

Part I Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 1st July 2025 in conference room I, Broadway

Members Present: Julius Adams Diana Martin
 Liam Butler (Teams) Mphathisi Ncube
 Sally Cornfield Paul Noon (Chair)
 Nirmal Gupta Jason Parker
 Paul Hartridge Liz Sithole (Teams)
 Deborah Ibojo Jack Stokes (outgoing Student Governor)
 Kaynat Ahmad (incoming Student Governor)

In Attendance: Rachel Corns (Vice Principal)
 Gill Darwood (Director of Corporate Governance) (DCG)
 Susanne Davies (Director IoT and Partnerships)
 Debbie Goode (Executive Director Public Affairs & Marketing)
 Kathryn Jones (Director of HR)
 Louise Jones (Chief Finance Officer) (CFO)
 Claire Millard (Vice Principal)
 Kaynat Ahmad (SU President and Student Governor 2025-26)

Board administrative matters

1 Confirmation of quorum

1.1 The Director of Corporate Governance (DCG) confirmed that a quorum was present.

2 Apologies for absence

2.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Wendy Davies, Ana Ferreira, Sarah Wood, Matthew Collins, Lord Ian Austin, Tom Westley and Steve Johnson.

3 Formal thanks to outgoing Student Governors and welcome to new Student Governor

3.1 The Chair expressed the thanks of members to Deborah Ibojo and Jack Stokes, student governors who were both attending their final meeting.

3.2 Members welcomed Kaynat Ahmad, new Student Governor with effect from 1st July 2025, to the meeting.

3.3 The Chair presented the CEP with an award for completing 20 years' service with the College. Members noted that other staff had received recognition of their long service at a presentation lunch on 26th July.

3.4 **It was resolved** to note the appointment of Kaynat Ahmad as Student Governor with effect from 1st July 2025.

4 Declarations of interest

4.1 There were no declarations of interest relating to part I agenda items.

5 Minutes of previous meeting on 18th March and notes of Development Event on 2nd May 2025

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2025 were confirmed as a true record by members.

5.2 The notes of the development event held on 2nd May 2025 were also confirmed as a true record by members.

6 Matters arising

6.1 There were no outstanding matters arising from the previous meetings.

Strategic matters

7 Commercially sensitive - Institute of Technology update

This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.

8 Construction Technical Excellence Colleges

8.1 The CEP advised that, on 12th June, the Government had announced the first round of applications for Technical Excellence Colleges. The first round would see ten technical excellence colleges linked to Construction established across the country, with one in each region and one national college.

8.2 The successful colleges would be expected to have the capability and capacity to support colleges across the region for the benefit of all learners. Members noted the criteria outlined in the document and considered that the College was well positioned to meet these criteria and that this represented an excellent opportunity for the College.

8.3 The CEP noted that she was working collaboratively with the Principals of a number of other West Midlands colleges who were also intending to submit applications, to agree endorsement for each others' applications, which were due for submission by 4th July.

8.4 **It was resolved** to note the update on the Construction Technical Excellence Colleges and endorse the College's application.

Student centred matters

9 Students at the centre of all we do – annual update

9.1 Members received a presentation from Claire Millard and Rachel Corns which highlighted key achievements and developments in relation to student engagement, outcomes, and progression across the College. Key points were noted as:

- Learner Numbers:
 - Over 5,000 16–18 learners enrolled, including 467 studying T Levels and 656 at Dudley Sixth.
 - Adult provision remained strong with over 4,600 enrolments.
 - Apprenticeship numbers exceeded 1,800.
 - Record HE intake with 738 learners on higher-level or modular programmes.
- Learner Outcomes:
 - Retention rates were high across 16–18 and adult cohorts (90%).
 - Achievement was predicted to improve across all key client groups.

