



THE WINDSOR FOREST COLLEGES GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Tuesday 18 March 2025 at 5.00pm (*online via Zoom*)

PRESENT:	Jacob Clay	Governor
	Nathan Garat	Governor
	Nathan Green	Student Governor FE
	Rob Lewis	Governor
	Gillian May	Group Principal & Chief Executive
	Nathan Peters	Student Governor Sixth Form
	Antonia Spinks	Governor
	Jeremy Spooner	Co-opted Member of Q&C Committee
	Signe Sutherland	Governor <i>Chair</i> (elected at meeting)
	Sarah Waller	Staff Governor
APOLOGIES:	Alison Wheatley	Governor
IN ATTENDANCE:	Amanda Down	Principal Sixth Form
	Anne Entwistle	Principal FE
	Tracy Reeve	Group Director of Governance
	Karen Griffiths	Group Vice Principal
	Laura Peters	AP * Safeguarding Curriculum & SEND
	Sinead O'Donoghue	AP Curriculum & Quality – Sixth Form
	Judy Brassington	AP ESOL, Adult and Community
	Naomi Bailey	AP Student Services – Sixth Form
	Nicole Onyett	AP Curriculum (FE)
	Vivien Gordon	AP Curriculum (FE)
	Lorraine Levy	Head of Apprenticeships (Slough & Langley College)
	Emma Raymond	Head of Business Development & Apprenticeships (BCA)

(* AP = Assistant Principal)

MINUTE

No

A.

Election of Quality & Curriculum (Q&C) Committee Chair and Vice-Chair

Chair of Q&C: The Group Director of Governance (TR) opened the meeting and reminded attendees that Tina Coates had now stepped away from the committee and resigned as Q&C Committee Chair. TR confirmed that following an email to all members she had received one nomination for The Chair's role, Signe Sutherland. The election of SS as Chair was proposed (AW had sent her written nomination in advance of the meeting) and seconded (RL).

The meeting APPROVED the election of SS as Chair of the Q&C Committee.

Vice-Chair of Q&C Committee: There were no nominees for the Vice-Chair role and TR informed the meeting that she would canvas members for this outside of the meeting.

NOTED

Presentation:

➤ Skills Development

The meeting was preceded by a presentation on Skills Development given by one of the APs for Curriculum within the FE colleges (NO).

NO reminded the meeting that the area of Skills Development had been highlighted as a strength at WFCG during the 2024 Ofsted inspection but management were conscious that there was further development work to be done and this had been identified as a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) priority for 2024-25. There had been a focus on developing meaningful relationships with employers through the introduction of Skills Weeks, visiting employers to build better employer profiles, and conducting employer forums. This enhanced data gathering on employers allowed a better fit of learners to suitable placements.

ACTION

NO highlighted the importance of the Skills Weeks as a valuable alternative for students who could not take part in an external work placement. The meeting noted the breadth and range of workshops available during the recent Skills Weeks held for Travel & Tourism students and Construction learners. The learner feedback from these events had been positive and any suggestions for improvement would be implemented when more Skills Weeks were rolled out during the summer term.

The positive impact of these new initiatives were ensuring that learners:

- Secured full-time and part-time employment
- Gained industry placement experiences in highly sought after companies
- Secured apprenticeships
- Gained additional industry specific skills/qualifications
- Discovered new career opportunities

Governors (NGa) asked how the college was trying to secure the necessary employer placements. NO informed the meeting that staff were trying to schedule placements when employers needed extra people and when they had capacity. There was a focus on lining up work placements to ensure they were at the right time of year and that the students were well prepared so they added value to the employers. NO outlined the Skills Passports which would allow learners to develop targeted industry specific and core 'power' skills. The committee chair (SS) thanked NO for the presentation and commended the new initiatives that were being developed in relation to learners' skills development.

NOTED

➤ Bootcamps

The Director of Governance (TR) informed the meeting that this presentation had been deferred to the June 2025 Q&C meeting.

NOTED

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received as shown above. The Chair (SS) welcomed the APs to the meeting and commended the opportunity for the Q&C Committee to look at the operational detail. The Chair welcomed the new Staff Governor (SW) to her first governance meeting at WFCG and outlined the value of the staff governor input to governance.

2. **Notification of any other urgent business**

There was no other business notified.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

No member declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 November 2024**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 November 2024, having been previously sent to members, were agreed as a true record and would be taken as signed by the Chair.

