BOARD OF GOVERNORS: RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Thursday 26 June 2025 at 08.30

Online via Zoom

			Meeting Attendance
PRESENT:	Sam Foley *(Committee Chair)*		(4 out of 4)
	Gillian May *(Group Principal and CEO)*		(4 out of 4)
	Signe Sutherland		(3 out of 4)
	Jo Croft *(Chair of Governors)*	***(Part)***	(2 out of 2)

APOLOGIES:	Louise Fellows	
	Antonia Spinks	
IN ATTENDANCE:	Susan Brady	Group Director People
	Lucy Gill	Group Director of Finance
	Karen Griffiths	Vice Principal Quality and Apprenticeships
	Tracy Reeve	Group Director of Governance
	Wendy Stott	Group Management Accountant
PART (Items 1- 6):	Dan Fairbairn	Group Director Digital, Marketing & Admissions
	Tim Mace	Head of IT infrastructure & security

PART I

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1. **Apologies for Absence**

The Director of Governance (TR) informed the meeting that apologies had been received as detailed above.

2. **Notifications of any other 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 of Resources Committee**

The meeting considered the minutes of the TWFCG Resources Committee meeting of 12 March 2025 which had previously been circulated to all members and **were agreed as a true record. They would be taken as signed by the Chair.**

All Members were agreed

5. **Matters Arising of the Previous Meeting of the Resources Committee**

The Director of Governance (TR) presented a report which confirmed that all matters arising had been actioned or would be actioned in the future (timing not due for completion yet).

i. *Delayed timeline for receipt of sale funds from land at Honey Lane (BCA)*

Group Director of Finance (LG) informed the meeting that she had attended an audit planning meeting with external auditors MHA earlier in June. The money from the sale would be treated as an updated post balance sheet event note; there had been a note on the expected funds in the July 2025 Financial Statements. The Chair (SF) sought, and was given, assurance that there would not need to be an adjustment within the accounts. The CEO (GM) informed the meeting that a best-case scenario was for the contract to complete at the

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	end of November 2025 but this might slip into January 2026. LG assured the meeting that there would be more certainty on the timeline for the receipt of the income by the time the Financial Statements were finalised and brought to the Board for signing (10 December 2025). ***NOTED***	

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

6. **<u>Leasing proposal for WFCG digital strategy</u>**

The Group Finance Director presented a paper which proposed the introduction of a leasing facility for key IT equipment. This strategic shift would optimise WFCG's capital expenditure, improve cash flow management, and provide greater flexibility in upgrading technology. The meeting agreed that in the current evolving educational landscape, access to up-to-date technology was paramount for both staff and students. LG highlighted that leasing would provide a proactive solution to the challenge of keeping IT equipment current and would allow the group to replace equipment that had reached the end of its usable life, without significant upfront capital outlay. This would ensure that WFCG's learning and working environments were equipped with the best tools available, compliant with security recommendations, enhancing productivity and the overall educational experience. The meeting also noted that another key driver for exploring a leasing option was to ease the pressure on cash flow related to capital expenditure. Instead of large, infrequent outlays for IT equipment, leasing would allow the cost to be spread over time through predictable monthly or quarterly payments. This would free up capital cashflow that could be used for other strategic initiatives or used to build financial reserves, providing greater financial stability for the WFCG.

Governors noted that the proposal was for a phased approach to implementing this leasing strategy, beginning with staff laptops. This initial phase would allow the group to establish the leasing framework, understand the operational implications, and demonstrate the benefits before expanding. There would then be potential for steady growth as follows:

- **Student Laptops:** Current plans were for an investment of £250,000 in leasing student laptops for the 2025-26 academic year. This would begin the process of ensuring students had access to the necessary technology for their studies, supporting our commitment to digital skills.
- **Teaching Walls:** There would also be potential to extend the leasing facility to other critical IT infrastructure, such as teaching walls, representing an additional potential investment of £250,000. The meeting noted that there were a significant number of aging interactive whiteboards and projectors predominantly at Strode's College and Slough & Langley which could potentially impact teaching and learning. Governors were assured that an IT equipment condition audit was currently underway to establish the specific needs. It was suggested that leasing these assets would enable WFCG to replace a higher proportion of devices improving the student and staff experience.