- Strong predicted high-grade outcomes at Dudley Sixth (76% A*–C).
- Over 1,600 learners sat GCSE maths and English resits, with improved attendance noted.
- Increase in supported internships and employer engagement.
- Continued positive relationship with the WMCA.
- Learner Voice – Survey Outcomes:
 - High levels of learner satisfaction across all groups (16–18, adults, and apprentices).
 - Positive feedback on teaching, resources, support for mental health, and feelings of safety.
 - Notably, 97–99% of adult learners and apprentices understood the importance of respect and tolerance.
 - 90% of learners felt safe in College.
- Enrichment & Achievements:
 - Sporting successes across volleyball, basketball and football, including national and regional recognition.
 - Strong performance in skills competitions, with learners competing in over 18 areas and achieving top placements, including in business, early years and graphic design.
 - Growth in external competitions and national recognition (e.g. Teen Tech Gold Awards, Pedley Fashion Award).
- Community Engagement and Facilities:
 - Opening of the Animal Management building and Aspire charity shop.
 - High-quality learner work showcased at Artsfest.
 - Community fundraising activities.
- Looking Ahead:
 - Over 4,700 new applicants and 2,400 progressing learners already enrolled for the new academic year, including 571 T Level applicants.
 - A structured transition and induction approach in place, focusing on skills development, progression pathways and early intervention.
 - Continued roll out of T Levels including additional pathways of Marketing and potentially Media.

9.2 In response to a question from M Ncube, the CEP advised that student satisfaction surveys were undertaken each year and that benchmarking with other similar colleges was included in the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment.

9.3 **It was resolved** to note the ‘students at the centre of all we do’ presentation.

10 **Student Union summer term report**

10.1 J Stokes presented a summary of the Students’ Union summer term report and highlighted the following areas of activity:

- Reflection on his two-year term, highlighting major achievements including campaigns on cost-of-living, voter registration, and mental health.
- Presidential elections were held with record engagement (1,200 votes). Kaynat Ahmad was elected President for 2025–26—the first from the Brierley Hill campus.
- A month-long structured handover from Jack to Kaynat ensured continuity and leadership development.

- Dudley SU played a national role at the NUS England Conference, where its submitted policies on “Tackling the Far-Right” and “Investing in FE Students’ Unions” were adopted as national priorities.
- Jack and Kaynat attended a Parliamentary roundtable on combatting far-right extremism, advocating for legal status and funding for Students’ Unions in colleges.
- Dudley SU participated in the SOS-UK Sustainability Summit, strengthening student voice in climate action.
- SU Intern Sam Robinson was commended for his contribution to events and the We Socialise Too! group for disabled students.
- Representatives attended the SU Marketing Conference to improve branding and engagement strategies.
- As part of NUS’s “Fair Deal for Our Future” campaign, Dudley SU had collected over 300 signatures on “Money Monday”, using a creative two-part campaign.
- Leadership training was delivered over half-term to develop SU officers’ skills in campaigning, engagement, and project management.
- Students participated in policy-shaping workshops on the Curriculum and Assessment Review and the new National Youth Strategy, with participation from local MP Sonia Kumar.
- Jack and fellow students were nominated for national awards at the Student Governor Changemaker Destinations Conference. Jack had been placed second as national Student Governor of the year.
- A highly successful Anti-Racism Festival was delivered in partnership with the ESOL department, with 300 student participants.
- Dudley SUFC continued to grow, competing against teams such as Aston Villa and Wolves; plans were in place to enter four leagues in the next season.
- An E-sports Tournament attracted over 50 students, with plans to launch an E-sports Club in 2025–26.
- Cultural enrichment trips to London and Blackpool, as well as participation in Birmingham Pride, supported community cohesion and student engagement.
- The SU Prom brought together over 100 students for a celebratory and inclusive end-of-year event.
- Two new external storage containers were secured to improve space and functionality in the SU Base.

10.2 Members congratulated J Stokes for his transformational leadership during his term as SU President, leaving a legacy of enhanced student engagement and national advocacy.

