

West Herts College Corporation Board Meeting

Wednesday 2 April 2025

TEAMS Meeting (online)

5pm – 7pm

MINUTES

Attendees:

Governors	Role:	Other Attendees	Role
Tony Breslin	Chair of Corporation	Gary Dixon	Deputy Principal West Herts
Gill Worgan	Principal & CEO	Emma Doree	Director of Student Experience
Zoubair Aouam	Student Governor	Cath Gunn	Principal of Barnfield College
Phil Berry	External Governor	Sarah Knowles	Deputy Principal
Charles Chidom	Staff Governor	Tammy Nuthall	Deputy Principal
Laura Dawson	External Governor	Amanda Washbrook	Deputy Principal
Wendy Donovan	External Governor	Nidha Patel	Director of Finance
Mariam Hassan	Student Governor	Anne-Marie Kinsella	Clerk to Corporation
Irina Kendix	External Governor		
Richard Lewis	External Governor	Apologies	Role:
Chris Nicholls	External Governor	Guy Ainsley	External Governor
Stuart Ord	External Governor		
Martin Sidders	External Governor		
David York	Staff Governor		

Ref Agenda Item

Prior to the Corporation Meeting, the Executive gave a presentation about the recent Ofsted test inspection. There was no formal feedback or judgments awarded as this was a test inspection using the new inspection toolkit, due to go live in October 2025.

The Board thanked the Executive for their presentation and staff and students across all campuses for the time and effort put into this valuable piloting exercise.

26/24 1. GENERAL BUSINESS

1.1. Apologies for absence and quoracy

Apologies were noted and accepted, and the meeting was quorate.

All reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting for the Board's consideration.

1.2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

There were no declarations.

1.3. Requests for urgent business

There were no requests for urgent business.

27/24 2. PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1. Approve Minutes of previous meeting (12 February 2025)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and approved for electronic signature.

2.2. Action from previous Corporation meeting

There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

Ref	Summary of Actions	when
	No actions due for completion at this meeting.	

28/24 3. PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

The report showed that the College is performing well against its Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) and of particular note was the good retention across all provision types It highlighted the key funding announcements which were also outlined in the Finance Report (4.3), and included the cuts to the adult education budget, the in-year growth funding and the grant payments towards the increase in national insurance contributions.

In response to questions from the Corporation it was noted that a review of the adult education offer would be undertaken to identify any areas that can be reduced in line with cuts to funding. A reduction in provision is not expected to lead to any significant changes to staffing other than a reduction in the number of hours being available for teachers employed on an hourly paid basis.

In terms of the reduced funding for in-growth, which was the same for all colleges across England, and the contributions to national insurance increases, the College had not budgeted for any additional income in-year which means any in-year payments received, although less than anticipated is still positive. It was also highlighted that the College would receive funding to improve its estate, it was hoped that the receipt of funding would align with planned capital projects.

The Corporation congratulated the College and students on their recent success in competitions for Hairdressing and Student Support work.

The report was noted.

29/24 4. RESPONSIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

4.1. Environment & Sustainability Report & Policy

The College has reduced its carbon emissions further over the past year, primarily due to improved waste disposal - over 50% of the waste produced by the College was disposed and turned into usable energy reducing the College’s carbon emissions from 19.41 tonnes to 4.50 tonnes in this area. The report illustrated levels of progress against specific targets in a rag rated plan and good levels of progress was noted. It was highlighted that the College commute is still challenging in terms of measuring emissions. ,

The Corporation was pleased with the report and went onto discuss other initiatives such as car sharing, solar panels and water usage. The Executive outlined the promotion of the cycle to work scheme, the flexible working policy, devices across the College to manage water usage, rainwater harvesting, and the installation of LCD lighting at the Watford campus.

The Policy had been reviewed and no changes were recommended.

The report was noted.

DECISION: The Corporation approved the Environment & Sustainability Policy.

4.2. SEND Report

The report detailed the number of students enrolled with special educational needs and/or disability, as well as students with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and students with high-cost support needs. The proposed new inspection toolkit has a particular focus on SEND learners and in April 2024,

Ofsted judged the College's provision for students with high needs to be Outstanding under the previous inspection framework

It was noted that qualification achievement rates for students with SEND are consistently high and significantly exceed national averages for students with SEND and for those without. The number of students with SEND progressing to positive destinations is good and consistent with other students.

