

Non-Confidential Minutes of a Meeting of the FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held on 8 October 2025, 1.15pm-3.30pm Online Via Teams

37/25 APOLOGIES AND WELCOME

Apologies were received from Mr Ken Dueck and Mrs Sara Weech. The Director of Governance drew attention to the Committee's Terms of Reference regarding quoracy which states that the majority of those in attendance should be Corporation Members. As at 1.15pm half of those attending were Corporation Members and half were Co-opted Members with one further Corporation Member expected to join the meeting. It was agreed that as Corporation Members were not in the minority, the meeting would proceed. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and expressed thanks to Mr Chris Goddard for his service and expert contribution as a Co-opted Member to this Committee at his last meeting in the role.

38/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39/25 APPROVAL OF THE NON-CONFIDENTIAL AND CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 11 JUNE 2025

The non-confidential and confidential minutes of the meeting held 11 June 2025 were approved as a true record.

40/25 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 11 JUNE 2025 (CONFIDENTIAL)

41/25 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

The Head of Estates and Safety presented the Health and Safety Annual Report for 2024/25. She reported on successful integration with the Transformation Fund Project, the contractor Wates and their team. There were regular meetings, strong relationships and sharing of safety information, she reported. She also reported that the Student Feedback Survey 2025 found 98% of students agreed that they feel safe on and off the campus. 196 members of staff had received Health and Safety training and ten members of staff have obtained a full First Aid at Work qualification in the last year. She reported that there were 70 reported accidents, 32 incidents and seven 'near misses' within the reporting year. One accident was reported to RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) which concerned a staff member injured by a falling window blind resulting in more than seven days of injury. There had been five fire drills completed with all blocks spread throughout the year, nine lockdown drills and two bomb drills. Twenty safety inspections had been completed within practical learning areas with reports, recommendations and follow-up meetings with Heads of Learning responsible for those areas. A series of security measures had been put in place including the removal of one of the rear entrance/ exit routes, security guarding put in place for parts of the year, a new security policy established, and screening introduced. There were also a number of new work platforms that had been introduced to cut down paperwork and reduce workload, these included a new Risk Assessment database, new accident reporting systems, and a new contractor Health and Safety induction system.

The Chair noted the sustained year on year increase in accidents and enquired whether this was due to ease of reporting and improved reporting or a genuine rise in accidents. The Head of Estates and Safety responded that she believed this was due to ease of reporting and improved reporting. She reported that the culture was changing with increased emphasis on safety and health. She gave an example of paper cuts as an area of improved reporting, where this previously may not have been reported.

The Chair identified a spike within Motor Vehicle and enquired whether that area required a 'deep dive'. The Head of Estates and Safety responded that an investigation had been undertaken into Motor Vehicle in September 2025 which was not included in the 2024/25 academic year reporting. She reported that it was

likely that there was improved reporting due to new staff. The Health and Safety team were working with the new staff in this area.

The Chair noted that in the bar graph included in the report under Health and Safety Training, the key did not outline all colours within the bar graph. She also enquired whether there were any targets for training and whether the level of training reported reflected what the College was aiming for. The Head of Estates and Safety responded that the target outlined in the SAR (self-assessment review) and KPIs (key performance indicators) was 200. She would add this information to next year's reporting.

A Co-opted Member commended the report and its comprehensiveness. He commented that the 'near misses' were extremely low and considered that this meant that there were a significant number of 'near misses' that were not being reported. He gave the example of new students instructed by their tutors to stop or change an action in order to avoid an accident as 'near misses' and queried whether such examples were being reported. The Head of Estates and Safety responded that she believed that these types of incidents were not being reported as 'near misses'. He suggested talking to the lecturers about this type of reporting.

The Co-opted Member raised a query regarding the reported concern raised with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) by an unknown party. The Head of Estates and Safety responded that the concern raised was regarding general maintenance of equipment at CECAMM. The College was able to successfully refute the allegation, providing the required documentation, and the HSE took no further action.

The Co-opted Member commended the integration with Wates. He enquired regarding integrated media reporting in the event of an incident for example. The Principal responded that media reporting in such circumstances would lie with the Department for Education (DfE). In response to a further query from the Co-opted Member, the Principal confirmed that there were regular reminders regarding reporting and she was confident that such reporting would be made directly to the DfE. In response to a clarification point by the Chair, the Principal confirmed that all contractors and project managers for the Transformation Project were under the oversight of the DfE.