The meeting noted the detailed spreadsheet which outlined the tender process that had been undertaken for this leasing proposal. It was noted that this tender process had been conducted by sector specialists Unilink (identified through the Crescent Purchasing Consortium). A number of suppliers had provided quotes including Lombard, Lenovo Financial services, HP Financial services as well as other CPC approved lease suppliers. The college was looking for the option to purchase or return the equipment at the end of the contract and sought the best compliant value. It was noted that the college IT team would identify the laptops that they wanted and then the lease company would buy them. LG highlighted the preferred option in the paper to go with a lease option with CHG Meridian Operating Lease over three years. For the anticipated staff laptops, the initial quote (yet to be confirmed) was £118,400; the costs would be £9,203 per quarter over three years and the residual purchase value at the end of the contract would be £24,864 (21% of the initial costs). LG confirmed that in line with IFRS16 the assets would be on the WFCG's balance sheet. The meeting was also assured that these costs for the staff laptops were included in the CFFR 2025/26 as well as the first phase of student devices.

The Chair asked for input from the IT staff in the meeting. Group Director Digital, Marketing and Admissions (DF) highlighted the time pressure to replace staff laptops due to their forced obsolescence as they could only run Windows 10. The support contract for Windows 10

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	would lapse at the end of 2025 so it was crucial to have laptops that could run Windows 11. DF confirmed that these 'obsolete' Windows 10 laptops would be used somewhere across the WFCG estate. Head of IT infrastructure and security (TM) highlighted that as well as being a cashflow benefit the phasing of the new leasing would also break the cycle of all laptops reaching end of life at the same time. This would help the IT Team to manage workload and to bring new devices on board in a calm and manageable manner. The phased approach would also ensure a sensible approach to the proposed change in strategy, it would allow the College to review benefits as well as any negative impact to see whether it was a sensible long-term option.	
	The Chair (SF) highlighted the high interest rate at 8% but asserted that this was the cost of convenience. SF sought clarity on any risks and whether the college would have an available exit strategy if it was necessary. LG agreed that it would be important to check what the risks were around early return of devices. The meeting agreed that the phased approach would limit risk and the fact that the college was dictating which laptops to buy would maintain a high degree of autonomy. Risks were also reduced as the tender had gone through the recognised CPC framework.	
	Governors (SS) sought confirmation on how the equipment would be supported. TM confirmed that anything in relation to hardware failures would be serviced under the usual lines of manufacturer support. The meeting noted that the residual value would be based on the condition of the device at the end of the three year term and the college would be providing laptop bags for staff and making them accountable for maintaining good condition. The Group Management Accountant (WS) informed the meeting that the team looking at the tender had asked Unilink whether insurance should be bought from the leasing company but they had suggested that this would be expensive and it would be better for the college to insure devices under its usual insurance policies.	
	After discussion the meeting agreed that the proposal to move to the leasing scheme should be approved and recommended to the Board for approval. However, the Chair asked management to take stock of progress with the leasing agreement at the end of Year 2 to ensure that it was still beneficial and the best way to proceed.	
	The Resources Committee APPROVED the use of a new leasing proposal as outlined in the paper (detailed above) in order to deliver WFCG's digital strategy; this would be RECOMMENDED to the Corporation for approval (9 July 2025).	
	ACTION:	
	i. Take to Board for ratification and approval.	**TR/ LG**
	ii. Leasing scheme to be reviewed at the end of Year 2 to ensure that it was still beneficial and the best way to procure staff and student laptops.	**Exec**
	All Members were agreed.	
	[DF and TM left the meeting.]	
7.	**Risk Register**	
	The CEO/ Group Principal (GM) presented the Risk Register for 2024/25 which continued to be reviewed and updated by the Senior Leadership Team. The meeting discussed the highest scoring risks and the updated narrative explaining current risk scores, mitigation and assurance levels.	
	• Risk 1 Failure to meet budget forecast (risk score remains at 16 'amber'): Acute risk linked to financial health; the upwards pressure on pay was still a very real concern. GM confirmed that the risk had remained high throughout 2023/24 and was reflected in the year-end position but reminded the meeting that lagged funding and tight control of costs would return the College to a positive EBITDA and financial health in 2024/25. The pay costs as a percentage of income were still above the 68% target at 70% but had shown improvement since the prior year. *GM suggested that the Resources Committee might consider whether this risk score was still at the correct level or whether it should be reviewed.* However, although predictions for the year-end July 2025 were strong it was agreed that it would be prudent for the year-end accounts to be finalised before a review was considered.	

