

Corporation Board

Wednesday 1 July 2026, 16:30 - 18:00

Boardroom (Teams available)

Attendees

Board Members

Stuart Lindeman (Chair), Lou Mycroft, John Croot, Sue Martin-Standley, Jason Evans, Chantal Brown, Peter Dewhurst, Jan Hemper, Leigh McKenzie, Jill Mannion-Brunt (Absent from: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5.1, 5.2, 6, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 7, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8, 8.2, 9, 10), Andrew Kelly, Julie Richards (Principal & CEO), Emma Long (Staff Governor (Curriculum)), Nicola Beldham (Staff Governor (Support)), Lily-Anna Radford (Apprentice Governor), Amy Kingham (Student Governor)

Absent: Howard Freeman

In Attendance:

Jessica Shore (Head of Governance), Claire Godfrey (Deputy Principal), Tom Kidsley (CFO), Jo Down (AP Student Experience & Wellbeing), Craig Acaster (AP People & Culture), Michaela Greaves (AP Teaching, Learning & Quality Improvement)

Meeting Minutes

1. Apologies & Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed members and formally welcomed Emma Long to her first formal Corporation Board meeting as Staff Governor. The apologies recorded above were received and noted by the Board.

Members were reminded of the need to declare any interests in relation to agenda items. No declarations were made in respect of Part 1 business.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Decision

The Part 1 minutes of the previous Corporation Board meetings held 20 May 2026 were reviewed and agreed as a true and accurate record. The review of confidential minutes is recorded under Part 2.

The action log was reviewed and there were no matters arising. Previous actions were updated and either marked as complete or carried forward as appropriate. (*Refer to Corporation Action Log – 1.7.26*)

Resolution: The Board **approved** the non-confidential minutes (Part 1) of the previous meeting

3. Student & Apprentice Governor Report

The Student Governor (AKi) and Apprentice Governor (LR) presented their report.

The Board heard that recent student consultation activity had focused on the future development of the Empower Personal Development Curriculum, Freshers' activities, clubs and societies, mentoring opportunities and wider enrichment.

LR reported that the Association of Apprentices had delivered training to Work-Based Tutors and Curriculum Managers regarding the new apprentice engagement platform due to launch in August 2026. The platform would provide networking opportunities, communication tools and personal development resources for apprentices.

AKi highlighted plans to introduce a student mentoring and buddy system to strengthen peer support, improve transition arrangements and create additional leadership opportunities for students. Students had

also expressed a desire for greater integration between apprentices, adults and full-time students.

CH: The Board queried how the proposed mentoring arrangements would support apprentices and adult students who can sometimes feel less connected to the wider college community. AKi/LR explained that the mentoring model would create additional support networks, improve confidence amongst new learners and provide an accessible alternative to approaching staff directly. It would also help apprentices and adult students feel more included within the College community.

Governors welcomed the consultation outcomes and noted that they reflected meaningful and authentic student voice.

On behalf of the board, LMy expressed appreciation for the contribution made by the Student and Apprentice Governors and acknowledged the support provided by JD in developing student voice activity.

Resolution: The Board **received and noted** the Student & Apprentice Governor Report.

4. Staff Governor Report

The Staff Governors for Support (NB) and Curriculum (EL) presented the Staff Governor Report and provided an overview of developments since the previous Board meeting.

NB reported that the new Workload Agreement for teaching staff had now been implemented. The agreement provided clearer expectations regarding teaching contact hours, administration requirements, remission arrangements and associated responsibilities. The developments had been positively received by staff and recognised trade unions. The AP People & Culture (CA) advised that, following the request from trade union representatives, work had subsequently commenced on a similar agreement for non-teaching delivery staff, including Learning Support Assistants and Personal Development Coaches.

CH: The Board welcomed the focus on men's mental health and sought assurance regarding staff engagement with wellbeing initiatives. NB confirmed that engagement with recent wellbeing activities had been strong, including the Men's Mental Health Breakfast. Staff feedback had been overwhelmingly positive. EL shared feedback received from colleagues regarding the recent Wellbeing Day. The event had been particularly well received, with staff suggesting further social and wellbeing activities in future. The AP Teaching, Learning & Quality Improvement (MG) confirmed that wellbeing initiatives were already included within plans for the next academic year.

CH: The Board queried the reference within the report to sickness absence and turnover amongst Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and requested greater context regarding the scale of the issue. NB explained that sickness absence and turnover within the LSA cohort remained above the College average. A comprehensive review of the SEND and inclusion infrastructure was underway, focusing on progression opportunities, staff support, wellbeing and workforce integration.