10.3 **It was resolved** to note the Students’ Union termly report.

11 **Students’ Union Constitution**

11.1 J Stokes advised that the Constitution of the Students’ Union had been updated to take account of current practice and to reflect structural updates to the Students’ Union.

11.2 He had worked with the support of the Director of Corporate Governance to review the proposed changes and to ensure that the document was compliant with

Charity Commission requirements. Changes to the previous version of the Constitution were highlighted through tracked changes.

11.3 In response to a question relating to financial delegations to individuals, the CFO advised that all SU expenditure was in accordance with the College's financial regulations and approval processes and so subject to the same scrutiny on all purchases.

11.4 **It was resolved** to approve the Students' Union Constitution

12 **Safeguarding and Prevent annual report**

12.1 R Corns presented the Safeguarding and Prevent Annual Report, which detailed the following:

- Most new starters continued to be compliant with safeguarding core training, 1 staff member was just out of 6-week time frame, HR were in contact to resolve.
- Lead governor had changed from Valerie Little to Matthew Collins. Three visits had taken place this academic year and the governor safeguarding checklist was completed.
- 2866 concerns raised through CPOMs. This was a significant increase compared with last year, but indicated staff were utilising CPOMs to report their concerns. Not all referrals required in depth action.
- 67 full suspensions this year resulting in 11 exclusions.
- 43 cool off suspensions.
- 479 learners supported by the counselling team.
- 177 students accessing support through Togetherall.
- 11 staff accessing support through Togetherall.
- 3 Prevent referrals.
- Safeguarding and Prevent arrangements in the College continued to be effective

12.2 S Cornfield requested that future reports include percentages to show increases as a proportion of the cohort, rather than just numbers of learners.

12.3 The Chair expressed his appreciation to all staff for their support for learners and thanked Matthew Collins for taking on the safeguarding lead governor role.

12.4 **It was resolved** to note the safeguarding and prevent annual report.

Routine business matters

13 Audit Matters

13.1 Minutes of audit committee held on 9th June 2025

13.1.1 L Butler presented the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th June 2025, highlighting the key matters considered. A number of items had been recommended for approval and were included within subsequent agenda items.

13.1.2 He drew members' attention to the internal audit report on Capital Projects, which had received a partial assurance opinion and advised that this report would be monitored by the committee separately going forward to track the completion of the identified actions.

- 13.1.3 He further noted that the Fraud and Irregularity Report had included notification of one instance of fraud. This matter had been discussed by the committee in detail, and the internal auditors had confirmed that, in their opinion, the risk of recurrence was remote and that all reasonable precautions had been taken by the College.
- 13.1.4 The Chair expressed gratitude to members for their work on the Audit Committee, which provided assurance regarding the robustness of the College's arrangements.
- 13.1.5 **It was resolved** to note the draft minutes of the audit committee of 9th June 2025.
- 13.2 **External audit plan for 2024/25 accounts**
- 13.2.1 The CFO presented the external audit plan for 2024/25 accounts which had been recommended by the Audit Committee.
- 13.2.2 The plan provided members with an overview of the nature and scope of the audit work and highlighted key aspects of audit. The document covered the audit of Dudley College of Technology and Transformational Technologies Partnership Limited (TTPL). The key points were noted as:
- Materiality was based on 2% of income.
 - Significant risks addressed by the audit would include management override of controls, fraud in income recognition and pension assumptions.
 - The report summarised the framework and guide for external auditors, released in March which replaced the Audit Code of Practice.
 - The interim audit would take place on 18 and 19 August with the main audit taking place weeks commencing 6 and 13 October.
 - The fee represented a 3% increase on the 2023/24 fee.
- 13.2.3 **It was resolved** to approve Bishop Fleming's external audit plan of 2024/25 accounts.
- 13.3 **Fraud and irregularity annual report**
- 13.3.1 The CFO presented the Fraud and Irregularity Annual Report which had been recommended by the Audit Committee.
- 13.3.2 She noted that it was the responsibility of the Corporation, as set out in grant funding agreements and contracts with DfE and WMCA, to establish and maintain an adequate system of internal control, to ensure compliance and to prevent and detect irregularities and suspected fraud (including theft, bribery and corruption). To achieve this the Corporation must establish and keep up to date an effective and proportionate counter fraud strategy, which set out the approach to raising awareness, prevention, detection, investigation and sanction (including seeking redress where appropriate) of suspected fraud.
- 13.3.3 The College had undertaken an annual risk assessment of fraud and irregularity that reviewed all key risk areas, provided commentary on the control framework in place that was designed to prevent fraud, and highlighted where relevant further actions required.
- 13.3.4 The annual report set out the results of that risk assessment and provided details of an incidence of fraud that had occurred during the year as a result of fraudulent