The Co-opted Member enquired whether the accident figures included the contractors. The Head of Estates and Safety responded that as these figures related to 2024/25, they did not include the Transformation Project which commenced after the reporting period. She confirmed that Wates have their own accident reporting system but that no accidents had been reported to her at regular meetings with the contractors. She confirmed that for contractors under the College's oversight, accidents would be included in the College's reporting. The College itself would log the report in relation to instances where First Aid was sought for example, she reported.

Noting an increase in cuts and grazes he asked if there had been any action taken to reduce this. She reported that in these instances she would visit areas to address. She clarified that of the 44 cuts and grazes reported, 17 of those were as a result of a trip, slip or fall. She added that risk assessments had been reviewed and there was a greater focus this academic year on maintenance. The Co-opted Member noted that these accidents were occurring with new students and the Head of Estates and Safety reported that students are required to complete an induction, risk assessments, safe systems of work sign off before they were allowed to start working with tools.

The Co-opted Member enquired whether there had been any development on dynamic risk assessments. The Head of Estates and Safety reported that there hadn't been any records of dynamic risk assessments being made. The Co-opted Member asked whether this meant that dynamic risk assessments were not being undertaken or only that they weren't being recorded. The Head of Estates and Safety responded that she thought that both were probably a factor. He suggested reviewing this as he argued that dynamic risk assessments should be recorded and that this would enable confidence that they were being undertaken. The Head of Estates and Safety would review this.

The Co-opted Member enquired regarding health and safety videos for contractors commenting that there was a risk that attention might not be given to these. The Head of Estates and Safety responded that a member of the Health and Safety team was present for the videos and those in attendance were required to answer questions after viewing. The Principal added that there was also follow up in any cases where the health and safety induction was not complied with and a repeat induction was required in these instances.

A Member enquired whether there was any student involvement in risk assessments. The Head of Estates and Safety responded that risk assessments were largely undertaken by technicians and the teaching team and she did not know how involved students were in this but confirmed that students were required to read and sign their compliance with risk assessments. She added that she would pick this up in meetings that she has scheduled with Heads of Learning.

The Chair enquired regarding noise with the current Transformation Project. She suggested reviewing the Gantt chart of works to ensure that noise wasn't an issue during exam periods. The Head of Estates and Safety confirmed that this had been reviewed by the senior leadership team (SLT). Staff would be made aware when noise may be expected but so far there had not been any noise or disruption. She added that there were control measures in place to reduce noise and dust.

The Committee RECOMMENDED the Health and Safety Annual Report 2024/25 for APPROVAL by Corporation.

42/25 ESTATES REPORT

The Head of Estates and Safety presented the Estates Report. She reported that the College had received £745k from the FE College Condition Allocation Fund to improve the condition and prevent deterioration of College buildings and grounds, prioritising safety and keeping buildings operational. The College has until March 2028 to complete all works. She also reported that an M&E (mechanical and electrical) survey had been completed on behalf of the DfE as part of the FE Condition Data Collection 2 (FE CDC2) survey. The College was awaiting feedback from the DfE expected within six months. Invest to Save funds have been used to install photovoltaics (PV) on the roofs of S and B blocks and at CECAMM. Works to install Light-Emitting Diode (LED) lighting into B and L blocks would commence during half-term. A refurbishment of the restaurant had been completed during the summer. Planning approval was awaited to add a lift to G block and convert some of the open space on the top floor into three additional classrooms. Planning approval had now been granted to complete property condition survey works on D block. It was expected that works would take place in November. All recommendations from the site accessibility audit in October 2024 have now been carried out. An update was also provided of figures for defects by category and progress in rectifying these.

A Co-opted Member commended progress. There were no questions.

The Chair reported that she had attended an Association of Colleges (AoC) meeting at which it was reported that it was expected that capital funding in the future would be via allocations rather than grant funding.

The Committee NOTED the report for ASSURANCE and ALERT to Corporation.

The Head of Estates and Safety departed the meeting.