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	• Risk 2 IT Failure with loss of data for staff or students (risk score remains at 16 'amber'): This key risk was now classified as number two on the Risk Register and Governors were reminded that capital had been ringfenced during 2024/25 for essential IT improvements. The systems upgrades (in IT, HR and Finance) to increase efficiency and resilience had been discussed at recent committee meetings and were now being actioned as a priority. GM assured the meeting that good progress was being made on system upgrades. • Risk 3 Uncertainty and risks associated with emerging national curriculum reforms (risk score remains at 12 'amber'): This key 'acute' risk was being well managed and senior staff continued to be engaged in advisory groups linked to reform. The T level roll out across WFCG was now confirmed and costed with a clear curriculum plan in place. The meeting was reminded that a revised WFCG Curriculum & Skills Strategy had been approved by the Board in March 2025. *GM suggested that this risk score might be reduced as the risk of defunding had largely gone away. There was also ongoing uncertainty around adult funding but this might be better categorised on the Risk Register as a funding risk not a curriculum reform risk.* • Risk 4 External Safeguarding Risks (risk score remains at 12 'amber'): The meeting was assured that the Executive Team continued to work with all relevant agencies in relation to any safeguarding incidents. This had been discussed in detail during the Governors' update safeguarding training at the Strategy Day on 13 June 2025. • Risk 5 Poor student outcome data in some curriculum areas results in a challenge to the Good Ofsted rating and the resulting impact on quality and reputation (risk score reduced to 8 'green'): The CEO confirmed that this continued to be a focus for management to ensure consistency across the four campuses. The CEO reminded the meeting that a more detailed Curriculum Risk Register was a standing report to the Quality & Curriculum Committee. • Risk 6 Changes to external funding risk future financial sustainability (risk score reduced to 9 'green'): The CEO reminded the meeting of the pro-active approach to adult education in Slough which was now being driven forward following the rebranding of Slough and Langley College. Curriculum planning had been adjusted and WFCG had maximised its allocation as well as the 10% growth allocation in adult funding. The adult funding for 2025/26 would also allow for potential 10% growth. • Risk 8 Insufficiently developed succession planning/ staff retention strategies (risk score remains at 9 'green'): The CEO reminded the meeting of the clear planning now in place to restructure the senior postholder (SPH) team across WFCG to reflect the resignations of the two principals. Work was currently underway to restructure the middle management tier to support this new SPH structure; this would be discussed in detail later in the meeting. GM assured the meeting that any risks associated with the loss of AD in August 2025 and AE in December 2025 were being well managed. The CEO informed the meeting that the Risk Register had been considered in detail at the Audit Committee (25 June 2025). The Chair commended the Risk Register and how it was used as a living document by management and governors. Governors (JC) asked that the wording 'Breach' of 68% benchmark (in relation to staff costs as a percentage of income) be softened by the addition of 'suggested' to benchmark. ***The meeting NOTED and APPROVED the updated WFCG Risk Register.*** ***ACTION:*** *i.* ***Amend wording for Risk 1 – 'breach of suggested benchmark'*** *ii.* ***It was agreed that the Risk Register should be reviewed in autumn 2025 with a view to changing the risks scores – as outlined above in purple italics.*** All Members were agreed.	**GM**
8.	**Budget 2025/26 and Financial Plan 2026/27** The Group Finance Director (LG) presented the budget 2025/26 and the revised financial forecast through to 2026/27. LG highlighted that the outturn was based on actuals for the first ten months (to the end of May 2025). Governors were assured that the budgets for FY25 and FY26 had been produced on a prudent basis. LG reminded the meeting that this budget	

followed on from what was discussed at the Governors Strategy event on 13 June. LG confirmed that the allocation statement from the DfE – confirming 14-16 income for 2025/26 – was first issued in March 2025 but had been updated (increased) several times. The meeting noted and discussed the following Executive Summary:

Income

- **DfE 16 to 19 income** based on the DfE March 2025 allocation statement with funding rates increased as announced in May 2025. This indicated that income for FY26 was expected to be at £35.112m including the NI grant. A provision for a decrease in T-level student numbers against the allocation had been set at £200,000. Offers accepted for ESFA full term provision were 2% ahead of prior year but there was no assumption of further DfE growth in FY26 (or lagged funding in FY27). The meeting discussed the largely flat student numbers other than at Slough & Langley College which was assumed to carry forward into stable enrolment for 2026/27.
- **Adult Education income** including Greater London Authority (GLA) devolved funding was expected to be £3.365m in FY26, down from £3.494m in FY25. Thereafter the assumption was that FY27 income would remain at the same level reflecting the unlikelihood of any growth in adult funding. LG confirmed that there was nothing included in the budget for the possible additional 10% ASF or 3% extra GLA as there was no certainty around the college earning this addition.
- **Apprenticeship income** was forecast to grow by 2.5% from 32.7m in FY25 to £2.784m in FY26; an additional 2.5% growth was also included for FY27. This steady growth was based on current pipeline strength and employer demand.
- **High Needs income** was forecast to continue to grow due to sustained high demand. The group had 503 DfE funded places confirmed for FY26 (up from 480 in FY25) which would generate ‘element 2’ revenue of £3.018m. The ‘element 3’ funding from local authorities was projected to remain consistent with FY25 levels at £3.518m with an expected 4.5% increase for FY27. LG reminded the meeting that a two-year funding settlement had been agreed with local authorities so there would be no increase in element 3 funding rates for FY26. Even if there were more high needs students in 2025/26 the mix within funding bands could not be predicted; this made it sensible to maintain income at FY25 levels. LG confirmed that the college would renegotiate a further 2-year deal with local authorities during 2025/26 for FY27 and FY28.
- **Other income streams** had been increased by 2.5% on all non-DfE income streams. The government grant for the additional TPS costs would continue but the amount was reduced from the previous year.

Governors (SS) sought confirmation on whether the college had any more information on extra income from DfE for Direct Entry 14-16 provision. The CEO confirmed that the WFCG bid had been submitted – for direct funding from September 2026 - and a meeting to discuss this with DfE had taken place. The college was currently waiting to hear about the outcome.

Pay Costs

- Pay costs would continue to put pressure on the financial performance of the College. The budget assumed a total pay cost increase of 4% (£1.438m) for FY26 and 2.8% (£1.039m) for FY27 as discussed at the Board meeting on 13 June 2025. The meeting noted that the AoC had not yet announced their pay recommendation. LG confirmed that the 4% allowed for all the salary on-costs. It was noted that the 2.8% forecast for FY27 might not be realistic in terms of pay pressure and inflation but it was a sensible forecast at this stage.
- Automatic pay progression (606 staff) would result in additional pay costs of £720K for FY26. A further 1.7% consolidated cost of living pay award for all staff would cost £625k. There would also be a non-consolidated payment in December of £250 for staff earning below £30,250 which would cost an additional £93k.
- With 16-18 student numbers at a static level for FY26 and FY27, pay as a percentage of revenue was forecast to remain above the benchmark of 65%; FY25, 69.66%, FY26 68.28%, FY27 70.59%. The budget was not assuming any increase in headcount for staff as learner numbers were assumed to be static.

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Non-pay costs

- A 2.5% inflationary assumption had been made on all non-pay costs for both years, except for exam fees for FY26 at 3.5% and bus transport costs at 5% for FY26.
- Forecast operating expenditure was: FY25 £12.664m, FY26 £12.935m, FY27 £13.073m. The meeting agreed that this control would help the bottom line but would require a really tight adherence to cost control by all management. LG highlighted that the marketing budget had been reinstated to the level from two years ago after two years of reduction. This increase would be important to allow the marketing team to focus targeted marketing and ensure that there was no decline in student numbers in the face of a static demographic.
- Utility contracts would be renewed in autumn 2025 and forecast savings were £645k per annum. This would partially offset inflationary pressures and allow investment in infrastructure projects to transition HR and accounting data to externally hosted cloud servers for enhanced security.

Capital expenditure

- Capital grant expenditure against allocation for FY26 would be £2.075m for IT infrastructure and estates, and £220k for T level specialist equipment (media and marketing).
- College funded capital expenditure in FY26 would be a total £730k of which £500k would be on leased IT equipment as discussed earlier in the meeting. College funded capital expenditure FY27 would be £1.150m of which £250k would be on leased IT equipment. LG confirmed that tight control of capital expenditure would help the college rebuild its cash reserves to reach the suggested FEC benchmark of 40 days cash (from January 2026).