All Members were agreed.

5. **Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting Held on 28 November 2024**

The Group Director of Governance presented a report which confirmed that the two matters arising were on track for completion when the due date was reached.

NOTED

6. **Curriculum Risk Register (RR)**

The meeting noted that this paper had been withdrawn earlier in the day after discussion with the CEO as it was in need of further update. The committee chair (SS) reminded the meeting that the majority of the risks and operational mitigations on the Risk Register would be covered through other items on the meeting agenda.

NOTED

Updated WFCG Curriculum & Skills Strategy

The CEO/ Group Principal (GM) reminded the meeting that the last review of the curriculum strategy had taken place in 2022 when WFCG was newly merged. Now that the college had completed a successful Ofsted inspection and achieved many of the initial objectives it was timely to update the Curriculum and Skills Strategy to deliver the objectives on the WFCG Strategic Map 2025-28.

Group Vice Principal (KG) presented the summary paper and the revised WFCG Curriculum and Skills Strategy 2025-28. KG outlined how the Curriculum & Skills Strategy was linked to the College Corporate Strategy (2025-2028) and was designed to ensure that the College remained responsive to local, regional and national skills needs.

The key areas of focus and objectives outlined in the strategy during the next three years would be as follows:

- **Regional Skills Development:** Expansion of industry-relevant programmes, including T Levels, green technologies, digital and screen industries.
- **Adult & Community Learning:** A flexible curriculum to meet the needs of adult learners, including short courses and professional upskilling.
- **Higher Education & Apprenticeships:** Growth in employer-led pathways and specialist provision in priority sectors.
- **14-16 Schools Provision:** Development of a direct-entry programme to support alternative education pathways for young learners.
- **Specialist SEND & Foundation Learning:** Strengthening pathways for neurodiverse learners and expanding progression routes.

Governors were reminded of the importance of strategic impact and the associated financial growth to enable the full financial recovery forecast for WFCG. The meeting noted that the strategy outlined significant growth opportunities during the three-year period, including:

- **Expansion of Level 1 provision** (+90 learners by 2027/28) to address local skills gaps and social mobility.
- **Increase in Higher Education enrolments** (128 learners by 2027/28) generating £608K in additional income. This element of the strategy might be more problematic in the face of recently announced cuts to adult funding.
- **Growth in apprenticeships**, with targeted employer partnerships increasing enrolments to 440 by 2027/28.
- **New direct-entry 14-16 provision**, supporting alternative routes for disengaged learners with a projected intake of 150 by 2027/28.

KG informed the meeting that in drafting the new strategy the SLT had tried to reflect the key strengths across WFCG and the current direction of travel as well as the regional and national priorities. KG informed the meeting that local priorities did not seem likely to change under the new government's Skills England agenda. This would require an ongoing focus on working with employers and local authorities although there might be some change as the devolution agenda moved forward. KG assured the meeting that the curriculum and skills strategy reflected all areas of provision and had a close focus on foundation students which would be key under the proposed new Ofsted inspection framework.

Principal FE (AE) gave the meeting more detail on the proposal to provide a new direct-entry 14-16 schools provision. AE informed the meeting that enquiries for 14-16 provision were becoming a bigger feature at the FE college open days with many parents looking for options for their home-schooled children. AE talked about the category of learners known as the 'Perfect Fragile'; these were high-achieving students who, lacking experience with failure, struggled to cope with setbacks and challenges and experienced mental health and anxiety issues. There was also a big need for 14-16 provision within the ESOL delivery; anecdotal evidence suggested there were a large number of young asylum seekers who were struggling with language and unable to access learning in mainstream secondary schools. The aim would be to start some 14-16 ESOL provision at Slough & Langley College in September 2025 with an extended direct entry 14-16 from September 2026. Governors agreed that enabling ESOL students to access some specialist provision two days a week would make a big difference to their lives and their capacity to learn within mainstream schools. AE confirmed that there had been a lot of interest already; she had attended a recent meeting of the secondary school heads in Slough and they were really keen to get involved. Governors

noted that the funding in this area was more secure moving forward and growth in this area would help to balance the forecast decrease in adult funding. The meeting discussed the mechanics of this new income stream which might come online in 2026/27; the direct 14-16 funding was not paid on a lagged basis but would need to be bid for in advance of the start of the academic year i.e. aligned to the schools funding model. AE also informed the meeting that an Ofsted grade of Good was required in order to bid for direct entry 14-16 funding. It was noted that several other FE Colleges were already delivering direct entry 14-16 provision and AE had been in contact with staff at Hull College to look at a model of good practice. Governors (RL) sought confirmation on whether this 14-16 ESOL provision would be just at Slough and Langley College or whether it would go across the other college campuses. AE confirmed that it would centre on Slough & Langley with some provision at BCA; this would reflect where the greatest need was and also where the College had staff expertise.