claims of bursary funds by a student, as outlined earlier by the Chair of the Audit Committee.

13.3.5 The report also included a review of the recent FE Commissioner (FEC) Intervention Assessment Summary Report on Weston College which detailed how lack of controls had led to excessive payments being made to the Principal. A summary of that report and how Dudley College performed against the FEC recommendations was noted.

13.3.6 **It was resolved** to approve the fraud and irregularity annual report 2024/25.

13.4 **Internal Audit plan for 2025/26**

13.4.1 The CFO advised that the internal audit plan for 2025/26 had been discussed and reviewed in conjunction with RSM and Audit Committee. The following areas were proposed for review in 2025/26:

- Planned and Reactive Maintenance Arrangements (Spring/April 2026)
- Employer Engagement Framework (April/April 2026)
- Framework for Compliance with Legal and Regularity Requirements: Prevent & Protect Duties – Advisory (December 2025)
- Learner Number Systems: Apprenticeships (October 2025)
- Key Financial Controls: Cashflow forecasting and planning (January 2026)
- Follow up (April 2026)

13.4.2 RSM had quoted a fee which represented an increase of 5% from 2024/25, in line with the tender document.

13.4.3 In response to a question from M Ncube, the CFO advised that all actions arising from internal audit were tracked through the audit committee and a follow up audit was undertaken by internal auditors each year to confirm completion of actions.

13.4.4 **It was resolved** to approve the internal audit plan for 2025/26.

13.5 **Confidential - Internal auditors' performance in 2024/25 and reappointment for 2025/26**

This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.

14 **Finance Matters**

14.1 **Minutes of F&E Committee held on 19th May 2025**

14.1.1 J Parker presented the draft minutes of the Finance and Estates Committee held on 19th May 2025 noting the key items discussed at the meeting. In addition, a number of items were recommended for approval and were included within subsequent agenda items.

14.1.2 **It was resolved** to note the minutes of the Finance and Estates Committee held on 19th May 2025.

14.2 **DfE Financial health letter**

14.2.1 The CFO advised that DfE reviewed the College's financial position following submission of the audited financial statements for 2023/24. The key points were noted as:

- The DfE had confirmed the College’s own assessment of its financial health as Good for the last financial year.
- No significant financial controls concerns had been identified by the DfE, based on the auditor’s management letter and audit committee annual report.
- Governors were reminded that financial information could be viewed on the View Your Education Data (VYED) portal. The CFO had provided a downloaded version of the information currently available based on the 2023/24 audited accounts which showed that:
 - Financial health was good and predicted to remain in that category to 2026. The financial health measures (current ratio, EBITDA ratio, borrowing as a percentage of income) were all performing well.
 - There was consistency in the reporting of cash balances and cash days, with all returns showing a similar cash balance. Cash balances showed a slightly improving trend over the period of the report.
 - Analysis of income and expenditure did not highlight any exceptional trends.
 - Actual performance to 2024 across a range of balance sheet measures showed an improved performance, with a cautious approach forecast for the years of 2025 and 2026.