Outputs

- EBITDA was forecast to be £2.765m positive in FY25, moving to £4.423m positive in FY26 and £2.927m positive in FY27. LG highlighted that this would be the first time the WFCG had generated cash from operation for several years.
- Year-end cash balances were forecast to be £4.295m in FY25 moving to £8.075m in FY26 and £9.645m in FY27. Cash days would remain above the new FEC benchmark of 40 from January 2026 onwards.
- Financial health for FY25 was forecast to be 210 points (Good); this was ahead of forecast by 30 points due to improved cash and the return to positive EBITDA. This would move to 270 points (Outstanding) in FY26 and 240 points (Outstanding) for FY27. The 30 point drop year-on-year would take the score to the minimum points level for Outstanding and was due to a 0.39% drop in the EBITDA ratio offset by higher cash. LG confirmed that although a grade of Outstanding in FY27 was achievable it would become harder in light of static student numbers.

LG reminded the meeting that the College was required to submit the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) to the ESFA by 31 July 2025. LG assured the meeting that the narrative commentary to accompany the CFFR would be more fulsome than in the prior year and would fully meet the requirements of DfE.

The Chair commented on the complication of additional funding being allocated at different times during the last couple of months. LG confirmed that it had been a challenging year in terms of timing and certainty. An example was the funding for the increased NI costs where the money would be payable for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 but would only be paid to colleges in September 2025 so there had been a five month lag. LG confirmed that this had been accrued for 2024/25 to cover the expenditure of £248,000 in FY25.

The Chair initiated a discussion on the benefits of being graded as Outstanding (O/S) for financial health and whether this should be a strategic objective. GM reminded the meeting that the recent dip into RI financial health had ruled WFCG out of bidding for certain grants and initiatives including the Construction TECs. GM agreed that whilst O/S was an aspiration she would be content with the top end of Good as long as there were improved cash reserves. The meeting agreed that the O/S grade was a blunt instrument and sometimes hid financial issues; it would be more accurate to look at cash days and the surplus at year-end. The meeting agreed that it would be useful for WFCG to set its own targets for surplus and

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	cash days rather than chasing the O/S label. These financial targets could be added to the college risk register to help Governors and Management understand the financial risks and see progress mor clearly. Other members of SLT (KG) confirmed that the key focus should be on increasing cash to give the college financial stability for the longer term; whilst O/S was an aspiration the key driver would be to get to a Good rating. The impact on TU discussions with Trade Unions if the college had an O/S grade was also noted. The meeting agreed that this work to review the merits of being O/S and design some internal financial targets should be undertaken once the external audit 2025 was completed. This timing would also enable management to have enrolment and the first terms performance (retention etc.) confirmed. The meeting discussed section 10 of the budget paper which showed the financial recovery and progress against the FE Commissioner financial benchmarks over the budget and plan period. GM asserted that this clearly demonstrated that the forecast three-year post-merger recovery period had been proved accurate. SF asked management to think carefully about where the college would ideally like to be for cash days. LG confirmed that she believed that 40 days was an absolute minimum as it would cover a full month payroll plus a few contingencies. LG asserted the value of having a higher cash day figure as it would give management and governors more flexibility to make decisions that were not bounded by available cash. Although not a high risk business the meeting agreed that there were times of the year when cash could become an issue e.g. at Christmas with early payroll and potential delays to the term 1 high needs funding income from local authorities. GM reminded the meeting that the range across the FE sector was enormous with some colleges being in the 'hundreds' for cash days. The Chair sought confirmation on possible covenant breaches. LG informed the meeting that the CFFR would not generate any breach in FY26 and FY27 but that it would be close for FY25. The meeting was assured that the DfE would be made aware of any possible breach at an early stage. The Chair thanked the Finance Team for the clear and helpful paperwork which explained the prudent budget and forecast and the positive picture over the next two years. LG reaffirmed the cautious approach to the FY27 forecast as there were so many uncertainties. ***The meeting APPROVED the budget 2025/26 and the financial plan 2026/27 and would RECOMMEND this to the Board for approval.***	
	ACTION:	
	i. Take budget and cover paper to Board with no changes.	**TR/ LG**
	ii. Executive to think about: ➢ ***the strategy of aiming for Outstanding financial health*** ➢ ***developing WFCG financial targets including operating surplus and cash days which should be included on the college risk register to help management and the governors to manage the ongoing financial risk.*** ***(Timing of (ii) in Autumn 2025 after the year-end financial statements audit)***	**Exec**
	[Jo Croft left the meeting]	
9.	**Legacy East Berks College bank account** The meeting considered a paper which was presented by the Group Management Accountant (WS). Governors noted that the AP Student Services Sixth Form had recently discovered a legacy NatWest Current Account in the name of 'East Berkshire College Student Union'. WS confirmed that this Student Union Account was a designated legacy account that was used for the management of funds raised and spent by the Student Union Executive at East Berkshire College. This account was now dormant with a balance of approximately £15,000 remaining but it had not been dealt with during the due diligence for the merger between EBC and Strode's College in May 2017. Governors noted that the named signatory on the account was no longer an employee of the Windsor Forest Colleges Group (WFCG). If the funds remained unclaimed, they would eventually be redistributed to community and charitable organisations. WS informed the meeting that in order for WFCG to assert ownership of the account and the £15,000 balance, NatWest were insisting on a minuted record of Governors' approval that	