The meeting discussed the forecast demographic dip in 16-19 learners over the next few years and agreed that it made sense to look for areas of growth outside the mainstream 16-18 delivery. This would include Apprenticeships. KG confirmed that the curriculum strategy was predicated on making strong financial decisions as well as ensuring that the courses offered met stakeholders needs. Governors (NGa) sought, and were given, confirmation that the financial objectives outlined for 2027/28 in relation to growth of level 1, 14-16 direct entry, HE and apprenticeships were achievable. KG confirmed that the objectives for growth were aspirational but achievable. NGa asked where progress against these objectives would be tracked. The meeting was assured that the objectives were tied into the Strategy Map which came to all of the sub-committees as a standing item and would be RAG rated for progress from summer 2025.

The meeting (JS) sought additional detail on what the college was doing for neurodiverse learners. LP outlined the work being done within the foundation curriculum for high needs learners. The pathway was strong but there was improvement being sought in the availability of 'exit routes' to employment. LP informed the meeting that current work included the establishment of three new pathways for supported internships which could lead to a final outcome of paid employment. The new partnerships included one with Delta Marriott hotels who were providing ten supported internships. The current final success rate was 60-70%. The college was also working with Ways Into Work to grow this provision. LP informed the meeting that the high needs team had also started conversations with one of the special schools in RBWM, Manor Green. This would be looking at partnership to enhance WFCG's curriculum offer to include Duke of Edinburgh Awards as well as some additional curriculum areas including carpentry, hair and beauty. The committee chair (SS) asked whether the WFCG offered supported pathways inside the college. LP highlighted that the supported internships needed to be placements outside the college but it was a good suggestion to use opportunities within college as a learning experience to extend their comfort zones.

LP updated the meeting on the recent Safeguarding and Wellbeing weeks that had been held across Slough & Langley and BCA; this had involved many outside agencies who had come into college support students and train staff. Tutorials had been held on reinforcing the dangers of misogyny, knife crime and drug use. LP informed the meeting that earlier that day the college had run a Knife Crime Day in liaison with Slough Youth Action and Slough Borough Council (SBC). There had been 250 learners taking part in this event and there had been five different options for engagement during this event. The aim of this day was to give students a wider understanding of the issues around knife crime so that they can make the right choices when out in the community.

The meeting discussed the terminology used in the curriculum strategy referring to excellence and asked how movement to reach excellence would be quantified and how that would be validated as the last Ofsted inspection assessed WFCG as 'good'. GM reminded the meeting that the college volunteering to take part in the pilot inspections for the new inspection framework would provide up to date external validation of distance travelled since March 2024. KG reminded the meeting that the new Ofsted inspection framework was more detailed than the previous framework but the college was working towards the new Ofsted 'exemplary' grade. Outcome data, learner feedback and learner destination data would also triangulate any assertion of improvement. Governors were assured that the rigorous WFCG quality processes including detailed termly Quality Review Boards for each curriculum area would also track progress. KG highlighted that this ongoing self-assessment process and the annual Quality Improvement Plan had already identified areas of excellence. JS suggested that the Curriculum Strategy and Strategy Map should use evidence from third parties to validate the 'excellent' criteria. ***KG agreed in principle and suggested that***

management think about external sources of validation other than Ofsted. JS praised this stretch to excellence and reminded the SLT of the importance for staff to know how good they already were so that they would know that 'excellence' was achievable.

KG

GM reminded the meeting that this new Curriculum & Skills Strategy would be the focus of the annual strategic conversation with the college relationship team at DfE at the end of the month. GM also informed the meeting that the initial report from the government's review of curriculum reform had now been published but was leaning towards very limited changes. Once confirmed the report would be brought to the governors for information.

The Quality & Curriculum Committee:

- i. APPROVED the Curriculum & Skills Strategy 2025-2028.**
- ii. ENDORSED the strategic priorities outlined in the strategy, particularly:**
 - **Expansion of Level 1 and Foundation Learning to improve access for disadvantaged learners.**
 - **Growth of Higher Education and Apprenticeships to meet employer needs and drive income generation.**
 - **Development of a direct-entry 14-16 provision, with an application for DfE funding by August 2025 for a September 2026 launch.**

and would recommend (i) and (ii) above to the Board for approval (27 March 2025).