14.2.2 **It was resolved** to note the DfE’s review of the College’s financial statements.

14.3 **Integrated Management Accounts to May 2025**

14.3.1 The CFO presented the management accounts to May 2025 against the revised budget 2 approved by Corporation at the March meeting. The position ten months into the year was a surplus of £890k being £192k favourable to a budget of £698k. A forecast position for the year end had also been included showing an expected surplus of £321k. The key points were noted as:

- KPIs showed a positive position with most having a green indicator. There was one amber KPI which was debt service cover, but this was not considered to represent any concern by year end. There was one red KPI which was debtor days, this had been caused by invoices being raised for High Needs Income which had not yet been paid, but did not represent any concerns.
- Income was adverse to budget by £171k mainly due to catering income (£160k), other commercial income (£99k) and other funding body grants (£157k).
- Pay Costs were £53k favourable to budget. DfE had announced they were funding most of the NIC increase, but still lower than budget by £35k for the year.
- Non pay costs were favourable to budget by £200k
- The cash position continued to remain positive. The cash position of £6.4m at the end of May compared favourably to the revised budget of £5.2m.
- 19+ WMCA discretionary hardship fund showed a year to date spend of £431k against an annual budget of £520k, however this included committed spend. Actual spend to the end of May was £366k.

14.3.2 The Chair expressed his thanks to the CFO and finance team for their effective and robust financial management.

14.3.3 **It was resolved** to approve the integrated management accounts to May 2025.

14.4 College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) and 2025/26 budget including staff pay award

- 14.4.1 The CFO advised that the budget and College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) had been prepared in accordance with the Department for Education's College Financial Planning Handbook 2025. The budget had been set in conjunction with budget holders and aimed to support the achievement of the College's strategic priorities.
- 14.4.2 The 2025/26 budget had been based on confirmed funding allocations, or reasonable estimates where allocations had not yet been received, as well as budget holder requests informed by planned student recruitment and other factors, such as inflation. Staffing costs had been determined using the pay model, which had been reviewed against the curriculum plan at course level by senior managers to ensure efficiency measures were achieved.
- 14.4.3 A table showing the proposed 2025/26 budget in comparison with the 2024/25 forecast outturn was presented.
- 14.4.4 The associated risks had been addressed within the sensitivity analysis section, which included detailed actions to mitigate adverse variances.
- 14.4.5 Members were also asked to approve the College's capital expenditure programme, totalling £3.01m, comprising:
- £1.87m from College funds; and
 - £1.14m from grant-funded projects.
- 14.4.6 The financial return demonstrated that the College continued to meet the indicators set out in its financial strategy, with the exception of the following:
- EBITDA was expected to be 6.7% of turnover against a target of 9.0%. The Further Education (FE) Commissioner's target for colleges with 'Good' financial health was greater than 6%, and for 'Outstanding' financial health, 8% or greater. It was proposed that the 2025/26 target be set at 6.7%, reflecting the College's 'Good' financial health rating.
 - Debt service cover was expected to be 1.84, compared to the financial strategy target of 2.31. Given that loan and lease costs were fixed and the only variable was the operating surplus generated, it was suggested that the 2025/26 target be revised to 1.84.
- 14.4.7 Subject to Corporation approval of this revised financial strategy, the accompanying presentation showed that all key performance indicators (KPIs) were expected to achieve green or amber ratings. Based on the year-end forecast, the financial health of the College was predicted to remain 'Good' for 2024/25 and in subsequent years.
- 14.4.8 The CFO drew members' attention to the following points:
- Any additional income would be included in the revised budget.
 - Pay costs incorporated current staffing, vacancies, a 4% cost of living pay award, and all incremental awards. A pay saving target of £1m had been set, to be monitored by the Finance and Estates Committee. This target included savings arising from vacancies, sick leave, and maternity leave.