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	this account was now owned by WFCG. The meeting noted the request from NatWest for the WFCG Corporation to agree to the recommendations outlined below in relation to the transfer/ closure of the dormant NatWest bank account and its associated funds. The Resources Committee meeting noted and approved all three actions that NatWest were asking WFCG Governors to agree to; they would be taken to the Board for ratification. The Chair suggested that it would be prudent to have more than two signatories on the account for tight control. ***The Resources Committee AGREED to:*** • ***Confirm that the account was under the ownership of Windsor Forest Colleges Group (previously known as East Berkshire College).*** • ***Endorse the request to reclaim funds from a dormant NatWest Current Account.*** • ***Confirm that at least two new signatories would be supplied in relation to the future account management of the bank account (the college would prefer to have more than two signatories).*** ***These three resolutions would be RECOMMENDED to the BOARD for approval (9 July 2025).*** ***ACTION: Take to Board for approval on 9 July 2025.***	**LG/ TR**
	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION	
10.	**Human Resources Update Report** The Group Director of people (SB) presented an update on the senior leadership restructure which was proposed and endorsed at the 12th of February 2025 Board meeting. This restructure builds on opportunities created by the 2022 merger, aiming to enhance collaboration, improve efficiency and centralise group functions. It also sought to address the changes needed after the resignation of the Principal Sixth Form (31 August 2025) and principal FE (31 December 2025). The meeting was reminded of the interim senior organisational chart which would be in place from September 2025 and the final version which would come into force after the retirement of the Principal FE in December 2025. The meeting was reminded that a phased approach had been adopted: • Phase One: Appointment of an interim Group Deputy Principal, who will take on oversight of the sixth form colleges while retaining their existing responsibilities as Group Vice Principal. • Phase Two: Restructure of student services and safeguarding and strengthening of commercial and higher education leadership. • Phase Three: The number of Assistant Principals had been reduced following the establishment of three College Principals who will be responsible for local leadership and quality. Additionally, a Group Deputy Principal will be appointed to oversee group function including curriculum, student services and compliance. SB confirmed that formal consultation with affected staff began on 31st March 2025 and concluded on 23rd May 2025. All seven posts involved in the restructure were placed at risk of redundancy. Two staff proposals made during the consultation were accepted: removal of the Assistant Principal Adult and ESOL post; and removal of the Curriculum Director English and Maths post, reflecting strengthened departmental leadership. The meeting noted that two internal candidates had been successfully appointed to the new Group Vice Principal roles: VP Student Services, Laura Peters; and VP Commercial, Adults and Apprenticeships Naomi Bailey. These two roles had been ring-fenced for those affected by redundancy and would not come into effect until the final structure was put in place on 1 January 2026. SB confirmed that recruitment for the three new College Principal roles was underway, with 17 applications received and final interviews (with two external candidates and one internal) scheduled for the start of July at Slough & Langley College. Five Assistant Principal roles would remain in the new structure; eligible at-risk staff would be considered for these posts in early July. Governors were assured that any legal risks in relation to unfair selection for redundancy had been mitigated by ensuring that a robust process was used with	