SS/ KG/ TR

8. **Curriculum Efficiency**

The CEO (GM) presented an update on the work which was still ongoing across WFCG to drive forward curriculum efficiency. This was using the FE Commissioner (FEC) benchmarking tool to look at the college performance versus historical comparisons. However, the SLT at WFCG had decided to take these benchmarks and use them to track in-year performance 2024-25; this was allowing the college to see whether the operating plan was effective. The meeting noted that, across the group, staff utilisation remained exceptionally high but this included staff covering absence. However, remission for management tasks within teaching roles, as well as reduced hours allocated for trainee and newly qualified teachers, remained significant. GM confirmed that it was mostly Heads of Department that were given remission but this also applied to some specialist staff. The meeting noted that although above the FEC benchmark at an annual cost of £1.3m; some of this 'remission' time was also being used to cover staff absences. The ongoing curriculum planning process was aiming to address this imbalance with the aim of reducing remission costs and improving overall efficiency. GM assured the meeting that remission across the group was reviewed annually to ensure parity across the colleges and departments.

GM informed the meeting that group sizes which had increased proportionally with the rise in student numbers at the start of the 2024-25 academic year had now fallen in line with the benchmark. However, these group sizes were still financially viable (apart from T levels). GM reminded the meeting that this model had not yet been extended to adult provision as there was no FE Commissioner benchmark tool available for adult provision. Quality & Curriculum Committee Members were assured that study hours were carefully aligned with funding bands to ensure revenue maximisation. GM informed the meeting that at the R06 point WFCG had reported 4,650 learners and 95.55% of these were in the top funding band; this was a strong funding position. The meeting was assured that the aim was to get as close to 100% in the top funding band as possible although some learners would always necessarily be on a smaller programme.

Governors noted that retention of students remained ahead of the national benchmark and continued to improve year-on-year. This success reflected enhanced recruitment processes and more effective Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) services.

Other key points were highlighted as follows:

- There was an opportunity to increase assessor workloads for apprenticeships, supporting further utilisation as provision grows.
- High Needs income was also increasing, currently outperforming benchmarks. This reflected the significant growth in High Needs student numbers at both BCA and Slough & Langley College.

The meeting noted that the financial benchmarking and efficiency aspects of this paper had been discussed at Resources Committee and Audit Committee earlier in the month. The Chair commended this useful report which allowed governors to track the college's ongoing efficiency in-year.

NOTED

9. **Update on in-year performance 2024/25**

The meeting noted an update report – presented by AD and AE – on performance year-to-date against the College KPIs. AD highlighted the following summary data:

- The group had secured significant growth in ESFA funded 16-18 Learners. WFCG recruited 4719 learners against an allocation of 4455 in 2024-2025.
- Adult Education Budget grant funded enrolments were expected to finish the year on 3392 compared against 2967 in 2023-2024.
- Retention on 16-19 study programmes at RO7 was currently 92.4% compared to 90.90% (23/24) overall for the same recorded point last year.
- Overall actual attendance was below the college KPI of 90% at 87.7% which was a marginal improvement on 2023/24. Ongoing actions remained in place to secure improvements in actual attendance.
- Actual attendance was lower for 19+ learners (84.5%) compared to 16–18-year-olds (88.1%) reflecting the challenges of the 19+ cohort.
- Punctuality was good across all of the provision (97.4%).

The meeting also noted the data by College site; the lower retention in the Sixth Form reflected the number of two-year courses. NO highlighted that the current underperformance in attendance was partly predicated on how the English and maths data was being incorporated; MIS were working on resolving this. The detailed performance reports for Sixth Form and FE were taken as read.

The Committee chair asked that the format of reporting for Sixth Form and FE be standardised for the next report to Quality & Curriculum Committee.

