



Annual Report and Financial
Statements for the Year Ended
31 July 2024

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Reference and Administrative Details

Board of Governors

A full list of Governors is given on page 14-15 of these financial statements.

Director of Governance

Sarah Horeesorun

Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel are defined as Senior Post Holders and members of the College Executive Team and were represented by the following in 2023/24:

- Dr Fazal Dad, Principal and Chief Executive; Accounting Officer
- Jennifer Eastham, Vice Principal - Finance and Corporate Services
- Rachel Tarplee, Vice Principal – Curriculum and Quality
- Nicola Clayton, Director of Business Development and External Engagement
- Matthew Robinson, Director of Student Support and Experience (from 22 August 2023)

Principal and Registered Office: Feilden Street, Blackburn, BB2 1LH.

Professional advisers;

External Auditors:

Beever and Struthers

Internal Auditors:

RSM UK Consulting LLP

Bankers:

Santander UK Plc, Barclays Bank Plc

Solicitors:

Forbes Solicitors

Strategic Report

Nature, Objectives and Strategies

The members present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2024.

Legal Status

The Corporation was established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 for the purpose of conducting Blackburn College. The College is an exempt charity for the purposes of Part 3 of the Charities Act 2011.

Mission Statement

Transforming students' lives and our community, through excellent education, training and support.

Vision Statement

Aspiring, innovating and achieving through excellence.

Value Statements

- **Excellence** - we strive for excellence to realise the potential of our students and staff;
- **Knowledge** - we promote the value of learning in the fostering of curious minds and to aid the acquisition of knowledge and skills;
- **Empowerment** - we empower and support our students and staff to develop their lives through education and training;
- **Equity** - we promote equality, diversity and inclusion in our teaching, training, support and customer services;
- **Commitment** - we are committed to the education, training and support of our students and staff;
- **Respect** - we treat everyone as individuals and with respect.

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is regularly reviewed by the Corporation Board, with the current plan covering the period 2022-2025. This Strategic Plan was developed following consultation with Governors, staff, students, local stakeholders and employers. The plan on a range of key strategic objectives, covering all aspects of the College including the student experience:

- **Student Experience** - To provide an excellent student experience which leads to high levels of student success and supports progression to employment, education and training, raising future aspirations.
- **Teaching and Learning** - To deliver outstanding teaching and assessment practice that enables students, of all abilities, to succeed in their ambitions, progress to their chosen next steps and prepares them for leading successful and prosperous lives.
- **Curriculum** - To have an academic and industry-led curriculum which meets the needs of employers, the local economy, addresses the regional skills shortages, has employability at its heart and provides a holistic education experience.
- **Learning Environment** - To provide students with an inspiring, sustainable and outstanding learning environment, which prepares them for industry and enables innovation in teaching and learning.
- **Partnerships** – As an anchor institution, lead and be known for partnership work and collaboration that increases social mobility and the opportunities for different groups of students and helps communities grow and thrive.

Each of these pillars are underpinned by cross-cutting themes. The cross-cutting themes run through everything that the College does and will be at the forefront of our minds:

- **Student Focus**
- **Quality and Standards**
- **Finance and Resources**
- **People**
- **Communication**
- **Technology**

Strategic Report (Continued)

Financial Objectives

As part of the College's Strategic Plan, Finance and Resources is a cross cutting theme and is supported by a financial ambition statement to 'ensure financial stability and effective use of resources in order to invest in our students and our staff'. The performance indicators, which were reviewed and approved by Governors in March 2023, are as follows:

Objective 1	
To deliver an adjusted operating ratio of at least 1% of income plus a net cash inflow from operating activities in each year of the plan submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) (Current year and next two years).	
Performance	The plan submitted delivers surpluses in all years.
Achieved	
Objective 2	
To ensure that the College continues to achieve at least grade "Good" financial health in both the ESFA Financial Plan for all reported years, with a current ratio of no less than 1.2:1.	
Performance	The financial plan submitted to the ESFA had an automated financial health grade of 'Outstanding' and current ratio of 2.51 for 2023/24. The budget and forecast for the following two years, under the current and proposed methodology sees the automated financial health grade remaining as 'Outstanding' and current ratios of 2.66 and 2.63.
Achieved	
Objective 3	
To undertake capital projects to ensure that the campus remains fit for purpose with continued investment industry standard facilities.	
Performance	The College invested £4.35m in the year, £1.95m on Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment, £2.4m on adaptations and improvements to the campus. Capital investments during the year include IT Infrastructure, 'UCBC Exchange', Construction Atrium infill and outdoor space, Electrical workshop, Cyber suite and the Health ward, 'Farm to Fork' hospitality refurbishment and the College contribution towards the Victoria building refurbishment. Major project grants received include LSIF Cyber and Hospitality, Skills Development Fund, T-Level Capital Grant, Energy Efficiency, Levelling up, HTE Skills Injection fund and the OfS.
Achieved	
Objective 4	
To ensure that risk management plans are in place and fit for purpose.	
Performance	A Risk Register is maintained, scoring all risks and reporting to Audit Committee and Corporation.
Achieved	

Strategic Report (Continued)

Objective 5	
To generate a cash inflow from operating activities of at least £3.5m.	
Performance	The net cash flow from operating activities for 2023/24 was £6.7m.
Achieved	

Objective 6	
To ensure that staffing cost to income ratio remains below 65%, as measured by the FE Commissioner.	
Performance	After significant consideration, Governors agreed that the College could budget for a 65.9% staffing to income ratio. This is a shift from the previous financial strategy of a maximum of 65% and is reflective of the significant cost pressures from pay rises and increased pension contribution costs. For 2023/24 the staffing cost ratio was 66.26%, excluding LGPS pension charge and Restructuring costs.
Not achieved	

Resources

The College has various resources that it can deploy in pursuit of its strategic objectives; this includes our staff, campus and net assets.

As at 31 July 2024 the College employed 536 full time equivalent staff, of whom 319 are teaching staff. Staff have a range of qualifications to suit the level at which they teach and the College has a rolling Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program to support the development of staff across all areas of the College.

The College has seen a slight increase in its net assets from £38.1m in 2022/23 to £38.6m in 2023/24. The College currently has £5.8m of outstanding loans, which were used to invest in the College campus. The campus is made up of various buildings, the Victoria Building, Elizabeth Building, Construction Centre, Harrison Centre, Sixth Form Centre, University Centre, Beacon Centre, Futures Centre, Regional Automotive Technology Hub and Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre (a joint venture with Blackburn with Darwen Council) and forms part of the tangible assets.