- Non-pay expenditure was aligned with the 2024/25 budget, with savings sought where possible. Projects such as HID and planned maintenance had been included.
- No subcontracting activities were planned for 2025/26; all income would be generated directly by the College.
- A Students' Union grant of £169k had been included, representing both pay and non-pay costs, and reflecting an increase in funding.
- The balance sheet position, as reviewed at the May development day, had been included in the forecast. Capital expenditure of £3m was planned, comprising £1.9m from College funds and £1.1m from grant funding, with no finance leases planned for the year.
- Grant funding of £2.1m for Condition Works had been included and shown as restricted cash.

14.4.9 It was noted that financial ratios remained in line with targets. The FE Commissioner had updated benchmarks, including operating surplus to EBITDA as a percentage of income at 6% or higher, and cash days from 25 to 40, which the College continued to meet. The pay cost benchmark had remained at 65%, despite increases to National Insurance and pay costs; the College was at 66%, which compared favourably to sector averages.

14.4.10 The College aimed to generate additional cash from operating activities to support future investment, potentially moving financial health to 'Outstanding', though any surplus would be reinvested.

14.4.11 Sensitivity analysis indicated that financial covenants would continue to be met even in a worst-case scenario.

14.4.12 The TTPL forecast and budget had been reviewed by the TTPL Board and indicated a break-even position at this time.

14.4.13 The paper included a request for approval of a 4% pay award for all staff. This aligned to the School Teachers' pay award proposed settlement. The CEP highlighted the work undertaken to ensure that the lowest-paid staff remained above the Minimum Wage, with additional increases applied where necessary.

14.4.14 The CFO drew members' attention to the notification that BSN had been contracted to undertake refurbishment works to Broadway Campus F block in preparation for the expansion of 14-16 provision, at an estimated cost of £136k.

14.4.15 It was resolved

- to approve the revenue and capital budgets for 2025/26.
- to approve the financial return to be submitted to the DfE by 31st July 2025. In approving the financial return, the Corporation confirmed:
 - That the most appropriate financial health grade for each of the three years was:
 - 2024/25 Good
 - 2025/26 Good
 - 2026/27 Good

- That the return was consistent with the College's budget for the year ending 31 July 2026 and that this budget was approved by the governing body.
 - That the financial strategy KPIs for EBITDA as a percentage of turnover and debt service cover were reduced in 2025/26 to 6.7% and 1.4 respectively.
 - That this return was consistent with the College's strategic plan and that the plan and accompanying commentary had been reviewed in accordance with the method agreed by the governing body.
 - The data may be published by the DfE.
 - That the supporting commentary had been prepared with due regard to the financial planning checklist in the College Financial Planning Handbook.
 - That the cash balance output in this return, as at 30 April 2025 matched the College's reconciled actual cash position on that date. Furthermore, that a bank reconciliation had been carried out on the indicated date and that there were no concerns or unresolved issues arising from the reconciliation itself or since.
- to approve the pay award of 4% for all staff including senior postholders.
 - to note the appointment of BSN to undertake the refurbishment works on F block.

15 Standards and Performance matters

15.1 Minutes of Standards Committee held on 6th May 2025

15.1.1 Paul Noon, Committee Chair, presented the draft minutes of the Standards Committee held on 6th May 2025 noting the key items discussed at the meeting:

- Welcomed Dan Clarke, new Assistant Principal.
- Committee chair and vice chair elected for 2025/26.
- Review of data dashboard.
- Safeguarding and student conduct report.

15.1.2 In addition a number of items were recommended to Corporation which were detailed in subsequent agenda items.

15.1.3 **It was resolved** to note the minutes of the Standards Committee of 6th May 2025.

15.2 Operational Development Plan update

15.2.1 The CEP presented an update on the College Operational Development Plan. There were 11 actions which were complete including contributions to Skills West Midlands and Warwickshire, LSIF outcomes, EDI actions, Innovate UK, Security and capital works.