CH: PD reflected on discussions with students during the recent Link Governor visit centred around inclusion and observed that students appeared engaged and well supported. He sought assurance regarding consistency across the wider organisation. NB acknowledged that whilst many areas operated effectively, there remained opportunities to improve consistency and strengthen inclusion further. PD asked whether the LSAs had sufficient opportunities to collaborate and share effective practice. NB confirmed that the LSAs met regularly and were based together. EL added that improvements to planning processes and communication arrangements were also being implemented to improve consistency.

CA provided additional context regarding sickness absence data, explaining that three long-term sickness cases had had a disproportionate impact on the reported figures. He advised that absence levels were beginning to reduce and highlighted a revised sickness absence procedure currently under consultation.

The Principal (JR) drew attention to the College's recently announced £279k Inclusive Mainstream Fund allocation, which would support implementation of SEND reforms and strengthen inclusive provision across the organisation.

CH: The Chair (SL) observed that a significant amount of work was taking place across the SEND and Inclusion agenda and suggested it would be helpful for the Board to receive a dedicated update at a future meeting. He noted the strategic importance of the area, particularly in light of Ofsted priorities, planned investment, workforce developments and the wider SEND reform programme.

JR agreed and advised that the timing would be guided by progress against the review. She anticipated that a detailed update could be presented to the Board in the Autumn Term.

Action: SMT to present an update on the SEND and Inclusion review in the Autumn Term, including the use of Inclusive Mainstream Funding, LSA development plans, infrastructure proposals, and progress on retention and wellbeing initiatives.

The Board **received and noted** the Staff Governor Report.

5. Performance Report

The Board received the Performance Report and members were referred to the full report within the meeting papers, which had been scrutinised in detail by the Standards & Performance Committee; including student and employer feedback, safeguarding and EDI updates, performance KPIs and associated risks. CG provided an overview of the key focus areas.

CH: In considering the wider Performance Report, the Board asked about references to Green Skills and volunteering within the student feedback. The AP Teaching, Learning & Quality Improvement (MG) explained that Green Skills had been a key focus within personal development during the year and that the Green Skills Changemaker approach was intended to increase understanding and awareness among both students and staff.

CG then provided an overview of the key focus areas which are minuted below.

5.1. Predicted 2025/26 Outcomes

CG presented the latest predicted outcomes for 2025/26. The position indicated continued year-on-year improvement in classroom-based achievement, with overall achievement forecast at approximately 85.1% and adult achievement at approximately 86.1%. Apprenticeship performance remained strong. Although English and maths attendance remained an area of focus, current projections did not indicate a material impact on overall pass rates if performance remained in line with the previous year.

CH: LMCK asked about the implications of apprenticeship standard changes and the College's readiness to deliver the newly approved provision. CG advised that approval had been received to run a number of new standards. Some required more depth of knowledge and delivery planning than originally anticipated, particularly within engineering; however, the Artificial Intelligence (AI) provision had been progressed immediately and recruitment was underway for an AI specialist to lead this work across the organisation and support employer engagement.

CH: PD referred to his written challenge submitted prior to the meeting and asked whether the College was doing enough with employers to understand what being work-ready now required. CG confirmed that employer involvement was a firm requirement within curriculum planning and that new provision would not be approved without appropriate employer engagement and endorsement. She also highlighted uncertainty arising from delayed apprenticeship incentives, which could affect employers' willingness to recruit apprentices in September, and advised that the risks were being reviewed.

Discussion broadened to the potential for full-cost commercial provision, particularly management and team-leading development where apprenticeship funding was no longer available. Governors reflected on pressures facing employers, particularly SMEs, and the importance of both incentives and productivity.

The Chair (SL) linked the discussion to the forthcoming strategic planning cycle and Board Away Day, whilst governors highlighted the increasing centrality of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for employers and reflected on

recent business events where AI-enabled productivity had featured prominently and noted the potential opportunity for the College.

Action: CG to provide further information on AI developments, employer engagement and associated curriculum opportunities.

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5.2. Annual EDI Statement

The AP Student Experience & Wellbeing (JD) presented the EDI Annual Statement and highlighted progress against the College's strategic objectives, including wellbeing and inclusion, meaningful workforce initiatives and the embedding of inclusion within the Empower Personal Development Curriculum. The SEND Lead Governor (CB) confirmed that the statement had been scrutinised by the EDI Committee and was recommended to the Board for approval.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the Annual EDI Statement, as recommended by the EDI Committee.

6. Finance & Corporate Services Report

The CFO (TK) presented the Finance & Corporate Services Report and key focus areas covering the latest financial position, the 2026/27 budget and three-year financial plan, risk and bad debt write-off. An additional initial scoping proposal on student travel support was also considered.