43/25 ACTIVE CAPITAL PROJECTS: PROGRESS UPDATE (CONFIDENTIAL)

44/25 MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT: MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS INCLUDING CFFR

The Interim Director of Finance presented the Monthly Finance Report. The key points were as follows:

The report provided the management accounts for August 2025. As this was the first month of the new academic year there was limited information about the 2025-26 year. The report provided:

- 1) The draft financial outturn for the 2024-25 year.
- 2) Information to date for the 2025-26 year.

The draft surplus for the 2024-25 year is £704k being £553k ahead of budget. Draft EBITDA is £1,604k being £547k ahead of budget producing EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization) educational income of 8.6%, ahead of the FE Commissioner's 6% benchmark. EBITDA has improved by £206k on the CFFR (College Financial Forecasting Return) which is the result of franchise delivery being lower than the contract provided to the franchise providers (the College always provides for the maximum contract amount). The improvement moves the College slightly into the Outstanding financial health range (being the minimum 240 points) although this includes items relating the write back of old provisions which if removed would move the College back to Good (230 points). These figures are still to be audited. All of the College's financial loan covenants have been met with this result. Cash holdings at 31 July 2025 are higher than the CFFR forecast at £7,311k due to the additional surplus in year. Cash holdings at 31 August 2025 are £7,338k. The College's payroll for August and September supports the College's budget for 2025-26. The curriculum is being delivered within the expected posts. There have been no issues in other costs lines to date. It was too early to comment upon student recruitment to determine any financial impact.

The Chair raised an enquiry regarding table 1 of the report and the variances referenced separately. The Interim Director of Finance confirmed that they were referencing the same variance. A Member asked looking at the direction of travel how did the Interim Director see the finances evolving. The Interim Director of Finance responded that it was very early on in the academic year but that the news so far was positive. The ability to negotiate high needs funding from the Local Authority was key as there were increased costs and increased learners, he said. A cautious view was taken in budgets in this respect but conversations were positive, he reported. Budgets had been prepared including all staff positions and a pay award had been made. The Chief Operating Officer and Deputy CEO reported that student recruitment had been positive so far and indications were that the College would exceed its allocation, and therefore if there were any growth awards in year the College would benefit from that. The key now was to retain those students, she added.

The Chair enquired whether the College was likely to have any T Level clawback in-year. The Chief Operating Officer and Deputy CEO responded that it was the College's practice to make provision for a clawback and this had been done. She added that T Level numbers were a challenge and whilst numbers were increasing she did not expect the College to meet its allocation.

The Interim Director of Finance reported that the College has provisioned for the Association of Colleges (AoC) recommended pay award of 4%. The Principal clarified that whilst this had been provisioned for, it was important to be aware that until the College was clear on its final numbers, high needs funding, scale of clawback on T Levels, and apprenticeship recruitment, this had not yet been announced to staff. She reminded Members that in July Corporation approved a 3% pay award plus a non-consolidated 1% award and staff had been informed of this award. She added that the College was hoping to achieve the 4% pay award, that is an additional 1% but before doing so wanted to be clear that the College had reached its 16-19 numbers, that students were retained after the 42 days, that the College had achieved the apprenticeship recruitment required, and to ensure there was no drop in EBITDA. There would be a decision on the 1% as soon as possible, she reported. The Chief Operating Officer and Deputy CEO added that staff had been advised that the College would be seeking to achieve the AoC recommendation contingent on the factors outlined.

The Interim Director of Finance reported that cash was in a positive position.

The Chair commended the outturn for 2024-25 as a positive result. The Co-opted Member praised the financial position and commented on how significantly this had changed since 2019.

The Committee NOTED the Monthly Finance Report, Management Accounts, Forecast, and Financial Position to August 2025, and the outturn for 2024-25 for ASSURANCE to Corporation.

45/25 HR ANNUAL REPORT

The Head of HR (Human Resources, People & Culture) presented the HR Annual Report for 2024-25. The College had had a challenging year with the introduction of a new team working together, changing historic working patterns, ensuring compliance, and reaching out to staff as much as possible. She reported that the team had developed and were working together well, and that with the introduction of the new HR system and the new iRecruit platform, alongside streamlining processes, the department was in a stronger position to be able to support and address concerns raised by managers and staff, in addition to supporting the strategic direction of the College. The focus for the coming academic year was further streamlining, and utilising AI (artificial intelligence) and systems to enable the department to improve support to staff. The department would also be introducing a new mental health and wellbeing pilot in partnership with Solent Mind with sessions offered on a different subject each month. Another area for focus would be on reducing sickness. She reported that significant strides had been made in the last year. The new HR system would support this further with quantifiable data and improved return to work reporting, she reported. She added that it was also important to understand the root causes of sickness and to address these as much as possible.