15.2.2 There was one action which was postponed – *Agree and deliver the relocation of the Skills Shop*. It was hoped that a new location for the facility had now been identified.

15.2.3 One action was to be amended following the review of the Estates Strategy and governor development day – *Complete outline design stage including costs and apply for planning permission for the Transport Technologies Centre subject to Department Approval*.

- 15.2.4 All other actions were in progress.
- 15.2.5 **It was resolved** to note the operational development plan update.
- 15.3 **Annual Accountability Statement**
- 15.3.1 The CEP advised that the Accountability Statement had been updated and considered at the recent Standards Committee. Corporation members had then been asked to review and approve the final version via email by Friday 27th June. The statement had then been submitted to DfE ahead of the required deadline of 30th June 2025.
- 15.3.2 The Annual Accountability Statement would be shared on the College website in readiness for the new academic year.
- 15.3.3 **It was resolved** to confirm approval of the Annual Accountability Statement.
- 16 **Governance and compliance matters**
- 16.1 **FE Commissioner letter on good governance**
- 16.1.1 The DCG advised that the letter from the Further Education Commissioner acknowledged the valuable contribution of college governors while highlighting concerns arising from recent governance failures in a small number of institutions. The Commissioner had set out key expectations and reminded colleges of their statutory responsibilities and good practice. The letter highlighted the following key points:
- Importance of Triumvirate Governance
 - Adherence to Governance Codes
 - Equality of Trusteeship
 - Preparation and Transparency
 - Governor Induction and Training
 - Schemes of Delegation
 - Performance Appraisal including SPHs and Chair
 - Governance Professional Standards
 - Financial Oversight and Remuneration
- 16.1.2 The DCG noted that the Fraud and Irregularity Annual Report presented at item 13.3 outlined in detail how the College complied with all of the FE Commissioner's recommendations.
- 16.1.3 **It was resolved** to note the FE Commissioner letter.
- 16.2 **Meeting schedule and Business Plans for committees for 2025/26**
- 16.2.1 The DCG advised that the business plans for the Audit Committee, Finance & Estates Committee, Standards Committee and Remuneration Committee had been considered by each committee and recommended to the Corporation for approval.
- 16.2.2 The overarching schedule of all governance meetings had been planned for the year and was also included. Once approved, calendar invitations would be sent out to members for the relevant meetings.

- 16.2.3 The paper also included the College Calendar for 2025/26 which contained key dates for the academic year. Members were encouraged to attend any of the cross-college events and activities, and 'hold the date' markers would be sent for key events.
- 16.2.4 **It was resolved** to approve the business plans for Audit, Finance & Estates, Standards and Remuneration Committees for 2025/26 and the meeting schedule for 2025/26.
- 16.3 **Corporation Membership Update**
- 16.3.1 The DCG advised that the report was provided to enable members to discuss the membership of the Corporation, its sub-committees and representation on Dudley Academies Trust for the coming academic year 2025/26:
- 16.3.2 In respect of current Membership of the Corporation, it was noted that:
- Nirmal Gupta's first term of office finished on 05/07/2025.
 - There would be one vacancy for a student member which was likely to be filled early in the new academic year.
 - There would be one vacancy for a Professional Services Staff Governor as Ana Ferreira was leaving the College at the end of July. An election process would commence in September.
 - The Corporation of the College had the right to appoint individual Members to the Members' Board of Dudley Academies Trust as well as to nominate one member of the Corporation, which was a Corporate Member of the Trust. There was currently one vacancy for a Member and Tom Westley had confirmed his willingness to become a Member when his term of office as a Trustee of DAT ended in August 2025.
- 16.3.3 Over the summer, members would have the opportunity to meet with the Chair for their annual review, at which time they would be able to consider the contribution they would wish to make to the work of the Corporation during 2025/26, and in particular to give consideration to succession planning for the role of Vice Chair.
- 16.3.4 **It was resolved**
- To reappoint Nirmal Gupta for a term of four years commencing 6 July 2025.
 - To approve the appointment of Tom Westley as a Member of Dudley Academies Trust.
- 16.4 **Chair's performance review 2025**
- 16.4.1 The DCG advised that, in line with published guidance from the FE Commissioner, a confidential and anonymised performance review of the Chair of the Corporation had been undertaken to evaluate leadership effectiveness and inform future development. The report provided a summary of the outcome of the survey and confirmed that the Chair of the Corporation was performing at a high level across all aspects of governance leadership. Governors had expressed strong confidence in the Chair's ability to lead the Board strategically, inclusively, and effectively.
- 16.4.2 The Remuneration Committee had noted the findings to support the Chair's continued development and recommended the report to the Corporation to support the wider succession planning process.