6.1. Student Travel Subsidy Proposal

The Principal (JR) introduced work exploring free or subsidised travel for students living more than ten miles from College as part of the recruitment, retention and attendance strategy. The attendance analysis presented demonstrated a clear relationship between distance from College and attendance. TK outlined the current arrangements with Stagecoach and advised that a further planning meeting was scheduled to explore whether a better commercial offer could be secured if the College purchased a substantially larger number of passes. The Board recognised the potential to remove a significant barrier to attendance and recruitment in fringe areas. The indicative cost of extending support to the wider six-to-ten-mile group was noted to be considerably higher, while the more targeted proposal still represented a significant unbudgeted commitment and therefore required careful consideration once student numbers were clearer.

CH: PD referred to regional transport developments discussed at a recent partnership summit and asked whether EMCCA could provide support. JR confirmed that the College had participated in the regional transport consultation, including extensive consultation with students, but had not yet received an outcome. She agreed that the issue should continue to be pursued with EMCCA.

CH: AKi asked about student feedback. The proposal was expected to be welcomed by students, although members acknowledged the need to consider carefully how any scheme would be introduced and sustained for students across programme years.

CH: SMS asked how the College would monitor whether the scheme was successful. JR confirmed that students receiving a pass could be separately identified, enabling reporting on attendance, retention and progress. The implementation arrangements would therefore incorporate ongoing monitoring and any appropriate attendance expectations.

CH: LMy highlighted the link to the College's sustainable travel ambitions, which members agreed should be considered within the final proposal.

The Board supported continued exploration within an agreed cost envelope. JR emphasised that any scheme would need to be promoted quickly if it was to influence September recruitment and proposed that, following TK's meeting with Stagecoach and further consideration by SMT, a firm proposal should be circulated to the Board by Written Resolution.

Action: Meet with Stagecoach to negotiate bus pass pricing, finalise the travel subsidy proposal and circulate a written resolution with a firm proposal for Board approval via Written Resolution over the summer.

Resolution: The Board **agreed** to consider the final proposal for approval via Written Resolution.

Decision

6.2. Management Accounts – Period 9

TK presented the Period 9 Management Accounts, noting that these had already been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Finance & Corporate Services Committee. The latest forecast indicated year-end Educational EBITDA of approximately £3.2m, a slight improvement on the position reported at Period 8 and ahead of the original budget.

Governors were referred to the sensitivity analysis, which modelled a range of potential year-end outcomes. The analysis showed Educational EBITDA ranging from approximately £2.3m in the worst-case scenario to £3.8m in the best-case scenario, compared with the central forecast of £3.2m and an original budget of £2.5m. The principal variables within the sensitivity analysis included 16-18 in-year growth funding, apprenticeship income, Adult Skills Fund income, additional pay costs and agency reliance, and the potential impact of non-pay inflation remaining above the level assumed within the budget.

TK confirmed that, since the previous report to the Board, the College had received confirmation that 16-18 in-year growth funding would be paid at 75%. Although the funding had not yet been received, payment was expected in July and would be incorporated into the next forecast. TK advised that this was expected to improve Educational EBITDA from the current £3.2m forecast to approximately £3.6m-£3.7m, which was described as a significant positive movement in the anticipated year-end position.

All other financial health measures and sector benchmark calculations remained broadly consistent with the position previously reported to the Board and were detailed within the supporting papers.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the Period 9 Management Accounts.

6.3. Curriculum Planning - Budget 2026/27 and 3-Year Financial Plan

Decision

TK presented the 2026/27 Budget and Three-Year Financial Plan, which had been scrutinised by the Finance & Corporate Services Committee. The presentation summarised the strategic assumptions, curriculum efficiency considerations, demographic growth opportunity, financial resilience, income diversification, capital investment plans and key risks and contingencies. The budget had been prepared prudently, including no assumed funding-rate increase, and forecast strong financial health across the planning period.

Governors discussed the continuing transition to T-Levels and the additional delivery hours associated with the qualification, together with the need to monitor curriculum efficiency carefully. The capital programme and use of reserves were considered in the context of curriculum investment, ICT infrastructure and the longer-term estates plan.

CH: Governors asked about income diversification and the opportunity to develop commercial activity, including links to Green Skills. TK confirmed that diversification remained an important strategic focus. Potential growth areas included Level 7 and employer-funded full-cost provision, with engineering and construction identified as areas that could lend themselves to a stronger commercial offer.