The College enrolled approximately 7,669 students. The College's student population includes 2,876 16-to-18-year-old students and 19-24 year-old EHCP students, 29 T-Level students, 665 Apprentices, 1,004 Higher Education students of which 93 are HE apprenticeship students, 1,875 adult learners and 1,313 commercial learners

Stakeholder Relationships

In line with other colleges and with Universities, Blackburn College has many stakeholders. These include:

- Students;
- Education sector funding bodies;
- FE Commissioner;
- Staff;
- Local employers (with specific links);
- Local Authorities;
- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs);
- The local community;
- College Bankers;
- Other FE and HE institutions;
- Trade unions; and
- Professional bodies.

The College recognises the importance of these relationships and engages in regular communication with them.

Strategic Report (Continued)

Public Benefit

Blackburn College is an exempt charity under the Part 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is regulated by the Secretary of State for Education. The members of the Governing Body, who are Trustees of the charity, are disclosed on pages 14-15. In setting and reviewing the College's strategic objectives, the Governing Body has had due regard for the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and particularly upon its supplementary guidance on the advancement of education.

In delivering its mission, the College provides identifiable public benefits through the advancement of education to approximately 7,669 students. The College provides courses without charge to young people, to those who are unemployed and adults taking English and maths courses. The College adjusts its courses to meet the needs of local employers and provides training to 665 Apprentices. The College is committed to providing information, advice and guidance to the students it enrolls and to finding suitable courses for as many students as possible regardless of their educational background.

Development and Performance

Financial results

The College generated an operating surplus in the year of £1,385k (2022/23 – £1,402k surplus). The College faced a number of income challenges in respect of Higher Education, Commercial courses and Apprenticeships, however, through direct management action, savings were secured to minimise the impact.

There is an overall increase in the total comprehensive income reserve of £0.4m after Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) adjustments, note 24 provides detail on the Local Government Pension Scheme valuation and accounting adjustments.

Cash flows and liquidity

At £16.2m (2022/23 £13.9m), cash and cash equivalents are strong in the Corporation's view. A capital investment plan has been developed to re-invest in the College Campus and Curriculum equipment to support the development of the College, in line with its Strategy. The increase from the prior year is due to an improvement in operating performance before depreciation.

The College loan facility is subject to financial covenants and during the year to 31 July 2024 there were no concerns with the College's operating within the banking covenants. The size of the College's total borrowing and its approach to interest rates is modelled to ensure a reasonable cushion between the total cost of servicing debt and operating cashflow. During the year this margin was comfortably exceeded.

Developments

Student Experience has been a key focus for the College and has made some significant progress in improving the campus. This has been achieved through capital investments in IT Infrastructure, 'The UCBC Exchange', Construction Atrium infill and outdoor space, Electrical workshop, Cyber suite and the Health ward, 'Farm to Fork' hospitality refurbishment which were funded through grants received from Skills Development Fund, T Level Capital Grant, LSIF, 'Levelling Up' and the OfS. The College has contributed towards the Victoria building refurbishment and general on-site equipment and facilities. These investments will continue as part of the development of the College, with a clear focus on student experience and creating a more sustainable campus.

Reserves

The College has accumulated Income and Expenditure reserves of £38.6m (after FRS102 Pension adjustments) and cash and short-term investment balances of £16.2m. The College currently wishes to continue to accumulate reserves and cash balances for investment in the estate in line with its strategic objectives.

Tangible fixed asset additions during the year amounted to £4.35m, of which £1.95m was invested in Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment. Expenditure will continue in future years as the College continues to develop its facilities to suit the changing landscape of Education within the sector.

Strategic Report (Continued)

Sources of Income

The College has a reliance on the education sector funding bodies for its principal funding source, largely from recurrent grants. In 2023/24 the ESFA provided 66.7% of total income.

Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting

The College is committed to reducing its carbon emissions and has taken the following measures in the year to improve energy efficiency:

- Formed a Sustainability Committee.
- Appointed a Sustainability Officer.
- Progressed the FE climate change road map.
- Introduced recyclable consumables within the catering provision.
- Promoted efficiencies across campus through focussed campaigns and sustainability newsletters to staff.

The College has published on its website the Carbon Emissions report, in line with the Government's streamlined energy and carbon reporting requirements: <https://blackburn.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/sustainability>.

Future Prospects

Future Developments

The College performs an annual review of all areas as part of the Business Planning cycle, which includes a review of the appropriateness of the Curriculum offer for our local community and employers. As the College starts the delivery of T levels, this review has allocated resource for both the development of the Curriculum and investment in appropriate technology for 2024/25 and beyond.

The annual review also includes a review of the Campus. Further investment is planned across campus with the refurbishment of the Victoria Building as part of the Department for Education (DfE) Further Education Capital Transformation Fund and further alterations to the Construction building for the delivery of T Levels.

Financial Plan

The College Governors approved a financial plan in July 2024 which sets the financial objectives for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Treasury Policies and Objectives

Treasury management is the monitoring and control of the College's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

All new borrowing requires the authorisation of the Department of Education and shall comply with the requirements of the Financial Memorandum.

Reserves Policy

The College recognises the importance of reserves in the financial stability of any organisation and ensures that there are adequate reserves to support the College's core activities. The College reserves include £60k held as restricted reserves. As at the Statement of Financial Position date, the Income and Expenditure reserve stands at a surplus of £36.6m after £0.975m non-cash pension credit adjustment (2022/23: surplus of £36.1m). It is the Corporation's intention for reserves to be maintained in line with the Strategic Objectives.

Strategic Report (Continued)

Going Concern

The financial position of the College as at 31 July 2024, its cashflow, liquidity and borrowings are described in the financial statements and accompanying notes, with mitigating action taken to manage the financial risk in terms of cost control and appropriate use of grants available.

To ensure financial stability the College operates an ongoing cost reduction and efficiency review as part of Business Planning (planning for the year) and Performance Monitoring (during the year). These reviews allow the College to be responsive to the changing economic environment in respect of student recruitment and changes in Government policy and associated grant funding.