AD/ AE

- **Progress against Quality Improvement Plans (QIP) 2024/5**

The meeting noted the detailed update which tracked progress against the Sixth Form and Further Education (FE) QIPs for 2024-25. Governors asked for more detail on the 'extra counselling support to help with waiting list for mental health problems' (page 79 of the pack in the Sixth Form QIP). RL sought clarity on how long students were waiting and AD confirmed that this depended on the time of year; the start of term and exam season caused longer waits. AD informed the meeting that Strode's College now received additional funding from the Strode's Trustees to pay for an additional counsellor who was now working across the two sixth form colleges. The aim was to ensure that the wait was no longer than two to three weeks. It was noted that there were currently 14 learners on the waiting list. The sixth form colleges had also created 'wellbeing rooms' which were staffed by the college Safeguarding Officers and Student Services Team. This additional resource was very well used and dealt with a lot of learner mental health issues on a day-to-day basis.

In the FE QIP (page 92 of the pack) the meeting sought additional detail on the NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) indicator being developed to identify students at risk of withdrawal. NO informed the meeting that this was being developed after a recent visit to Sparsholt College who had developed this tool after they noticed a big spike in withdrawals from Ukrainian students. The 'risk of NEET indicator' used weighted criteria to look at the risk of individual learners withdrawing at some point. It would allow WFCG to identify where learners needed additional support. NO informed the meeting that a working group were currently working on the criteria and characteristics to be used within the tool; this would then be brought in across WFCG for 2025/26. LP confirmed that a draft of the NEET indicator would be in place before the May 2025 Ofsted pilot inspection. NO also highlighted the flexibility of this tool as criteria could be updated as necessary as the model identified additional or different indicators of risk.

The Sixth Form and Further Education (FE) update report was NOTED.

- **Apprenticeship Update 2024/25**

The paper was presented by the Group VP (KG) who led the apprenticeship provision across WFCG. Governors were reminded that currently, the BCA site's apprenticeship provision was rated as *Requires Improvement*, while Slough & Langley College had still faced issues despite its good outcomes.

The meeting noted the recent restructure of the leadership of the provision. This restructure had allowed the college to address current performance challenges, improve strategic and operational focus and reduce the costs associated with the leadership and management of the apprenticeship provision. The Slough & Langley apprenticeship provision would now be managed by Lorraine Levy (former head of quality for apprenticeships) and the BCA provision would now be managed by Emma Raymond (alongside her Business development role). KG introduced LL and ER to the meeting.

The meeting noted the key updates and discussed current progress as follows:

- Enrolments 2025/26: Apprenticeship enrolment at R06 (6 February 2025) was 776 apprentices (an increase of 89 apprentices and £388k from the same point in 2024/25). Specific growth had been noted in Sports Turf operatives at BCA, Property Maintenance, Plumbing and Light motor vehicle technicians.
- Changes to English and Maths requirements: The meeting noted that from 11 February 2025, the requirements for English and maths were optional for apprentices who were aged 19 and over at the start of their apprenticeship training. Funding would continue to be available for English and maths qualifications for adults if they, or their employer, felt that this was required. All apprentices would continue to be required to secure, and be assessed, on the job-specific English and maths skills that they would need as part of the apprenticeship standard. Young apprentices, who were aged 16-18 at the start of their apprenticeship, would continue to be required to secure up to a Level 2 qualification in English and maths, if they do not already hold one. KG informed the meeting that management felt nervous around the messaging that English and maths qualifications were not necessary so 19+ learners at WFCG were still being enrolled for English and maths but were being permitted to drop it before their End Point Assessment (EPA) if achievement was proving problematic. KG informed the meeting that by 5 April WFCG was required to provide data to DfE on the number of learners impacted; this was circa 189 across WFCG. The meeting was also reminded that colleges would lose funding if apprentices were not studying English and maths. ***KG confirmed that data on the number of 19+ learners who had opted out of English and maths would be brought to the next Q&C Committee meeting.***
- Introduction of shorter apprenticeships: The meeting noted that apprenticeships currently had a duration of at least 12 months but new legislation had recognised that there were circumstances where a learner could achieve full occupational competence more quickly. To support this, government would be reducing the minimum duration of an apprenticeship to 8 months, down from the current minimum of 12 months. Changes would be introduced from August 2025, subject to the legislative timetable. Currently there were three 'trail blazer' apprenticeships planned, one of which would be the Media apprenticeship offered at Windsor College.
- Changes to EPA principles: The government had recently announced that the assessment process for apprenticeships would be streamlined under a new set of principles. This would 'remove any unnecessary duplication and ensure the amount of assessment is proportionate'. Where appropriate, End-Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) would be able to delegate assessment to the training provider, in line with the assessment plan.
- Payment simplification: From August 2025 the DfE would begin to remove the need to submit overlapping data via both the ILR and Apprenticeship Service account in order to receive funding for apprenticeship training. This change would remove duplication and eliminate data mismatches between the ILR and Apprenticeship Service submissions. The change was welcomed as it would save significant MIS time, reduce administrative burdens and improve cash flow.
- Visit from Ofqual: The meeting noted that the WFCG apprenticeship provision had been recently (11/02/25) visited by a team from Ofqual, including the Deputy Chief