TK also updated the Board on a national funding announcement received that afternoon which had implications for the assumptions around pay and employment costs. The detailed pay position was considered under Part 2.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked TK and the Finance Team for the work undertaken and also recognised the prior scrutiny provided by JC and the Finance & Corporate Services Committee.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the 2026/27 Budget and Three-Year Financial Plan.

6.4. Risk Register

The Board received the updated Risk Register, which had already been subject to detailed review by the Audit Committee.

The report recorded an increased likelihood for the risk relating to failure to adapt and respond to student inclusivity, reflecting the ongoing review of Additional Learning Support and proposed capacity enhancement. It also confirmed that the overall Health & Safety risk remained high and highlighted increased focus arising from Business Continuity Planning audit recommendations and preparations associated with Martyn's Law.

TK confirmed that the register was presented for noting and no further questions were raised at this point. A later discussion under the tannoy system/lockdown item resulted in an explicit request to bring the updated lockdown and evacuation procedures back to the Board for approval so that the Risk Register could be updated accordingly.

6.5. Bad Debt Write Off

TK presented the proposed bad debt write-off of £14,753.77. The amount related to three debts which had already been placed with the College's debt collection agency. Members were advised that progressing to the next stage of recovery would incur fees which would outweigh the likely value recovered and further action was therefore not considered financially proportionate.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the bad debt write-off of £14,753.77.

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7. Corporate Report

The Principal (JR) introduced the Corporate Report and referred members to the standing updates within the full report on corporate risks, Health & Safety and in-year KPIs, together with the items requiring Board approval.

7.1. Annual Accountability Statement

JR highlighted the headline priorities within the Annual Accountability Agreement and their alignment with the College mission, Strategic Plan and developing the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), which had been submitted through the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA).

The Board welcomed the document, noting that it reinforced the mission and key priorities and built on the previous year.

JR explained that preparation required the College to map its strategic plan back to LSIP priorities and that the Accountability Agreement was becoming increasingly meaningful within the Government's approach to holding colleges accountable for meeting local skills needs and future funding arrangements.

CH: Governors noted the number of targets and asked whether performance against the agreement would be measured separately. JR confirmed that these were effectively the same College priorities presented through the Government accountability framework and would be monitored through existing strategic and KPI arrangements. It was noted that this area was receiving increased scrutiny through Ofsted.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the Annual Accountability Agreement 2026/27.

7.2. KPIs 2026/27

The Board considered the proposed KPIs for the 2026/27. Most measures remained unchanged; however, CG invited particular consideration of the attendance target because of the increasing national and Ofsted focus on attendance.

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CH: The Board highlighted that the attendance measure needed to be stretching while remaining realistic. JR cautioned that increasing the target further could make it unrealistic against the current position.

CH: The Board emphasised the importance of starting points, particularly for students who arrived at College having experienced significant barriers to attendance. Governors suggested retaining a high aspirational target, while supplementing it with data showing the progress of students with identified barriers so that the significant impact achieved could also be demonstrated.

Governors supported a more nuanced presentation of the data which maintained high aspirations but demonstrated progress from different starting points. CG agreed to revisit the measure and also suggested that a separate aspirational student-facing attendance target could be considered. **Action: Review and propose a method of reporting attendance KPIs that maintains high aspirations, whilst also demonstrating progress for learners with significant barriers to attendance. Revisit for Board approval via Written Resolution over the summer.**

CH: PD suggested a future KPI on partnership development or employer engagement and, over time, a way of determining the College's return on this work. JR confirmed that an employer partnership measure was already being developed around strategic partners, social value and work experience. Partnership Coordinators would also be given targets intended to broaden employer engagement beyond employers already involved in apprenticeships. **Action: Draft and circulate a proposal for an employer engagement/strategic partnership KPI for 2026/27, including proposed targets and measures for growth, for Board approval via Written Resolution over the summer.**

CH: LMy requested that Green Skills and the planet agenda be reflected when the next three-year strategic plan and associated measures were developed, informed by the Green Skills Strategic Group and national roadmap. JR agreed.

Subject to the revised attendance proposal and the additions above, members were comfortable with the remaining KPIs.

Resolution: The Board **agreed** to consider the revised KPIs for approval via Written Resolution.

7.3. Strategic Plan/Priorities

JR presented the proposed high-level strategic priorities for 2026/27, explaining that they linked directly to the Strategic Plan, Self-Assessment Report, Quality Improvement Plan, Business Plans and Accountability Agreement. The Board noted that the priorities reflected matters already being reported through committees and Board. The Chair (SL) reminded members that the planned January Board Away Day would support further work on the subsequent strategic planning cycle.

No further questions were raised.

Resolution: The Board **approved** the Strategic Priorities for 2026/27.