- 16.4.3 **It was resolved** to approve the Chair's performance review for 2025.
- 16.5 **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for 2025/26**
- 16.5.1 The Chair advised that he would discuss succession planning for the role of Vice Chair with Members during their summer one to one meetings. The appointment of Vice Chair was therefore deferred to the next meeting.
- 16.5.2 **It was resolved** to appoint Paul Noon as Chair for 2025/26.
- 16.6 **Policies for approval**
- 16.6.1 The following policies had been recommended for approval by the committees as indicated and a summary of any changes was provided. The full policies were available in the Document Library of Convenor.
- 16.6.2 On recommendation from Finance and Estates Committee:
- *Learner Financial Support Policy* - Changes to the policy were highlighted in yellow.
 - *Supply chain fees and charges policy* - key changes to the policy were noted.
 - *Financial Regulations* – changes made to the document reflected the new procurement policy and other updates and were detailed in a summary.
- 16.6.3 On recommendation from Standards Committee:
- *Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy* – changes were highlighted through tracked changes.
 - *Freedom of Speech Policy and Annual Report* - The annual report highlighted the current position of Freedom of Speech at the College and the ongoing activities that ensured it met its legal obligations regarding this duty. An annual review of the Freedom of Speech Policy had also been undertaken by the senior leadership group.
- 16.6.4 For Corporation approval:
- *Admissions Policy* - The policy was an amalgamation of three previous policies to holistically present the College's working practices with regard to the admissions process for learners on full-time 16-18 programmes (including vocational technical and A level learning), 19+ age learners on full and part-time programmes and all learners on Apprenticeships. It was designed to span the legal requirements of the Office of Students (for Higher Education (HE) programmes) and those of the Department of Education (DfE) bringing them together in a single policy.
- 16.6.5 **It was resolved** to approve the Learner Financial Support Policy, Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy, Financial Regulations, CEIAG Policy, Freedom of Speech Policy and Annual Report, Admissions Policy.
- 16.7 **DCT-DAT master collaboration agreement oversight group minutes of 20/03/2025**
- 16.7.1 The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Oversight Group which had received a detailed update on Schedule 4 projects and areas of collaborative work between Dudley College and Dudley Academies Trust (DAT),

highlighting the value of this group in maximising the potential for collaboration between the two organisations.

16.7.2 The DCG advised that the DAT Board of Trustees had also considered the update at its meeting the previous week and had proposed two further actions:

- Inclusion of a SEND focus as a new area
- Publication of an annual report.

16.7.3 A joint meeting of both boards would be arranged for early in the Autumn term in line with the terms of the Master Collaboration Agreement.

16.7.4 **It was resolved** to note the minutes of the DCT-DAT master collaboration agreement oversight group of the 20th March 2025.

17 **Any Other Business**

17.1 There were no items of other part 1 business.

18 **Date of next meeting**

18.1 19th September 2025 – Strategic Development Event.

Staff attendees, staff and student governors left the meeting.

The part 2 meeting is the subject of separate confidential minutes.

The part 2 meeting closed at 18.42 hours.

Approved by members at the Corporation Meeting held 11th November 2025.