidential minute was taken at this point.

In addition, it was reported that a piece of work was being undertaken to work with Student Governors to ensure maximum engagement on the Governing Body.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next Corporation Meeting would take place in October. The date was to be confirmed. This meeting would be a formal business meeting which would be followed by development/strategy event

It was noted that the December meeting of the would take place on Wednesday, 10 December 2025 from 4.00 pm at Chichester College. The meeting would be followed by Christmas Dinner in the College restaurant.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ofsted Care Standards Inspection

Andrew Green confirmed that an Ofsted Care Standards Inspection had taken place, and the draft report had been received. CCG had been graded outstanding in every aspect and overall and the report would be shared with governors once it was in the public domain.

Governor Retirements

Steve Cooper and Andrew Green expressed their thanks and gratitude to Dr Roy Bowden and Ryan Sallows whose terms of office had come to an end and were attending their last meeting. Both had joined CCG's Corporation following the mergers with Worthing College and Central Sussex College. Their dedication and commitment to the role was noted, as well as their extensive knowledge of the sector and their local communities. Both Ryan and Roy noted the privilege of serving on the Board and their joy as seeing the Colleges they had originally served growing and thriving as part of CCG.