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	transparent criteria and measurement.	
	SB confirmed that an update on the Principal interviews would be brought to the Board meeting on 9 July 2025. She informed the meeting that the applications received had not provided a very rich pool of candidates; several applicants lived a considerable distance from the campuses. The meeting was reminded that these three principal posts were not designated senior postholder roles but there would be governor involvement in the interview day with Senior Independent Governor (RL) attending the interviews. Governors sought clarity on the poor response to the advert and the meeting discussed whether the roles should be more accurately titled as they were senior curriculum jobs without the associated aspects of student services. However, SB confirmed that the interviews planned for 2 July would go ahead with optimism.	
	The Human Resources update report was NOTED	
11.	**Estates Update**	
	• *Update for Capital Development Steering Group (CDSG), June 2025*	
	The meeting noted an update report which had recently been provided for the CDSG. This report confirmed that progress on the land sale at Honey Lane (BCA) to Elivia Homes was progressing as planned. Elivia had submitted the full 'reserved matters' package for appearance and landscaping to the planning department at RBWM on 28 March 2025. It was expected that the planners would need a five-month period for review and comment. GM confirmed that this extended timeline between exchange and completion was usual for development sites. It was also noted that the Director of Estates at BCA maintained very close direct contact with the developers and was fully up to date with progress.	
	The meeting also noted that the heritage repair and restoration project for Hall Place was now 'on pause' until there was certainty around receipt of funds. This decision had been a recommendation from CDSG in order to mitigate any financial exposure for the college during 2024/25 before receipt of the ring-fenced capital funds. However, there was significant urgency to address the building condition of South Wing and the stable block (Clock Cottage). Priority would be given to these buildings once the heritage project recommenced. A new project timeline would be discussed with project managers – Coreus – in November 2025.	
	The Chair sought clarity on the reference to the additional 73 flats being converted on the Hurley Road which local residents were concerned about increasing traffic. GM confirmed that this would not affect the Elivia Honey Lane proposal. SF sought, and was given, confirmation that all Elivia construction traffic would be routed through the BCA campus but there was no question of agreeing to take residential traffic through the campus on a long-term basis.	
	SF sought confirmation on the date of the next CDSG meeting. TR confirmed that this would be in September 2025 as there was unlikely to be anything to discuss in advance of that. The meeting was assured that if anything cropped up over the summer the CDSG would be convened; it had proven to be an agile membership with meetings often arranged at short notice.	
	The update on the land sale at Honey Lane (BCA) was NOTED	
12.	**Management Accounts May 2025**	
	The Management Accounts for April 2025 were taken as read. Group Management Accounts (WS) presented the management accounts for May 2025 which had previously been circulated to all governors by email. Governors noted that the accounts continued to be presented on a prudent basis reflecting the performance to date and the on-going cost challenges that the group was facing in the current financial year.	
	The final key financial indicators for the first ten months of the financial year were noted as follows against the February 2025 reforecast budget:	
	• *Income*: Total income to the end of May was £43.662m which was £1.999m favourable against the budget.	
	o *Adults*: Strong performance in the Adult Education Budget (AEB) including Greater	

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	London Authority (GLA) earnings would result in favourable earnings for the full year. Full year income was estimated to be £3.494m against a forecast of £3.252m.	

- ○ *Full cost income*: Strong performance in Skills Bootcamps and Multiply (maths courses) had also improved this income stream and revenue was expected to be £0.293m ahead of the budget/ CFFR.
- ○ *High Needs income:* The full year forecast for high needs funding was expected to be £0.626m more than budget, now reflected in the full year forecast.
- ○ *Apprenticeship income* was £0.348m ahead of the budget/ CFFR due to strong continuing enrolments. The meeting was assured that the pipeline remained strong.

- *Payroll* remained high and continued to be the largest risk to the ongoing financial health of the college group. The first ten months payroll was tracking £0.647m above CFFR/ budget; this included the additional NI costs from April 2025 which amounted to £62,000 per month (£248,000 for the four months in 2024/25). It had now been confirmed that the government would fund 80% of this increase for 2024/25 and through to April 2026. Staff costs as a percentage of adjusted income was 68.62% at the end of May and the full year forecast was 69.07% (against the benchmarks of GFE < 65% and SFC <70%). Governors were assured that the senior team continued to monitor and act where appropriate to reduce the risk associated with this expenditure.
- *Non-pay costs* continued to be well controlled and managed, there were no run rate concerns. It was noted that facilities and exams had done really well to control their costs and curriculum costs were only slightly over budget despite growth in learner numbers. The year end position was forecast to be a positive variance of £0.165m.
- *Year-end forecast:* The updated FY25 forecast was a positive EBITDA of £2.767m (a positive variance of £1.001m) resulting in a DfE financial health grade of Good at 210 points (30 points ahead of the CFFR forecast).
- *Cash balance:* The cash balance on 31 May was £5.227m, which was £1.138m higher than forecast. The cash days on 31 May were 42 days which was confirmed as just above the new FE Commissioner benchmark of 40. However, when the DfE grants balance of £0.980m was excluded this reduced the cash days to 34. The forecast cash balance at year end was £4.295m which was £0.959m ahead of the forecast/ CFFR.