KG

Regulator. During the visit - which took place in National Apprenticeship Week – the Ofqual team toured the site, met with staff and apprentices and discussed some of the anticipated changes. KG confirmed that this visit had enabled a sharing of information and feedback on proposed changes and had cemented a useful relationship that both the college and Ofqual were keen to continue.

The Apprenticeship update report was NOTED.

- **Higher Education (HE) & Access to HE:** Principal Sixth Form (AD) presented the update report for HE. AD informed the meeting that HE student enrolment continued to be positive with growth in enrolment numbers for 2024-25 across the college group. There were now 175 students enrolled on HE courses, including 56 on Level 4 courses in Hair and Beauty, Education and Training, Performance and the Creatives, and 66 enrolled on Access to HE courses. This compared to 167 students on Higher Education courses, and 41 students enrolled on Access to HE in 2023-24. Enrolments on the Creative Arts and Production delivered at Windsor College, had seen a significant increase in student numbers following the change of focus to Stage, Screen and Design, supporting learner progression from Level 3 and addressing local skills needs.

Governors noted that strong progress had been made against teaching, learning and assessment targets set at the start of the academic year as evidenced in feedback from external verifiers. Reading weeks had been introduced to Access Courses to promote and support independent study skills and better prepare students for progression to HE and further strategies for scaffolding writing have been introduced. Work continued on developing the use of feedback and feedforward to signpost students in their academic development, on standardising processes across the whole provision and on supporting students in accessing and utilising high quality academic literature and resources.

Strong engagement with the Skills Agenda and wider opportunities for students beyond the classroom were in place with a wide range of master classes delivered. There was also ongoing involvement of industry experts in developing curriculum content delivery. Access to HE students had received support with UCAS applications in liaison with UWL, Oxford Brooks and BNU and had undertaken practical experiments utilising the facilities at Windsor College to support their studies. In addition, staff were participating in regional partnership meetings to discuss health and life sciences as part of the Thames Valley LSIP. Further development of links with employers to impact curriculum design and delivery would remain a key priority.

The meeting noted that new HE courses had been introduced to meet student and local skills' needs, including the new Higher Technical Qualification in Leadership and Management. Good progress had been made with research and planning for Access to Animal Management/ Vet Science which would meet an identified local skills need and student interest. It was hoped to introduce this at BCA from September 2025 but this would be dependent on recruitment and appropriate staffing being in place. There was also planning for an Access to Policing offer.

AD confirmed that good progress had been made towards the consolidation of the group's university partners in the delivery of HE programmes. A strong partnership remained in place with the University of West London with whom WFCG was working to confirm the WFCG HE curriculum offer for 2025. Unfortunately, the contract with St Mary's had not progressed as previously discussed; this break was mutually agreed by both parties. A partnership with the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) had been successfully launched, initiated to co-plan and deliver new provision in line with local, regional and national skills need. The meeting was reminded that two of the WFCG's Access to HE students had recently been chosen by RCN to attend their re-launch VIP event in London in March. They had taken this opportunity to talk about their work placement opportunities in the presence of King Charles.

AD informed the meeting that proposed changes to the Office for Students' (OfS) role with regards to monitoring students' unions and issues around free speech had now been permanently suspended by the OfS. This had been welcome news.

The meeting noted the areas for further development within HE as follows:

- The interview process for Access to HE to ensure students were attending interview sessions and receiving appropriate information and guidance.

- Higher Technical Qualifications were to be investigated more fully as possible replacements for HND provision e.g. in Business.
- Further development and use of the WFCG Student App for HE and Access to HE was to be introduced this academic year with the aim of supporting consistent communication and access to college services.
- Marketing strategies had been reviewed and a revised HE marketing strategy had been produced to support sustained growth across HE and Access to HE provision.
- Continued development of support services including additional learning support to be undertaken to assist HE students' achievement and success.
- Further engagement of employers and HEIs in the development and delivery of course content to ensure students were developing appropriate skills for progression to employment and further study.