The College has strong year-end cash balances of £16.2m and £5.8m borrowings outstanding on a 25-year term loan running until July 2034. Future forecasts show net cash inflow from operating activities with sufficient headroom to manage the financial risks.

A detailed report on Going Concern has been prepared and after making appropriate enquiries, the Corporation considers that the College has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

Risk Management

The College has developed and embedded a system of internal control, including financial, operational and risk management which is designed to protect the College's assets and reputation.

Based on the Strategic Plan, the Vice Principal – Finance and Corporate Services undertakes a comprehensive review of the risks to which the College is exposed. The post holder identifies systems and procedures, including specific preventable actions which should mitigate any potential impact on the College. The internal controls are then implemented, and the subsequent year's appraisal will review their effectiveness and progress against risk mitigation actions. In addition to the annual review, the Vice Principal – Finance and Corporate Services will also consider any risks which may arise as a result of a new area of work being undertaken by the College.

A Risk Register is maintained at the College level which is reviewed by the Corporation Board and Audit Committee at each meeting. The Risk Register identifies the key risks, the likelihood of those risks occurring, their potential impact on the College and the actions being taken to reduce and mitigate the risks. Risks are prioritised using a consistent scoring system.

Outlined below is a description of the principal risk factors that may affect the College. Not all the factors are within the College's control. Other factors besides those listed below may also adversely affect the College.

1. Government Funding

The College has considerable reliance on continued government funding through the Further and Higher Education funding bodies. In 2023/24, 69% of the College's revenue was ultimately public funded and this level of requirement is expected to continue. There can be no assurance that government policy or practice will remain the same or that public funding will continue at the same levels or on the same terms.

The College is aware of several issues which may impact on future funding:

- Curriculum reforms;
- Apprenticeship reforms;
- Devolution of Adult Education Budget to Combined County Authority;
- New Labour Government;
- Local Authority funding cuts impacting on College services and the wider economy;
- Reduction in staffing levels at funding bodies and Government offices to service the College;
- Closure of ESFA in March 2025 with key functions integrated in to the Department for Education (DfE)
- Reductions or changes to the Office for Students allocations.

Strategic Report (Continued)

1. Government Funding (continued)

The College, in conjunction with its key stakeholders, develops strategies in response to the factors affecting the local area and its funding factor to mitigate the risk. These risks are mitigated in a number of ways:

- Funding is derived through a number of direct and indirect contractual arrangements;
- Ensuring the College is rigorous in delivering high quality education and training;
- Ensuring that the student experience and ability to find a positive destination is supported;
- Considerable focus and investment is placed on maintaining and managing key relationships with the various funding bodies as far as possible;
- Ensuring the College is focused on those priority sectors which will continue to benefit from public funding;
- Relevant Curriculum, leading to positive destinations;
- Regular dialogue with the funding bodies and with partner universities;
- Growth in other income streams, value for money and efficiency reviews.

2. Failure to maintain the financial viability of the College

The College's ESFA financial health grade for 2023/24 is autoscored as 'Outstanding'. Notwithstanding that, the continuing challenge to the College's financial position remains with balancing expenditure on the student experience with grant and tuition fee funding not linked to inflation and variations in student recruitment.

This risk is mitigated in a number of ways:

- By rigorous budget setting procedures and sensitivity analysis;
- Regular in year budget monitoring;
- Robust financial controls;
- Exploring ongoing procurement efficiencies;
- Relentless focus on costs and efficient deployment of resources.

3. Cybersecurity

Blackburn College continues to invest in Information Technology infrastructure, training, internal awareness raising. Many external factors present a risk to Blackburn College and mitigations are in place to address these risks.

4. Maintain adequate funding of pension scheme

The financial statements report the share of the local government pension scheme on the College's Statement of Financial Position in line with the requirements of FRS 102.

5. Ofsted and Inspection

In January 2022, the Further Education and Apprenticeship provision at Blackburn College was inspected by Ofsted and was given the grade 'Good'. The College continues to focus on the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of the Curriculum for our stakeholders. Student outcome measures for 2022/23 and 2023/24 showed good progress on the journey to further improve.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

The College has a number of internal KPI's that it monitors at both Governing Body and Executive Management levels. These include measures such as enrolments against target, retention, attendance progress, staff utilisation, room utilisation, financial health (as measured by the ESFA), Surplus ratio (as measured by the FE Commissioner), Assessment against a number of these measures are included within this Strategic Report, with regular updates discussed at Board, Committee and operational management meetings.

Strategic Report (Continued)

The College's financial health for 2023/24, as measured, using the ESFA scoring formulae, is 'Outstanding'. This is in line with the College's financial objectives.

Student Achievements

Further Education Achievement rates have increased to 91.8% overall from 90.3% in 2022/23.

Payment Performance

The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 came into force on 1 November 1998, which requires colleges, in the absence of agreement to the contrary, to make payments to suppliers within 30 days of either the provision of goods or services or the date on which the invoice was received. The target set by the Treasury for payment to suppliers within 30 days is 95%. During the accounting year 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024, the College paid 87.63% of its invoices within 30 days, with delays in the receipt of valid invoices the major contributor to this (by valid invoice, it means, with approved purchase order, sent to the Finance team). Average credit days taken were 23. The College incurred no interest charges in respect of late payment for this year (£nil 2022/23).

Equality and Diversity

Equality

Individuals from different cultures, perspectives and experiences are at the heart of Blackburn College. The College is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all who learn and work here. We are guided by our values in everything we do and recognise that being a diverse and inclusive College helps us fulfil our responsibility to make a difference in transforming the lives of our students through education.

We respect and value all protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or and belief, sex and sexual orientation. We strive vigorously to remove conditions which place people at a disadvantage, and we will actively combat intolerance. This policy is resourced, implemented and monitored on a planned basis. The College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is published on the College's Intranet site.

The College publishes an Annual Equality Report and Equality Objectives every year to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. The College undertakes equality impact assessments on all new policies and procedures to ensure the infrastructure within which we operate is free from any discrimination. Equality impact assessments are also undertaken for existing policies and procedures on a prioritised basis.

The College is a 'Positive about Disabled' employer and has committed to the principles and objectives of the 'Positive about Disabled standard'. The College considers all employment applications from disabled persons, bearing in mind the aptitudes of the individuals concerned, and guarantees an interview to any disabled applicant who meets the essential criteria for the post. Where an existing employee becomes disabled, every effort is made to ensure that employment with the College continues. The College's policy is to provide training, career development and opportunities for promotion which, as far as possible, provide identical opportunities to those of non-disabled employees.