The meeting took the detailed Management Accounts as read; the budget 2024/25 agenda item had discussed much of the detail. The meeting commended the optimistic position against forecast due to the positive learner numbers.

The Chair commended the move in the predicted financial health grade to Good as discussed earlier in the meeting. WS confirmed the benefit of opening up avenues for the college to bid for additional funding and initiatives. SF asked whether anything should be learnt from this 'hockey stick' recovery during FY25 in advance of confirming the CFFR for 2025/26. GM reminded the meeting of the need to remain mindful of the likely static enrolment numbers in September 2025 and the impact of funding future pay rises.

SS congratulated LG and WS as the Finance Team had managed to drive a change in culture in budget management down through WFCG; this change in behaviours took time and effort. SS confirmed that she was delighted to see the positive moves against forecast and budgets being exceeded. LG asserted the involvement of many people across the organisation to facilitate this change; one key example had been Head of IT Infrastructure (TM) who had focused on managing the costs of IT. LG highlighted the huge additional costs post-merger - e.g. consultancy - which were now no longer an issue. However, LG asserted the need for management to remain mindful of how the costs of big projects - e.g. the new accounting system – were managed. The meeting agreed that congratulations were due to all staff for their part in successful cost control during 2024/25.

The Management Accounts for May 2025 were NOTED and RECEIVED.

13. **Applications Report**

The meeting noted the current applications report for 16-18 programmes at 17/06/25 which showed that the applications for the Group were -3% (-144 learners) behind the same position in the prior year. The current change in applications by college was BCA -7% (-139), Langley +11% (+134), Strode's -2% (-20) and Windsor -13% (-119). The meeting also noted the offers accepted by college which was running 2% ahead of the prior year; BCA -5% (-74

MINUTE No		ACTION
	learners), Langley +22% (133), Strode's +2% (+20), and Windsor -5% (-25). GM informed the meeting that this data set was 'cleaner' this year as there had been more timely removal of withdrawn applications. GM reminded the meeting that this data was shared with all staff and governors on a weekly basis to maintain focus in advance of enrolment. The meeting noted that there would be a new T level offer at Windsor for 2025/26 but there was still work to do in relation to the curriculum offer at BCA and Slough and Langley regarding T Levels. All colleges were now gearing up for enrolment. SS asked when the data on predicted growth in Higher Education (HE) enrolments would be available. GM informed the meeting that HE numbers were small and would not be confirmed until September. It was agreed that the HE enrolment data would be included in the early enrolment data issued to governors at the start of 2025/26. ***The Applications update was NOTED*** ***ACTION: HE enrolment data would be included in the early enrolment data issued to governors at the start of 2025/26.***	**GM**
14.	**<u>Slides from AoC Finance & Audit Network</u>** The meeting noted a suite of slides from a recent Association of Colleges briefing for Audit and Finance Governors. This provided useful context for Resources Committee members. ***NOTED***	
15.	**<u>Dates and Times of Future Meetings</u>** TR confirmed that the next meeting was timetabled for Thursday 25 September 2025 at 08.30am on Zoom. All dates in 2025/26 would be confirmed after approval of the draft meeting schedule by the Board on 9 July 2025. ***NOTED***	
16.	**<u>Any Urgent Business</u>** ➢ **<u>Updated DfE Financial Dashboard and accompanying letter</u>** The CEO presented a paper which presented the latest iteration of the DfE Financial Dashboard for WFCG along with the covering letter received from DfE at the end of April 2025. The paper updated the Audit Committee on progress against the financial control issues highlighted during the 2023/24 external audit process, as detailed in the DfE Financial Statements Review letter and supported by internal management updates. The Chair thanked GM for this AOB update but reminded the meeting that the data on the DfE Dashboard was old. The CEO assured the meeting that the points raised in the DfE letter were those raised in the external auditors (MHA) management letter for the FY25 financial statements audit. GM informed Resources Committee members that a detailed update had been considered by Audit Committee on 25 June which gave assurance that all management letter points were either completed or being actioned in a timely fashion. GM also informed the meeting that the college's internal auditors (wbg) were currently looking at apprenticeship funding and the initial findings were all positive. LG highlighted that the next iteration of the DfE dashboard would include FY27 and would show the financial recovery at WFCG made in FY25. ***NOTED*** There were no other urgent items of business raised.	

The meeting closed at 10.25 am.

Chair.. Date..