The Higher Education update report was NOTED.

• **Adult provision:** The move to create one adult provision across all four college sites had been successful and smooth. Governors agreed that, in the light of funding cuts, it had been a prudent decision to rationalise the management of the team and ensure that close monitoring was taking place centrally. Governors were assured that the management team and MIS staff met regularly to track enrolment, allocations and expenditure. Changes to funding methodologies had meant that the college had filled its adult allocation more speedily and with fewer learners than in previous years, with no in-year growth available. In light of this ongoing pressure on adult funding further examination of cost contribution, staff utilisation and site specialism was in progress for all courses. The adult team continued to develop good relationships with Greater London Authority (GLA) and DfE funding authorities.

Current Adult enrolment was at 2351 enrolments generating on programme payments of £1,489,843 under the Adult Skills Fund (ASF); at the same point in 2023-2024 the College Group had 2592 enrolments generating on programme payments of £1,311,938 for ASF. At February 2025 the College Group had enrolled 480 enrolments generating on programme payments of £314,909 for GLA funding; this compared with 205 enrolments generating on programme payments of £181,735 for GLA. The meeting discussed the disappointment of the non-availability of in-year growth funding for adult provision which meant that the College Group had been unable to grow or sustain the number of adults it was able to support in comparison with the prior year. Governors were reminded that the demand was high but people were being put onto waiting lists for 2024-25. The meeting noted a letter from Minister Jacqui Smith to Windsor MP Jack Rankin; he had raised this issue of caps on adult Funding with the Minister on behalf of WFCG. The response from the minister at DfE was not offering any hope for a resolution on this matter.

The meeting noted that the funding position for 2025/26 looked equally bleak as there had been a recent announcement confirming a national cut of 6% to adult education budgets for 2025/26 (this had been expected to be circa 2%). The anticipated cut to GLA funding was 3.8% for 2025/26. However, the recent termly meeting with the GLA indicated that they hope to make more significant reductions from those providers with the largest allocations to protect those with small allocations. There had been no written confirmation of this. WFCG was focusing on alternative GLA funding streams; the commercial team was ready to bid for Bootcamps though early indications were that these would be competitive and would need to be aligned with the newly published London Growth Plan. The meeting was reminded that the very successful Multiply maths provision would end in March 2025.

The meeting noted that the Assistant Principal for Adults and Group Vice Principal were currently undertaking a cost contribution exercise for all adult courses on all sites. Staff utilisation would be considered as management planned the delivery schedule for 2025-26. However, it was likely that WFCG's programme of funded adult learning would be negatively impacted by funding cuts.

KG highlighted that Slough & Langley College - led by the ESOL team - had applied for a College of Sanctuary award. Results were pending but management were optimistic that the good work undertaken every day to support asylum seekers and those new to the UK would

The monitoring report on Adult provision was NOTED.

No

10.

Applications Report 2025/26

The meeting noted the current applications report for 16-19 programmes at 11/03/25 which showed that the Group was 5% (191 learners) behind the same position in the prior year. The current 'change' in applications by college was BCA -8% (-99), Langley +11% (+64), Strode's -1% (-7) and Windsor -18% (-149). The meeting also noted the offers accepted by college which was running 3% behind the prior year. GM confirmed that the applications data was monitored on a weekly basis and shared with all staff. It was also noted that these numbers did not include any progressing students a staff were just starting to undertake interviews for progressing students. The AP Curriculum & Quality for Sixth Form (SO) confirmed that staff were currently interviewing all Level 2 learners and prioritising an offer, either to a level 3 course or signposting them to an alternative vocational offer. GM informed the meeting that she expected a flat enrolment but some growth at Slough and Langley feeding the ESOL provision.

The CEO reminded the meeting that the budget reforecast paper which had been considered at the March Board meeting did not include any growth in learner numbers for 2024/25. However, GM confirmed that if the conversion rate for these applications was as expected the lagged funding figure for 2025/26 and the in-year growth funding for 2024/25 would continue the upward income trajectory for the college.

The applications update was NOTED

11.

Student Voice

The meeting deferred this report as governors had not attended any recent student liaison meetings since last discussed.

NOTED.

12.

Dates and Times of Future Meetings

The final meeting dates for 2024/25 was noted as:

- Thursday 19 June 2025, 5.00pm (online via Zoom)

NOTED

13.

Any Urgent Business

There was no urgent other business notified.

The meeting ended at 6.25 pm

Chair

Date