The College has committed to the 'Mindful Employer' initiative to assist the mental health wellbeing of staff. The College has achieved accreditation to the Committed to Equality (C2E) standard at the gold (highest) level. The College has also implemented an updated Equality and Diversity training programme which all staff have attended. Refresher training and training for new starters is carried out on an ongoing basis.

Strategic Report (Continued)

Disability Equality

The College seeks to achieve the objectives set down in the Equality Act 2010:

- a) As part of its accommodation strategy the College updated its access audit. An access audit was undertaken and the results of this form part of our Estates strategy.
- b) The Additional Learning Support team liaise with the Estates team and curriculum teams in terms of any accessibility issues identified as part of our anticipatory duty or by students on the programme to ensure full accessibility. This includes Personal Emergency Evacuation Procedures and any other aspects which may be buildings or equipment related to secure appropriate resolutions.
- c) There is a range of specialist equipment, managed by the Learning Technology Service which the College makes available for use by students, which is in addition to a range of assistive technology solutions available.
- d) Students at the College benefit from specialist advisory teachers, including a Teacher of the Deaf and Teacher for Visual Impairment. The Additional Learning Support Team employ specialists to provide in class support to promote access to education. There are a number of Academic Learning Support Assistants who can provide a variety of support for learning.
- e) There is a continuing programme of staff development to ensure the provision of a high level of appropriate support for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities which ensures that the College meets the requirements in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice as well as our Equality Duty.
- f) Inclusive learning programmes are described in College prospectuses. Achievements and destinations are recorded and published in the standard College format.
- g) Counselling and welfare services are described in the College Student Guide, which is shared with students via Moodle, together with the Compliments and Complaints and Student Behaviour Policy and Procedures.

In addition, the College has a Single Equality statement that encompasses all protected groups and pledges zero tolerance to discrimination of any kind. Full details can be obtained from the College website, by emailing thehub@blackburn.ac.uk or writing to The Hub Services, Blackburn College, Beacon Centre, Blackburn, BB2 1LH.

The College also has a Single Equality Committee to monitor key metrics, identify any gaps in progress / metrics and to work across College in supporting learners and staff.

Strategic Report (Continued)

Trade Union Facility Time

The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 require the College to publish information on facility time arrangements for trade union officials at the College. The information below covers the published period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024;

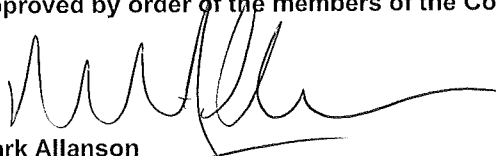
Numbers of employees who were relevant	FTE employee number
21	19.2
Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	0
1-50%	21
51-99%	0
100%	0
Total cost of facility time	£26.2k
Total pay bill	£23.9m
Percentage of total bill spent on facility time	0.11%
Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time	0%

Events after the end of the reporting year

Disclosure of information to auditors

The members who held office at the date of approval of this report confirm that, so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the College's auditors are unaware; and each member has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the College's auditors are aware of that information.

Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 6 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Mark Allanson
Chair of the Corporation Board

Governance Statement

The following statement is provided to enable readers of the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the College to obtain a better understanding of its governance and legal structure. This statement covers the period from 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

GOVERNANCE CODE

The College endeavours to conduct its business:

- i. in accordance with the seven principles identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership);
- ii. in full accordance with the guidance to Colleges from the Association of Colleges in The Code of Good Governance for English Colleges ("The Code").

In the opinion of the Governors, the College continues to comply with all the provisions of "The Code", and it has complied throughout the year ended 31 July 2024. This opinion is based on an internal review of compliance with "The Code" reported to the Corporation Board in July 2024, whereby the Board reviewed its performance and was fully compliant with "The Code".

An internal audit of the College's Governance Framework was completed in spring 2024. The assessment of governance was tested against best practice from the sector and compliance with the AoC Code of Governance for English Colleges. The audit returned the highest opinion of substantial assurance.

An External Review of Governance was completed in spring 2023. This was completed by an independent provider and the scope of the review met the requirements of the Department for Education Guide on External Governance Reviews in Further Education and the Post 16 Education and Skills Act. Many strengths were identified during the review and there were no areas of concern. Financial oversight is a strength, the Governors understand their role well, and the Corporation Board complies with all statutory and regulatory duties, supported by robust processes ably managed by the Director of Governance. The findings of the External Governance Review were presented to the Corporation Board at its meeting on 7 July 2023. The Executive Summary supplied and agreed by the independent External Governance Reviewer is available on the College website.

The Governing Body recognises that, as a body entrusted with both public and private funds, it has a particular duty to observe the highest standards of corporate governance at all times. In carrying out its responsibilities, it takes full account of "The Code" issued by the Association of Colleges in March 2015, which it formally adopted on 3 July 2015 and continued to follow in its subsequent revisions. The Board adopted the new AoC Further Education Code of Good Governance at its meeting on 5 July 2024.

Governance Statement

The Corporation

The members who served on the Corporation during the year and up to the date of signature of this report are listed in the table below;

Name	Date of Appointment	Term of Office	Date of Resignation	Status of Appointment	Committees Served	Attendance in 2023/24
Dr Fazal Dad	1 Jan 2019	Ex-officio		Principal and Chief Executive	Policy and Resources Learning and Quality Governance Panel	20/20 100%
Lillian Croston	17 Oct 2014	Ended 31 Mar 2024		External	Chair of Board Learning and Quality Governance Panel Remuneration Student Voice	13/14 93%
Mark Allanson	11 Dec 2015	31 Mar 2026		External	Chair of Board from 01/04/2024 Chair of Learning and Quality Governance Panel	10/15 67%
Ian Brown	6 Dec 2019	31 Mar 2025		Co-opted	Governance Panel	5/5 100%
Fran Crossland	15 Oct 2022	31 Mar 2025		External	Policy and Resources	7/11 64%
Ram Gupta	12 Mar 2021	31 Mar 2027		External	Learning and Quality	5/10 50%
Catherine Hill OBE	18 October 2019	31 Mar 2025		External	Vice-Chair of Board Chair of Learning and Quality from July 2024 Student Voice Chair of Remuneration	16/16 100%
Nadia Begum	134 Oct 2023	31 Oct 2024		Student	Audit	6/10 60%
Dr Zubair Iqbal	15 Oct 2021	31 Mar 2026	14 Jun 2024	Associate Board Member	Audit	-
Chris Johnson	20 Oct 2017	31 Mar 2026	15 Jul 2024	External	Chair of Audit	8/10 80%
Michael Lee	16 Mar 2018	31 Mar 2027		Staff	Policy and Resources	8/11 73%
Andrea Machell	2 Jul 2022	31 Mar 2025		External	Learning and Quality	7/10 70%
Corrinne McMilan	8 Dec 2023	31 Mar 2026		Co-opted	Policy and Resources	3/4 75%

Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control (continued)

Name	Date of Appointment	Term of Office	Date of Resignation	Status of Appointment	Committees Served	Attendance in 2023/24
Nadeem Memon	8 Dec 2023	31 Mar 2026		External	Policy and Resources	3/6 50%
Paul Morris	1 Apr 2020	31 Mar 2026		External	Policy and Resources Remuneration	9/11 82%
Ridwaan Omar	17 Mar 2023	31 Mar 2026		External	Policy and Resources	11/11 100%
Arif Patel	1 Apr 2020	31 Mar 2026		External	Policy and Resources Governance Panel Student Voice	10/11 91%
Rohan Quinn	13 Oct 2023	31 Oct 2024		Student	Learning and Quality	7/10 70%
Darren Ratcliffe	8 Dec 2023	31 Mar 2026		External	Learning and Quality	3/4 75%
Nathan Rogan	7 Jul 2023	31 Mar 2026		Associate Board Member	Learning and Quality	8/9 89%
Sharjeel Salahuddin	15 Oct 2021	31 Mar 2027		Co-opted	Audit	4/4 100%
Clare Shaw	8 Dec 2023	31 Mar 2026		Staff	Learning and Quality	3/5 60%
Taiyab Sufi	2 Jul 2021	31 Mar 2026		External	Audit	8/10 80%
David Swift	1 Apr 2023 5 Jul 2024	4 Jul 2024 31 Mar 2027		Co-opted External	Audit	New appointment
Steve Waggott	9 Nov 2018	31 Mar 2026		External	Policy and Resources	4/11 37%
Bryan Welch	5 Jul 2024	31 Mar 2027		External	Policy and Resources	New appointment

The Governance Framework

It is the Corporation's responsibility to bring independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance, resources and standards of conduct.

The Corporation is provided with regular and timely information on the overall financial performance of the College together with other information such as performance against recruitment targets, proposed capital expenditure, quality matters and personnel-related matters such as health and safety and environmental issues. The Corporation normally meets four times per year.

Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control (continued)

The Corporation conducts its business through a number of Committees. Each Committee has terms of reference which have been approved by the Corporation. These Committees are Learning and Quality, Policy and Resources, Audit, Remuneration, Governance Panel (Search) and Student Voice. Full minutes of all meetings, except those deemed to be confidential by the Corporation, are available on the College's website: www.blackburn.ac.uk or from the Director of Governance at the College's registered address: Blackburn College, Feilden Street, Blackburn, BB2 1LH.

The Director of Governance maintains a register of financial and personal interests of the Governors. The register is available for inspection at the above address.

All Governors are able to take independent professional advice in furtherance of their duties at the College's expense and have access to the Director of Governance, who is responsible to the Board for ensuring that all applicable procedures and regulations are complied with. The appointment, evaluation and removal of the Director of Governance are matters for the Corporation as a whole.

Formal agendas, papers and reports are supplied to Governors in a timely manner, prior to Board meetings. Briefings are provided on an ad hoc basis.

The Corporation has a strong and independent non-executive element and no individual or group dominates its decision-making process. The Corporation considers that each of its non-executive members is independent of management and free from any business or other relationship which could materially interfere with the exercise of their independent judgement. There is a clear division of responsibility in that the roles of the Chair and Accounting Officer are separate.

Appointments to the Corporation

Any new appointments to the Corporation are a matter for the consideration of the Corporation as a whole. The Corporation has a Governance Panel, which comprises four Corporation members and one co-opted member, which is responsible for the selection and nomination of any new member for the Corporation's consideration. The Corporation is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is provided as required. In 2023/24, six vacancies were filled on the Board and Committees and the position as at 31 July 2024 was that there was one Board vacancy.

Members of the Corporation are appointed for a term of office not exceeding three years. The number of consecutive terms of office is set at three, but this can be waived where an appointment is made mid-term or where it is in the best interests of the Corporation to make an appointment for a further term(s), for example where a member takes on a more senior role, such as Chair or Vice-Chair.

Corporation Performance

Governors have been appointed to at least one Committee and appointments to Committees have been made in accordance with the skills mix of Governors, to make best use of skills, knowledge and experience to enhance the decision making processes. Committee membership is considered when new appointments to the Board are made to make best use of Governors' areas of interest and skills, knowledge and experience.

Annually, each Governor is invited to participate in a Self-Assessment Review as a survey. The survey questions are agreed by the Governance Panel and feedback provided to the Board. The survey for 2023/24 was issued to Governors in August 2024.

In order to further enhance Corporation performance and as part of Governor Development, a number of presentations have been made at the Board and Committees. Governor development/training opportunities are actively promoted by the Director of Governance.

Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control (continued)

Training and development activities for members of the Corporation Board have been completed during the year. This includes presentations at Audit Committee on a number of risk themed topics including External Regulation, Delivering Internal Audit Effectively, Emerging Risks, Fraud, Internal Audit Plan and Strategy Development 2024/25, and introducing the new Financial Handbook for Colleges to this Committee and to the Board. The Corporation Board also had presentations on Safeguarding and Prevent, a sectoral overview from the Association of Colleges (AoC) Chief Executive, David Hughes, Capital Projects, and the revised Accountability Agreement and Local Needs Duty. Governors have also completed individual training delivered through the Association of Colleges (AoC) and Education and Training Foundation (ETF) Governance Development Programme. The Chair of the Corporation Board has completed the DfE/ESFA Financial Masterclass series and participated in local, regional and national Chair's network events and meetings. The Chair is participating in the 'Just One Thing' initiative launched by the Further Education Commissioner and attended two London events.