In response to questions from the Corporation the Executive explained how they designed their curriculum to be inclusive, which involved a wide range of partners, including a significant number of specialist agencies, and working closely with feeder schools and local authorities. The extra-curricular programme is accessible and offers students with SEND opportunities to further develop their knowledge and skills. The College also has strong links with numerous employers and these support the College in providing a range of supported internships for students with aspirations to gain paid employment on completion of their studies. Staff receive effective CPD to continually improve and further develop practices and lesson plans are designed with input from external stakeholders, students and families, to ensure they are inclusive. The Corporation was assured that all students receive targets and are progress is monitored routinely.

Further clarification was given on the work with the 13 local authorities. This partnership ensures appropriate levels of funding are available to support students with SEND. The College is part of quality improvement working groups in Hertfordshire, which look at all sections of education to review and map provision against forecast needs expected over the next few years. The College also sits on several groups working with secondary and primary sectors, to plan and track young people progressing through the education system.

The data within the report was scrutinised by the Corporation and clarification was given on those students not going into supported internships but community provision instead. The Executive highlighted the importance of finding the right route for each student

The Corporation congratulated the College on leading an Inter-College Skills Competition project to create more opportunities for students with SEND. The competition was a great success and all colleges and students involved have expressed a commitment to continue with the competition going forward. The competition has also been formally endorsed by WorldSkills UK.

The report was noted.

4.3. **Finance Report** (confidential item)

(please see separate minutes)

30/24 **5. REGULARITY COMPLIANCE**

5.1. **Audit Committee Recommendations for approval:**

The Chair of the Audit Committee (SO) gave a brief summary of the Audit Committee meeting and asked the Corporation to approve documents that had been scrutinised by the Committee at the meeting. The purpose of the Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy was clarified.

DECISION: The Corporation approved:

- Financial Regulations
- Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy

- Re-appointment of Buzzacott as the external audit firm for 2024-25

5.2. Corporate Risk Register

The Audit Committee reviewed the College's risk register at its meeting on 25 February 2025. The report included the risk register and a summary of the number of risks on the high-level Risk Register compared to the risks reported to Corporation at its meeting in December 2024.

In summary, the report highlighted that there are currently 3 high-level risks (HLR). No risks have been added to the HLR since the last Corporation meeting and one risk has been removed.

Members of the Audit Committee clarified some of the details in the risk register and the calculations of the residual score. The Corporation thanked the DoF for ensuring the risk register was updated and current.

The report and risk register were noted.

31/24 6. BOARD & ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

6.1. Feedback from Committees:

6.1.1. Audit Committee Minutes (25 February)

Please see agenda item 6 for additional information on Audit Committee activity. The minutes were noted.

6.1.2. Search & Governance Minutes (10 February)

The Chair of the Committee (RL) gave a brief update on the recruitment campaign. The minutes were noted.

6.2. Learning Walks

There had been no learning walks since the last meeting.

6.3. Update on Corporation membership

6.3.1. Irina Kendix – term of Office expires on 12 May.

IK will have completed 3 terms of office on the 12 May 2025 and is eligible to be reappointed to a final term of office. IK has indicated that she does not wish to be reappointed due to work commitments. This vacancy has already been included in the current recruitment campaign.

The Corporation and the Executive expressed their sincere thanks to IK for all her hard work and commitment to the Corporation.

IK thanked the College and said that she had enjoyed working with such a diverse group of people and has learnt a lot. She wished the College well and hoped they continued to go from strength to strength.

32/24 7. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

33/24 8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - Wed 21 May 2025 – Hemel Hempstead

Meeting closed: 6.45pm

Minutes approved by the Corporation on the 21 May 2025

Ref	Summary of Actions	when
	No actions were recorded at this meeting.	

Ref	Summary of Decisions
30/24/5.1	The Corporation approved the Environment & Sustainability Policy.
31/24/6.1	The Corporation approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Regulations • Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy • Re-appointment of Buzzacott as the external audit firm for 2024-25