



THE WINDSOR FOREST COLLEGES GROUP BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

Held at BCA on Friday 13 June 2025 at 08.30

PRESENT:	Jo Croft	Chair of Governors
	Kerry Blandin	Governor
	Paul Britton	Governor
	Tina Coates	Governor
	Louise Fellows	Governor
	Sam Foley	Governor
	Nathan Garat (<i>online</i>)	Governor
	Rob Lewis	Governor
	Gillian May	Governor (<i>Group Principal & CEO</i>)
	Antonia Spinks	Governor
	Signe Sutherland	Governor
	Sarah Waller	FE Teaching Staff Governor
	Alison Wheatley	Support Staff Governor
APOLOGIES:	Jacob Clay	Sixth Form Teaching Staff Governor
	Nathan Green	Student Governor FE
	Tony Haines	Governor
	Nathan Peters	Student Governor Sixth Form
	Ian Thomson	Governor
IN ATTENDANCE:	Amanda Down	Principal, Sixth Form
	Anne Entwistle	Principal, FE
	Lucy Gill	Group Finance Director
	Karen Griffiths	Group Vice Principal
	Tracy Reeve	Group Director of Governance

PART I

<u>MINUTE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	The meeting started at 8.30am	
1.	<u>Health & Safety Housekeeping</u> The Chair (JC) welcomed everyone to BCA and introduced new governor Kerry Blandin who was attending her first Corporation meeting after being appointed.	
2.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies had been received as detailed above. The Group Director of Governance (TR) confirmed that Staff Governor JC was teaching so could not attend. The students were also busy with their end of year assessments and exams.	
3.	<u>AOB</u> The CEO/ Group Principal (GM) asked Members to consider an update paper on a revised pay proposal for all staff which had been updated since last considered by the Board on 27 March 2025. There was no other urgent other business notified.	
4.	<u>Declarations of interest</u> There were no declarations of interest.	

MINUTE
NO.

ACTION

5. **Minutes of the previous meetings held on 27 March 2025**

The Minutes and Part II Minutes of the previous meetings held on 27 March 2025, having been previously circulated to members, were agreed as a true record and would be taken as signed by the Chair.

All Members were agreed.

6. **Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meetings held in December 2024**

The Director of Governance presented a report which updated the meeting on the current status of 'matters arising'; all were now completed.

The update was NOTED

7. **Governor Updates**

➤ Staff Governors' Report

SW and AW both gave the meeting a short verbal update on recent student and staff activity across the colleges.

The Staff Governor Feedback was NOTED

➤ Link Governor Feedback

There was no additional Governor Link feedback since the last meeting.

NOTED

ITEMS FOR DECISION/ APPROVAL

8. **GOVERNANCE**

8.1 **Board Membership**

The Director of Governance (TR) presented a paper which detailed the Members of the Corporation with cessation dates, and sub-committee membership. Governors were reminded that the current Board membership of TWFCG was determined at 19 members and there was one vacancy.

TR reminded the meeting that Tina Coates' (TC) current term of office (an exceptional two-year third term) would end on 31 July 2025. TC has been a governor at East Berks College and latterly WFCG since October 2015 and was a key member of the Governing Body which had steered the College through two successful mergers. The Corporation minuted thanks to TC for her role as Chair of Quality & Curriculum Committee and Strategy Governance & Search Committee throughout her term.

It was also noted that the current support staff governor – Alison Wheatley – would also come to the end of her four-year term of office on 31 July 2025. TR confirmed that this staff governor vacancy would be advertised to all support staff across the four colleges in September 2025. TR also informed the meeting that she would be reviewing committee membership for 2025/26.

➤ Vacancy for Vice-Chair of the Corporation

The Group Director of Governance (TR) informed the meeting that she had not received any nominations for the Vice-Chair role at WFCG; this arose when Rob Lewis took on the role of Senior Independent Governor at the end of May 2025. There were no nominations at the meeting so this matter was deferred for consideration outside of the meeting.

➤ New members

The meeting noted discussed Sam Marshall-Davies (SMD) and noted her detailed CV. SMD had been interviewed by members of the Strategy Governance and Search Committee on 8 May 2025.

Sam Marshall-Davies (SMD): The meeting noted the recommendation of the interview panel and their rationale for recommending SMD to be appointed as a Governor of WFCG. It was agreed that SMD's lived experience of FE, understanding of BCA and knowledge of the wider education sector would add breadth to the skill set of the Board at WFCG. The meeting agreed that Sam Marshall-Davies would make a valuable contribution to governance at WFCG. It was agreed that she should be appointed to the current vacancy on the WFCG Corporation.

The Corporation APPROVED SMD's appointment as a Governor of WFCG for a four-year term of office starting immediately.

All Members were agreed.

8.2

Use of the College Seal

The meeting noted the one use of the WFCG seal since the last timetabled Corporation meeting. This had been witnessed by the CEO (GM) and Teaching Staff Governor FE (SW).

- Lease for the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Slough & Langley College (WFCG leasing this from Slough Borough Council) was sealed on 25 April 2025 and finalised on 6 May 2025.

The use of the WFCG seal was NOTED and RATIFIED

8.3

Draft Meeting timetable 2025/26

The Director of Governance (TR) proposed a draft schedule of Corporation & Committee meetings for the academic year 2025/26. TR confirmed that this schedule was based on the prior year timetable. TR informed the meeting that these dates had been taken to each of the sub-committee meetings in June 2025 to allow Member to advise of any non-availability.