The Director of Governance has been in post since 1 September 2022. The Board was mindful of the ESFA funding requirement that the person selected should have a qualification relevant to the role, or equivalent experience.

The postholder has the relevant experience and is accredited as having completed the Induction and Mentoring element of the new Governance Professional Qualification delivered by the Education Training Foundation (ETF) and Institute of Directors and sponsored by the Department for Education.

The Director of Governance successfully passed the Award for Further Education Governance Professionals exam in spring 2024 and now holds the qualification (Award FEGP).

During 2023/24 the Director of Governance has completed substantial Continual Professional Development, including completion of the ESFA Financial Masterclass series, and webinars and briefings on the new Financial Handbook for Colleges. The Director of Governance is a member and contributor to the local, regional, and national Governance Professionals networks and attends regular update sessions provided by the Association of Colleges (AoC), RSM and Eversheds to ensure their skills remain current and to be informed of changes to best advise the College and Corporation Board. The Director of Governance is participating in the FE Commissioners 'Just One Thing' initiative and is affiliated with the National Association of School and College Clerks; Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland.

Governance Review

The Corporation Board reviews its performance and compliance annually, most recently in July 2024, and agreed governance at the College as being fully compliant against the current AOC Code of Governance for English Colleges.

An internal audit of the College's Governance Framework was completed in spring 2024. The assessment of governance was tested against best practice from the sector and compliance with the AoC Code of Governance for English Colleges. The audit returned the highest opinion of substantial assurance.

An External Governance Review was undertaken between March and July 2023. The External Governance Review was undertaken by an independent, an Associate of Rockborn Management Consultants, with extensive Governance experience. The scope of the review met the requirements of the Department for Education Guide on External Governance Reviews in Further Education and the Post 16 Education and Skills Act. The Review concluded that *"the Corporation Board has a well-functioning and effective Audit Committee, chaired by an experienced governor. Additional audit and finance experience has been added to the Committee through the appointment of co-opted members. As with other aspects of governance, both governors and managers appreciate their open and honest relationship based on trust, support and appropriate challenge. The quality of paperwork is good. There is a positive relationship with the college's auditors and the committee inputs into the development of the internal audit programme"*. The Review commented that the College Governance was strong, effective and fully compliant with Audit Code of Practice (ACoP).

Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control (continued)

The Audit Committee continued to review its performance against the RSM best practice guide: Turning Lights Green – A Best Practice Guide for Audit Committee. The Audit Committee was assessed as being fully compliant.

This was considered by the Audit Committee in June 2024 and reported to the Corporation Board in its meeting 5 July 2024.

The work of the Board and its Committees has been in accordance with the relevant calendars of business and has also included ad hoc reports as required.

Remuneration Committee

Throughout the year ended 31 July 2024, the Corporation's Remuneration Committee comprised three members of the Corporation. In taking account the best practice identified in the Association of Colleges (AoC) Code of Good Governance for English Colleges, the Vice-Chair of the Corporation Board Chairs this Committee. The Committee's responsibilities are to make recommendations to the Corporation on the remuneration and benefits of the Accounting Officer and other Senior Post-Holders, including the Director of Governance.

Details of remuneration for these posts for the year ended 31 July 2024 are set out in note 7 to the financial statements.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee comprises four members of the Corporation (excluding the Accounting Officer) and two co-opted members, four of whom are finance/audit specialists. The Committee operates in accordance with written terms of reference approved by the Corporation. At 31 July 2024 there is one vacancy for an independent member and one vacancy for a co-opted member.

The Audit Committee meets four times a year and provides a forum for reporting by the College's internal and external auditors, who have access to the Committee for independent discussion, without the presence of College management.

The College's Internal Auditors review the systems of internal control, risk management controls and governance processes in accordance with an agreed plan of input and report their findings to management and the Audit Committee.

Management is responsible for the implementation of agreed audit recommendations, and internal audit undertake periodic follow-up reviews to ensure such recommendations have been implemented.

The Audit Committee also advises the Corporation on the appointment of internal and external auditors and their remuneration for both audit and non-audit work as well as reporting annually to the Corporation.

The Audit Committee met four times in the year to 31 July 2024. The members of the Committee and their attendance records are shown below:

Committee member	Meetings attended
Chris Johnson	4
Nadia Begum (appointed 13 Oct 2023)	2
Taiyab Sufi	4
David Swift (co-opted member)	4
Sharjeel Salahuddin (co-opted member)	4

Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control (continued)

Internal Control

Scope of responsibility

The Corporation is ultimately responsible for the College's system of internal control and for reviewing its effectiveness. However, such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve College objectives and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The Corporation has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Principal and Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the College's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which he is personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to him in the Funding Agreement between Blackburn College and the funding bodies. The Principal and Chief Executive is also responsible for reporting to the Corporation any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

The purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process to identify and prioritise risks to the achievement of College policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place at Blackburn College for the year ending 31 July 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts.

Capacity to handle risk

The Corporation has reviewed the key risks to which the College is exposed, together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Corporation is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the College's significant risks that has been in place for the year ended 31 July 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual reports and accounts. This process is regularly reviewed by the Audit Committee and by the Corporation.

The risk and control framework

The system of internal control is based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures including the segregation of duties, a system of delegation and accountability. In particular, it includes:

- comprehensive annual budgeting system with an annual budget which is reviewed and agreed by the Governing body;
- regular reviews by the Policy and Resources Committee and the Corporation of periodic and annual financial reports, which indicate performance against forecasts (including reforecasts during the year);
- setting targets to measure financial and other operational performance;
- clearly defined capital investment control guidelines and delegated authorities to spend;
- the adoption of formal project management disciplines, where appropriate.

Blackburn College engages RSM UK Risk Assurance Services LLP to provide an Internal Audit service in accordance with the ESFA's Post 16 Audit Code of Practice. The work of the Internal Auditors service is informed by an analysis of the risks to which the College is exposed, and annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. The analysis of risks and the internal audit plans are endorsed by the Corporation on the recommendation of the Audit Committee. The Internal Auditors provides the Governing body with an annual report on Internal Audit activity in the College. The report includes the Internal Auditor's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's system of risk management, controls and governance processes.

Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control (continued)

Risks faced by the Corporation

The College has a Risk Management Policy that has been approved by the Corporation and is available for all staff on the College intranet. The Risk Management Plan is discussed by the Executive Team on a regular basis and is submitted to each meeting of the Audit Committee, with highlights presented to Corporation. The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services is the appointed Risk Champion for the College. The Risk Management

plan is reviewed annually by the Executive Team, this is to ensure that they have a good understanding of the risks facing College, reiterate the process for identifying risks and to give the opportunity to highlight any new risks. The College Risk Register is shared with the Executive Team ahead of each Audit Committee meeting.

The principal risks on the College's Risk Register, are government funding, financial viability and Ofsted / Inspection and ensuring compliance with OfS conditions as identified in the Strategic Report.

Control weaknesses identified

A total of six Internal Audits plus a follow-up audit were undertaken during the year. All reports were considered by the Audit Committee. No significant areas of weaknesses or failures were identified.

Responsibilities under funding agreements

The Corporation has met its contractual responsibilities under its funding agreements and contracts with the ESFA. Each year a Regularity Audit, which tests compliance, is undertaken by management, reviewed by the Audit Committee, reported to the Corporation and then audited by the External Auditors.

The Department for Education (DfE) and ESFA introduced new controls for the College on 29 November 2022 on the day that the Office for National Statistics reclassified colleges as public sector organisations in the national accounts. The ESFA Chief Executive communicated these changes to all college accounting officers and explained plans to introduce a college financial handbook in 2024. The College has reviewed its policies, procedures and approval processes in line with these new requirements to ensure there are systems in place to identify and handle any transactions for which DfE approval is required.

Statement from the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee has advised the Board of Governors that the Corporation has an effective framework for Governance and Risk Management in place. The Audit Committee believes the Corporation has effective internal controls in place.

The specific areas of work undertaken by the Audit Committee in 2023/24 and up to the date of the approval of the financial statements are:

- Assessed the performance of the External and Internal Audit function;
- Completed a retender exercise to appoint Internal Audit Service;
- Received External Audit report from the External Auditors and considered the audit outcomes for onward recommendations to the Board;
- Considered a scope of work for the Internal Auditors for recommendation to the Board. The agreed areas being Key Financial Controls, Curriculum Planning, Staff Mental Health and Well-being, Managing Harassment and Sexual Misconduct, Higher Education - Office for Students Compliance Framework, Governance Framework, Cyber Security and Business;
- Received Internal Audit reports on the agreed scope of work, considered the outcomes and monitored management actions against those outcomes and recommendations.

Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control (continued)

Review of Effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, the Principal and Chief Executive has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. His review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- the work of the Internal Auditors;
- the work of the Executive Team within the College who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework; and
- comments made by the College's External Auditors and the reporting accountant for regularity assurance in their management letters and other reports.

The Accounting Officer has been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Audit Committee which oversees the work of the internal auditors and other sources of assurance, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

The Executive Team receives reports on key performance and risk indicators and considers possible control issues brought to their attention by early warning mechanisms, which are embedded within the departments and reinforced by risk awareness training. The Executive Team and the Audit Committee also receive regular reports from Internal Audit and other sources of assurance, which include recommendations for improvement.

The Audit Committee's role in this area is confined to a high-level review of the arrangements for internal control. The Corporation's agenda includes a regular item for consideration of risk and control and receives reports thereon from the senior management and Executive teams and the Audit Committee. The emphasis is on obtaining the relevant degree of assurance and not merely reporting by exception.

At its meeting on 18 October 2024, the Corporation carried out the annual assessment for the year ended 31 July 2024 by considering documentation from the Executive Team and Internal Audit and taking account of events since 31 July 2024.

Based on the advice of the Audit Committee and the Accounting Officer, the Corporation is of the opinion that the College has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control, and has fulfilled its statutory responsibility for "the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the body and the safeguarding of their assets".

Approved by the members of the Corporation on 6 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Mark Allanson
Chair of the Corporation



Dr Fazal Dad
Principal and Chief Executive
(Accounting Officer)

Governing body's statement on the College's regularity, propriety and compliance with funding body terms and conditions of funding

As Accounting Officer, I confirm that the Corporation has had due regard to the framework of authorities governing regularity, priority and compliance, and the requirements of grant funding agreements and contracts with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and has considered its responsibility to notify the ESFA of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with those authorities and terms and conditions of funding.

I confirm on behalf of the Corporation, that after due enquiry, and to the best of my knowledge, I am able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the College, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the Corporation's grant funding agreements and contracts with the ESFA, or any other public funder. This includes the elements outlined in the 'Dear Accounting Officer' letter dated 29 November 2022 and ESFA's bitesize guides.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety, funding non-compliance, or non-compliance with the framework of authorities have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to the ESFA.

Fazal Dad. 06/12/2024

[signed by and date]

Dr Fazal Dad
Principal and Chief Executive
(Accounting Officer)

Statement of the Chair of the Corporation Board

On behalf of the Corporation, I confirm that the Accounting Officer has discussed their statement of regularity, propriety and compliance with the Board and that the Board is content that it is materially accurate.

Mark Allanson

[signed by and date]

Mark Allanson
Chair of the Corporation Board

6/Dec/2024

Statement of responsibilities of the members of the Corporation

The members of the Corporation, as charity trustees, are required to present audited financial statements for each financial year.

Within the terms and conditions of the College's grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA and any other relevant funding body, the Corporation – through its Accounting Officer – is required to prepare financial statements and an operating and financial review for each financial year in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting for Further and Higher Education, ESFA's College accounts direction and the UK's Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, and which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the College and its surplus / deficit of income over expenditure for that period.

In preparing the financial statements, the Corporation is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- assess whether the Corporation is a going concern, noting the key supporting assumptions qualifications or mitigating actions as appropriate; and
- prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the College will continue in operation.

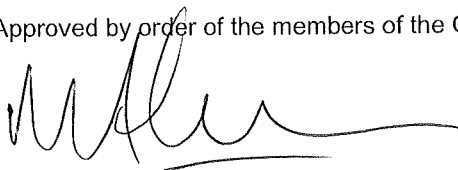
The Corporation is also required to prepare a Members' Report which describes what it is trying to do and how it is going about it, including the legal and administrative status of the Corporation.