A Member, referring to the number of days lost to sickness categorised under 'psychological conditions', enquired whether this was focused around a few staff members or was more widespread. The Head of HR (People & Culture) reported that it was a mix, there were several employees on long-term sickness absence with ongoing mental health issues but there were also short-term absences where mental health was cited as the reason by staff members. She added that the College was also looking at how efficient return to work interviews were and supporting managers to identify the root causes of sickness absence where there were mental health issues that had not been declared and the College were not alerted to. There were around 15 staff receiving external support for mental health from their General Practitioner (GP). The College was working in these instances to identify any adjustments that could be made.

The Chair enquired regarding the capacity of the HR team and whether reported challenges were due to vacancies, temporary workload issues with the introduction of new systems, or an ongoing situation that was not sustainable. The Head of HR (People & Culture) responded that on reflection it was a combination of the factors identified. The team had been affected by maternity leave, resignation, and a member of staff reducing their hours, and there had been a vacancy for the period of maternity leave. Recruitment had proved very difficult, and she had observed that in the last two years the market for qualified Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) professionals with experience that was transferable to the education sector was challenging. A new recruitment assistant had been appointed from another sector. It was hoped that in the next six months there would be a gradual decrease in pressure on the team but that pressure would continue as the department sought to ensure compliance and improve support which would result in more case files.

The Chair asked how comfortable the Head of HR (People & Culture) was that she would be able to fill the vacancy in the team. She responded that she had reached out to people in her local HR network. She had identified that there was potentially a market for part-time HR professionals who were seeking another role to top up to a full time role. She planned to test this market. If it wasn't possible to recruit HR specialist she may need to look at increasing administrative support to reduce pressure, she said.

The Chair raised a query on reporting regarding staff turnover and asked whether the workforce was growing. The Head of HR (People & Culture) confirmed that turnover was 3% and the workforce was growing, for example recruiting additional Learning Support Assistants (LSA) for high needs students.

The Chair enquired regarding mandatory training. She enquired whether all aspects of training were mandatory for all staff. The Head of HR (People & Culture) responded that there were some aspects that were focused in specialist areas. The Chair commented that she was not able to see from the report how the figures for staff training compared to target. The Head of HR (People & Culture) reported that she would provide that data.

The Chair referred to employment legislation changes regarding increasing probation periods and enquired whether there were any plans for the College to increase its probation periods. The Head of HR (People & Culture) responded that she had attended the AoC HR conference the day before the meeting and the AoC had reported that they had not received confirmation on this issue. The expectation was that day one rights would be reduced and a mandatory probationary period introduced for all employers with a revised procedure for dismissal. This would not be a College procedure but a law that the College would need to follow. It was expected to be a probation of six months with a maximum extension to nine months. She reported that the College's current probation was nine months with a maximum extension to twelve months.

A Co-opted Member raised an enquiry regarding disclosure and barring service (DBS) check. The Head of HR (People & Culture) reported that there were delays with local police force checks which she was following up on.

The Chair enquired regarding a cyberattack of one of the companies that undertakes DBS checks and asked if the College had been affected. The Head of HR (People & Culture) responded that the College had not been alerted to any issues by its DBS platform provider.

The Committee RECOMMENDED the Annual HR Report 2024-25 for APPROVAL by Corporation and ALERTED Corporation to new and updated legislation.

46/25 DRAFT 3AS REPORT TO OCTOBER CORPORATION

The Director of Governance explained that this would form the Committee's report to Corporation of those items that the Committee wished to alert Corporation to, assure Corporation on, and recommend for approval or action. The report would be drafted in consultation with the Chair and circulated to Members for comment and approval prior to inclusion in the board pack.

47/25 GOVERNOR SELF-REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair led Members in a self-review of the meeting. A Co-opted Member commended the meeting for not 'getting stuck in the weeds' and commented that the discussion was relevant. Another Co-opted Member commended the rounded agenda and discussion. A Member commented that the meeting was well managed and the reports were comprehensive. The Chair thanked staff for the well-balanced papers.

48/25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

49/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 25th Feb 2026