MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 13 MARCH 2026 IN THE EXCHANGE BOARD ROOM / VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:

Mark Allanson	Chair of the Corporation Board
Catherine Hill OBE*	Vice-Chair of the Corporation Board
Dr Fazal Dad CBE*	Principal and Chief Executive
Asif Ali	Member
Cheryl Dunn	Member
Ram Gupta	Member
Michael Lee	Staff Governor (Business Support)
Ridwaan Omar*	Member
Arif Patel	Member
Darren Ratcliffe	Member
Nathan Rogan	Member
Ojan Rohani	Member
Clare Shaw	Staff Governor (Academic)
David Swift	Member
Taiyab Sufi*	Member
Bryan Welch	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jennifer Eastham	Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
Rachel Tarplee	Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Nicola Clayton	Executive Director of Business Development and External Engagement
Laine Morris	Executive Director of People and Culture
Sarah Horeesorun	Director of Governance

* indicates attendance via Microsoft Teams

The meeting started at 14:00 and was quorate.

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including those members joining via Teams and thanked members for their continued support of the College.

The Chair noted that this was the final Board meeting for Mr Paul Morris and the Board joined the Chair in thanking Mr Morris for his service to and support of the College over many years in his role as a member of the Board and Policy and Resources Committee, and as Lead Governor on Health and Safety and Sustainability. A card and gift were presented to Mr Morris.

The Chair reminded members that the Agenda items had been discussed and scrutinised by the relevant Committees or had been considered in draft at the last Board meeting with the final versions proposed for approval at this meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from members Asif Ali, Faris Ahmed, Joshua Waghorn, and Executive Team member, Matthew Robinson.

The Chair advised those in attendance that should members of the Corporation Board become aware of any potential conflicts of interest, they should be disclosed at the earliest opportunity during the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETINGS HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2025

The Board agreed that the Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on 5 December 2025 were accurate.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no new matters arising, the Board having noted the status of actions from the previous meetings or actions would be covered by Items on the Agenda.

5. CHAIR'S MATTERS

The Chair provided a verbal update, reflecting on the Strategic Seminar that morning and sharing with members thoughts on recent events and visits to the College.

Ashley Wells, Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub, had provided a comprehensive update on the Combined Authorities and there was discussion of devolution and the Adult Skills Budget. The Agenda had also included Items on the Accountability Agreement, Student Experience and a tutor and students shared their experiences of a recent trip to France.

The Chair had participated in the AoC NW Chair's meeting earlier in the week and discussed the balanced scorecard and SEND funding.

The Chair acknowledged the:

- College was approaching the business end of year and supporting students to achieve, emphasising that student attendance was crucial as this had a huge impact on achievement. Great efforts to encourage engagement on Maths and English with revision sessions over easter and mock exams planned.
- Increased Board member engagement with the College. The Vice-Chair had supported the College at the Lancashire Tourism Awards in Blackpool where our student won the hospitality award, and the Chair had attended the Red Rose Awards.
- Members had judged the Lancashire Colleges Skills Competition for Digital and presented the certificates for the Lancashire Colleges Skills Competition for Foundation Learning. Whilst others planned to support the upcoming Quality Summits, and the Chair encouraged members to, wherever possible, engage with the College, its awards and events even more as this was positive in increasing the visibility of the Board and engaging with students and staff.
- Members that had completed the Chair's performance review survey and planned to meet with each member just before or just after easter. The Director of Governance was arranging.

The Chair informed members that there would need to be some careful choreography in Item 9 with members needing to leave the room for various parts of the Governance discussions. Thanking them in advance.

6. PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

The Principal had provided a comprehensive Report for his Item.

The Principal thanked the Board for their support and all that they continued to do, as their unrelenting focus on improvement and the future set the tone and culture of the organisation, and the continuous push to be exceptional was appreciated.

The Principal highlighted the following:

- A forensic approach to maths and English exams
- The retention rate for FE was 97% and it was critical to turn this into achievements.
- HE continues to improve
- HNS progress essential
- Apprenticeships aiming to achieve 70% in 2025/26
- Student win and recognition at the Lancashire Tourism Awards and thanks to the Hospitality Team at the College for supporting students
- Great achievements by students in the recent Lancashire Colleges Skills competitions
- Staff and students making plans for more foreign visits sponsored by the Turing Fund, and Malawi Orphanage Project shortlisted in the AoC awards.
- College and DfE Annual Strategic Conversation in April to celebrate all that has been achieved and share plans for the future
- Building on partnership with BwD on Teaching Assistants into Schools initiative and plans for Launchpad II to Darwen
- Partnership Reviews with the University of South Wales and Lancaster had gone well
- Government priorities included outcomes from the CAR and the introduction of incentives for SMEs to recruit Apprentices
- Letter from the new FEC setting out priorities and approach to interventions
- Student recruitment and interview evenings going well
- PGCE QTS start in September 2026
- Summer works and the science laboratories and phase II of the hospitality refurbishments would be completed over the summer
- Staff had met with the Principal at a ‘Meet the Principal’ meeting and shared their thoughts on what the College did well, and areas for improvement including, Team Communications and national living wage concerns.