7.4. Tannoy System Update

JR provided an update on the proposed tannoy system, referring to the detailed lockdown report within the papers. The Board had previously supported the principle of strengthening emergency communication arrangements but had deferred a final decision to allow further research and benchmarking to be undertaken. It was confirmed that the additional work undertaken continued to identify a site-wide tannoy system as the safest option and one with wider practical uses.

CH: LMy asked whether the cost had been revisited. TK confirmed that the quotation had been revised but remained in excess of £300k.

CH: The Staff Governor (Curriculum), expressed that she supported the proposal from a staff perspective, drawing on previous experience of a similar system and explaining the benefit of everyone immediately understanding what was happening. Her own experience of the text-alert trial had worked because she had

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her phone with her, but this could not be assumed in all settings. The Student governor (AKi) similarly noted that students in theatre or performance activity would not necessarily have phones available.

CH: SMS asked whether a distinctive alarm could provide an alternative to a tannoy. JR explained that the existing fire alarm was programmed across different zones and was not considered technically suitable. An alarm alone would also be unable to provide dynamic instructions and could create a risk of people evacuating when the required response was to remain secure.

CH: LMCK asked whether parents and guardians would be informed. JR explained that the immediate priority would be to secure the building and work with the police, with wider communication following at the appropriate point to avoid panic or people travelling to campus and increasing risk.

CH: JC asked whether the work had been informed by counter-terrorism advice. It was confirmed that this advice underpinned the research and identified a tannoy system as the gold-standard approach for dynamic emergency communication. Members recognised the low-likelihood but potentially catastrophic nature of the risk.

LMy confirmed that the additional research addressed her earlier concerns and that she was satisfied this represented the safest and most ethical decision.

TK informed the Board of the internal audit recommendation for Board approval of the new lockdown and evacuation procedures. **Action: Bring the updated lockdown and evacuation procedures back to the Board for approval and update the Risk Register accordingly. Share with the Audit Committee/Board.**

Resolution: The Board **approved** the PA/tannoy system and the recommended lockdown and evacuation arrangements, recognising the Governing Body's responsibility for these arrangements in the context of Martyn's Law.

8. Governance Report

The Head of Governance (JS) presented the Governance Report, which provided an overview of key governance activity since the previous Board meeting. In addition to the areas highlighted for discussion, members received the standing governance information relating to meeting attendance, ratified committee minutes, policy approvals, Chair's Action, Written Resolutions and use of the College Seal.

Resolution: The Board **received and noted** the Governance Report.

8.1. Membership

JS provided an update on Board and Committee membership. Members noted that there were two external governor vacancies. Targeted recruitment continued for one vacancy, with the Governance & Search Committee having previously recommended seeking an individual with third-sector experience. The second vacancy would arise following Sue Martin-Standley's resignation from the Board, effective 8 July 2026. SMS had confirmed her intention to remain involved in governance as a co-opted member of the Standards & Performance Committee. On behalf of the Board, JS formally thanked SMS for her significant contribution as a governor and welcomed her continued involvement through the Standards & Performance Committee.

Attention was also drawn to the vacancy on the Audit Committee following SL's appointment as Chair of Corporation. Targeted recruitment was underway through the College's employer network. The EDI Lead Governor role also remained vacant.

8.2. Link Governor Scheme & Stakeholder Engagement 2026/27

JS invited governors to consider the approach to Link Governor engagement during 2026/27. In response to previous governor feedback, the Triumvirate had proposed broadening the scheme to incorporate greater external stakeholder engagement, including employer forums, site visits and other opportunities for governors to engage directly with key stakeholders.

The Board discussed retaining the existing quality and inspection-focused elements of governor engagement whilst creating additional opportunities for governors to develop their understanding of employer and stakeholder priorities. The programme would continue to provide opportunities for governors to participate in curriculum and quality-focused visits, while a separate schedule of employer forums and stakeholder engagement opportunities would be developed for 2026/27.

Action: Develop and circulate a calendar for stakeholder engagement opportunities for governors in 2026/27.

9. Statutory Reporting & Lead Governor Reports

The Board received the Lead Governor reports covering Health & Safety, Safeguarding, Green Skills and Digital. The reports provided the detailed assurance from Lead Governor activity undertaken since the previous Board meeting. No additional substantive challenge was raised at this point. The Chair thanked the Lead Governors for their continued engagement and reporting.

Resolution: The Board **received and noted** the Lead Governor Reports.

10. Date of Next Meeting

- Mandatory Safeguarding & Prevent Training - Wednesday, 23 September 2026 - 4.30-6.30pm (online)
- Corporation Board - Wednesday, 21 October 2026

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