The draft meeting timetable 2025/26 was NOTED.

ACTION:

- i. Governors and Committee Members to notify any non-availability for suggested dates.***
- ii. Final meeting timetable to come to Board for approval on 9 July 2025.***

The Governance update report was NOTED and RECEIVED.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION – BACKGROUND READING FOR STRATEGY DAY

The following documents were presented to the meeting in the meeting papers as background reading for the Governors' and SLT Strategy Day which would follow the formal meeting. The documents were taken as read apart from item 9 which was highlighted by the Group Director of Governance (TR).

9.

FE Commissioner Weston College recommendations

TR highlighted this paper which informed governors of circumstances in relation to an FE Commissioner intervention at Weston College of Further and Higher Education. The intervention report (published in June 2025) was shared with the meeting; this report outlined the issues found at the college and a number of governance recommendations. The meeting noted that the failings at Weston College led to a letter from the FE Commissioner to all CEOs/ Chairs of Governors; this letter was noted by the meeting. TR brought the meeting's attention to the recommendations on good governance practice arising from the Weston College failings. TR informed the meeting that she had mapped the recommendations on governance practice against the status quo at WFCG for the assurance of Governors. The following three good practice recommendations from her review would be added to governance practice at WFCG.

- i) Formal Scheme of Delegation to be updated by 31 July 2025***
- ii) Recruit a new Governor for Audit Committee who is a qualified accountant (by September 2025).***

MINUTE
NO.

ACTION

iii) Group Director of People to complete biennial review of WFCG Relationships at Work Policy.

The Weston College recommendations and WFCG action plan were NOTED and RECEIVED.

10. **Updated Risk Register**

The meeting took the updated Risk Register as read.

The updated Risk Register for June 2025 was NOTED and RECEIVED.

11. **WFCG Strategic Map and progress to date 2024/25**

The meeting took the Strategic Map as read – progress would be discussed at the strategy event following the formal meeting.

The Strategic Map and progress report at June 2025 were NOTED and RECEIVED

12. **Management Accounts April 2025**

The meeting took the detailed Management Accounts as read.

The Management Accounts for April 2025 were NOTED and RECEIVED.

13. **Applications Report 2025/26**

The meeting noted the current applications report for 16-19 programmes at 03.06.25 which showed that the Group was 2% (96 learners) behind the same position in the prior year. The current 'change' in applications by college was BCA -5% (-106), Langley +12% (+136), Strode's -1% (-11) and Windsor -13% (-115). The meeting also noted the offers accepted by college which was running 1% (-43) behind the prior year. GM reminded the meeting that she expected a flat enrolment but some growth at Slough and Langley feeding the ESOL provision.

The applications update was NOTED

14. **Letter from SoS DfE: additional funding 2025/26**

The meeting noted a letter from SoS at DfE which confirmed an additional £160m funding for the FE sector 2025/26 and cited the priority of recruitment and retention of teaching staff. GM informed the meeting that WFCG's share of this additional money was yet to be confirmed but it would be allocated across the FE sector via an increased student funding rate and increased programme weightings.

The letter from DfE was NOTED.

15. **Local Labour Market Information**

The meeting took the following two documents as read; they would be considered during the strategy event:

- Berkshire Economic Strategy 2025-2035 (published in June 2025)
- PowerPoint slides from a recent Berkshire Business Board presentation (May 2025)

The updated labour market information was NOTED and RECEIVED.

16. **Dates and Times of Future Meetings and Events**

The dates and times of future meetings were noted. TR confirmed that the final Corporation meeting for 2024/25 was scheduled on Wednesday, 9 July 2025, 5.00pm at Slough and Langley College.

NOTED

Any Urgent Business**➤ Update to the WFCG pay proposal 2025/26**

The meeting considered an update to the Pay Award Proposal for 2025/26 which had been considered and ratified by the Board on 27 March 2025. The CEO (GM) informed the meeting that following confirmation of additional DfE funding for 2025/26 – as outlined at agenda item 14 - the college group was now able to increase the total value of the pay award for staff from £0.941 million to £1.438m (representing an increase to staff costs of 4%). This enhanced award would support staff retention and morale whilst maintaining a sensible approach to the group's financial sustainability. GM informed the meeting that she was bringing this paper as an urgent item under AOB so that she could brief staff on Monday 16 June.

The meeting noted that the breakdown of this overall 4% increase would be as follows:

- £720,000 allocated for pay progression benefiting approximately 606 staff (out of a total of 895 employees).
- £625,000 available for a 1.7% cost-of-living (COL) uplift across all staff.
- £93,000 for an additional non-consolidated payment of £300 for all staff earning below £30,250 (pro-rated for part-time staff).

The CEO (GM) confirmed that she believed that this proposal would honour pay progression commitments, maintain financial stability and protect jobs across WFCG where possible.

The meeting AGREED that the Corporation should:

- Endorse the proposed allocation of £1.438m for pay in 2025/26 as outlined above.***
- Support ongoing engagement with trade unions to explore phased or creative approaches to the Cost of Living pay uplift.***
- Approve continued financial monitoring and risk mitigation actions in relation to the upward pressure on the payroll by the Executive Team.***

All members were agreed.

There was no other urgent business.

The meeting ended at 9.20am