Lastly, the Principal added a special thank you to Matthew Robinson, Executive Director of Student Support and Experience, who had introduced the Turing Project to the College and for whom many students had travelled to foreign countries on life changing visits to improve their employment skills and enhance their learning.

The Principal thanked all staff for their hard work.

The Chair thanked the Principal and Chief Executive for the comprehensive Report and further updates.

7. ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

7(i) Appointment of External Audit Service

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services introduced this Item seeking approval for the appointment of Menzies as the External Auditors of the College’s Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2026.

Based on the experience for 2024/25, content of the accompanying Report and recommendation from the Audit Committee, the Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Menzies as the regularity auditors to undertake the Financial Statements Audit for the 2025/26 year-end.

7(ii) Risk Management Policy

The College's risk management process was fundamental to the work of Audit Committee and the regular review of the risks associated with the College and its operation and strategic direction.

The policy had been reviewed by the Audit Committee, and bar a few small changes to titles, remained 'fit for purpose' and was presented to the Board for approval for a further three years, as recommended by the Audit Committee.

The Board **APPROVED** the Risk Management Policy.

7(iii) Risk Register 2025/26

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services talked the Board through the Report informing them that no new risks had been identified, and one risk was RAG rated as being 'Red', and one had been reduced to amber.

The Risk Register had been considered by the Audit Committee at its February meeting.

Having scrutinised the Report and attachments there followed some discussion of Apprenticeships, Commercial and HE and the Board was assured that these areas were being monitored closely.

The Board **APPROVED** the February 2026 Risk Management Report.

8. ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

8.(i) Management Accounts to 31 January 2026

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services provided an update on the financial position, operating position, and budget to date. The position on income and expenditure was summarised within the Report and areas being closely managed included Higher Education and Apprenticeship income. Across the sector, institutions were awaiting announcement from the Government on 'in-year growth' funding.

Cash balances were strong and the financial position Outstanding.

The Policy and Resources Committee had considered the Management Accounts in the February Committee meeting and recommended these to the Corporation Board for approval.

The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Management Accounts.

8.(ii) College Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2025/26

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services shared the KPI Report for the period ending 31 January 2026 and explained that

- 7 KPIs were on target
- 0 were on target in part
- 4 were under target
- 10 were Not yet Reportable

There was discussion on why Student Attendance, HE Enrolments and Surplus/Deficit/FEC surplus KPIs were not meeting target and the Board assured by the explanations given and that mitigating activities were being undertaken.

The Board **APPROVED** the Key Performance Indicator Report for the period ending 31 January 2026.

8.(iii) Strategic Plan Operating Statement update 31 January 2026

The Board noted the targets for the Annual Operating Statement 2025/26 and performance on these so far as set out in the Report and attached Appendix.

Members noted that good progress was being made on most and the Chair asked about the Alumni campaign and if there was more to be done to raise the profile of Alumni around the College, for example, if I can see it, I can be it.

The Board **APPROVED** the Strategic Plan Operating Statement Report as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee.

8.(iv) Financial Regulations 2025/26

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that the Financial Regulations set the control environment under which the College's finances were operated and how they were governed. Normally, the Financial Regulations were reviewed biennially as a minimum, however, a review of the regulations identified the need to make changes so that the regulations were current. These changes were detailed in Appendix A with all of the changes marked up using tracked changes. The majority of the changes were minor.

The Policy and Resources Committee had prior consideration of this Report and recommended it to the Corporation Board for approval.

The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations pending the action above being checked.

8.(v) Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech

The Policy and Resources Committee had considered the Colleges' current Code of Practice on the Freedom of Speech and the Code remained fit for purpose.

The Report had included comparisons of the Colleges' Code to that of other institutions and highlighted to similarities and differences.

A member enquired if premises should include digital and online spaces and the Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality explained that there were other College policies that covered online delivery and social media.

The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee.

9. ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE GOVERNANCE PANEL

9(i) Succession Planning

The Director of Governance introduced this Report and reported that there was one external Board member vacancy for an independent Governor, and as Mr Morris was leaving, this would create another Board vacancy, and vacancy on the Policy and Resources Committee, a vacancy on Remuneration Committee and that of Lead Governor on Health, Safety and Sustainability. An update on Governance and current vacancies was supplied within the Report.

The Board **APPROVED** Mr Brandon's appointment to the Board and as a member of the Policy and Resources Committee as an independent member. The College's Health and Safety

Committee would discuss appointment separately, and the Governance Panel would discuss the vacancy on the Remuneration Committee.

The Board considered the Terms of Office for four Governors whose Terms of Office were to end on 31 March 2026.

Per the Succession Planning Policy, the Board **APPROVED** the continued membership and new term of office of three years for Ridwaan Omar, Arif Patel, Darren Ratcliffe and Clare Shaw to end 31 March 2029.

The Governance Panel therefore proposed that the term of office for Mr Mark Allanson be extended by one year to end on 31 March 2028.

The Corporation Board **APPROVED** the recommendations of the Governance Panel and the term of office for Mr Mark Allanson, Chair of the Corporation Board, be extended to 31 March 2028.

9(ii) Probationary Reviews

The Board considered the Report from the Director of Governance and the successful completion of the probation period for Mr Asif Ali and Mr Ojan Rohani.

The Board agreed with the recommendation of the Governance Panel that both members had successfully completed their 12-month probation period and **APPROVED** continued membership.

9(iii) External Governance Review

REDACTED COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE

10. STAFF GOVERNOR'S REPORT

The Staff Governors highlighted the main points within the Staff Governors Report including a thank you from staff for the staff pay increase announced prior to Christmas, and mention of the many student competitions, the Apprenticeships week, success of Project Search, and activities marking Women in Construction and Careers week in College.

The Chair thanked the Staff Governor for the positive Report.

11. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services elaborated on the detail contained within the Report, including the:

- Victoria Building renovations delays and expected handover for the 2027/28 academic year.
- The College was reviewing areas and equipment to be renewed to improve the condition of the campus and student experience and spend £1.5m DfE Condition Fund allocation.
- The Executive were evaluating options put forward as part of the Campus Masterplan and working with BwD on exploring potential options for Engineering and Construction centres.
- The forthcoming summer works were out to tender.

The Board noted the content of the Report and thanked the Vice-Principal for the update.

12. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Summary notes and Minutes of Committee Meetings were received for information:

(i) Student Voice Committee 28 January 2026
(ii) Governance Panel 28 January 2026
(iii) Academic Board 29 January 2026
(iv) Learning & Quality Committee 25 February 2026
(v) Audit Committee 26 February 2026
(vi) Policy & Resources Committee 2 March 2026

The Chair canvassed the members for any additional comments on the meeting Minutes supplied for information. No comments were made.

13. <u>SUBCONTRACTING ACTIVITIES</u>

This Report provided the Board with an update on Subcontracting Activities and reminded Governors of their responsibilities, including having oversight of Subcontracting activity.

The College was in the fourth year of subcontracting out 16-18 funding for the delivery of 16-18 BTEC Sports provision with Blackburn Rovers Community Trust.

The Board noted the content of the Report provided for information.

14. <u>HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) UPDATE AS AT 31 JANUARY 2026</u>

This Report provided a summary of core HR data for the period 1 August 2025 to 31 January 2026 with the detailed data to be found in the Appendix.

The Board noted the content of the Report and Appendix.

15. <u>SAFEGUARDING TERM 1 REPORT</u>

The Report provided Board members with information on safeguarding arrangements across all aspects of the College provision and provided assurance that effective structures and processes were in place.

The Chair stressed the importance of reading this Report, the Safeguarding Policy and other Appendices as the Board and its members had responsibilities to ensure Safeguarding was effective.

The Board received this Report for information.

16. <u>ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – MID YEAR POINT</u>

This Report had been considered by the Learning and Quality Committee on February 2026.

The Board received this Report for information.

17. <u>HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE</u>

This Report had been discussed by the Policy and Resources Committee in its 2 March 2026 meeting and provided the Board with information on the key health and safety activities during 2025/26, legislative changes and key health and safety risks.

The Board received this Report for information.

18. <u>NET ZERO CARBON - UPDATE</u>

The Report had previously been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 2 March 2026 and provided an update on activities and progress towards Net Zero goals.

The Board received this Report for information.

19. LANCASHIRE COLLEGES HEADLINE BENCHMARKING 2024/25

The Report provided the Board with an update on the headline financial position of the Lancashire Colleges. The analysis attached to the Report showed comparison figures for the last three years.

The Board received this Report for information.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair canvassed members for any other business of which there was none.

21. REVIEW OF THE MEETING

The Chair canvassed members for feedback on the meeting and all agreed that it had been a good meeting, covered everything on the Agenda and dealt with the right issues at a suitable level.

The Chair thanked all attendees in person and on MS Teams for their contributions to the meeting.

22. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 3 July 2026 at 2pm.

Signed: ……………………………………. Date: …………………………………….