The Corporation is responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the College and which enable it to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation including the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and Charities Act 2011, and other relevant accounting standards. It is responsible for taking steps that are reasonably open to it to safeguard assets of the College and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Corporation is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the College website; the work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and, accordingly, the auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the Corporation are responsible for ensuring that expenditure and income are applied for the purposes intended and that the financial transactions conform to the authorities that govern them. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring that funds from the ESFA, and other public funds, are used only in accordance with the ESFA's grant funding agreements and contracts and any other conditions that may be prescribed from time to time by ESFA, or any other public funder, including that any transactions entered into by the Corporation are within the delegated authorities set out in the 'Dear Accounting Officer' letter of 29 November 2022 and the ESFA's bitesize guides. Members of the Corporation must ensure that there are appropriate financial and management controls in place to safeguard public and other funds and ensure they are used properly. In addition, Members of the Corporation are responsible for securing economical, efficient and effective management of the Corporation's resources and expenditure, so that the benefits that should be derived from the application of public funds from the ESFA and other public bodies are not put at risk.

Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 6 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Mark Allanson
Chair of the Corporation

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of the Corporation of Blackburn College

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Blackburn College (the "College") for the year ended 31 July 2024 which comprise the College statement of comprehensive income, the College balance sheet, the College statement of changes in reserves, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the College's affairs as at 31 July 2024 and of the College's income and expenditure, gains and losses, and changes in reserves and cash flows, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with 2019 Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting for Further and Higher Education, Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and the Accounts Direction, for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 August 2019, issued by the Office for Students.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the College in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Members of the Corporation use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the College's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue. Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Report and Financial Statements other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Members of the Corporation is responsible for the other information contained within the Report and Financial Statements. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements, or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Office for Students' Accounts Direction

We are required to report on the following matters by the Office for Students' Accounts Direction. In our opinion, in all material respects:

- funds from whatever source administered by the College for specific purposes have been properly applied to those purposes and managed in accordance with relevant legislation;
- funds provided by the Office for Students, UK Research and Innovation (including Research England), the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Department for Education have been applied in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions; and
- the requirements of the Office for Students' accounts direction for the relevant year's financial statements have been met.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations required for our audit.

Further, we are required by the Office for Students' Accounts Direction to report to you if the results of our audit work indicate that the College's expenditure on access and participation activities for the financial year disclosed in Note 10 has been materially misstated.

- We are also required by the Office for Students' Accounts Direction to report to you where the results of our audit work indicate that the College's grant and fee income, as disclosed in Note 2 to the financial statements has been materially misstated.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Responsibilities of the Corporation of Blackburn College

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Corporation Responsibilities set out on page 23, the Corporation is responsible for the preparation of financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Corporation determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Corporation is responsible for assessing the College's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Corporation either intend to liquidate the College or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The objectives of our audit are to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding compliance with laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, to perform audit procedures to help identify instances of non-compliance with other laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements, and to respond appropriately to identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations identified during the audit.

In relation to fraud, the objectives of our audit are to identify and assess the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud, to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud through designing and implementing appropriate responses and to respond appropriately to fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit.

However, it is the primary responsibility of management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, to ensure that the entity's operations are conducted in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations and for the prevention and detection of fraud.

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud, the audit engagement team:

- obtained an understanding of the nature of the sector, including the legal and regulatory frameworks that the College operate in and how the College is complying with the legal and regulatory frameworks;
- inquired of management, and those charged with governance, about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, including any known actual, suspected or alleged instances of fraud; and
- discussed matters about non-compliance with laws and regulations and how fraud might occur including assessment of how and where the financial statements may be susceptible to fraud.

As a result of these procedures we consider the most significant laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements are FRS 102, Further and Higher Education SORP, the College Accounts Direction published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and Regulatory Advice 9: Accounts Direction published by the Office for Students'. We performed audit procedures to detect non-compliances which may have a material impact on the financial statements which included reviewing financial statement disclosures.

The College is also subject to many other laws and regulations where the consequences of non-compliance could have a material impact on amounts or disclosures in the financial statements, including Further and Higher Education Act 1992, Charities Act 2011, taxation legislation, data protection, anti-bribery, employment, environmental and health and safety legislation. We performed audit procedures to inquire of management and those charged with governance whether the College is in compliance with these law and regulations and inspected correspondence and inspected correspondence with licensing or regulatory authorities.

The audit engagement team identified the risk of management override of controls and revenue recognition as the areas where the financial statements were most susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. Audit procedures performed included but were not limited to testing manual journal entries and other adjustments and evaluating the business rationale in relation to significant, unusual transactions and transactions entered into outside the normal course of business, challenging judgments and estimates and inspecting funding agreements and allocations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at <http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Corporation, as a body, in accordance with the Funding Agreement published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and our engagement letter dated 5 November 2024. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Corporation, as a body, those matters we are engaged to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Corporation, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Beever and Struthers

For and on behalf of

BEEVER AND STRUTHERS
Suite 16b
The Beehive
Lions Drive
Shadsworth Business Park
Blackburn
BB1 2QS

Date: *12 December 2024*

Reporting accountant's assurance report on regularity

To: The Corporation of Blackburn College and Secretary of State for Education acting through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 5 November 2024 and further to the requirements and conditions of funding in ESFA's grant funding agreements and contracts, or those of any other public funder, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether anything has come to our attention that would suggest, in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received by Blackburn College during the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 have not been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

The framework that has been applied is set out in the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice ("the Code") issued by the ESFA and in any relevant conditions of funding concerning adult education notified by a relevant funder. In line with this framework, our work has specifically not considered income received from the main funding grants generated through the Individualised Learner Record data returns, for which the ESFA or devolved authority has other assurance arrangements in place.

This report is made solely to the Corporation of Blackburn College and ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Corporation of Blackburn College and the ESFA those matters we are required to state in a report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Corporation of Blackburn College and the ESFA for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Blackburn College and the reporting accountant

The Corporation of Blackburn College is responsible, under the requirements of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, subsequent legislation and related regulations and guidance, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received are applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the Code. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Code issued by the ESFA. We performed a limited assurance engagement as defined in that framework.

The objective of a limited assurance engagement is to perform such procedures as to obtain information and explanations in order to provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express a negative conclusion on regularity.

A limited assurance engagement is more limited in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in a reasonable assurance engagement. Accordingly, we do not express a positive opinion.

Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity of the college's income and expenditure.

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- Documenting the framework of authorities which govern the activities of the Corporation;
- Undertaking a risk assessment based on our understanding of the general control environment and any weaknesses in internal controls identified by our audit of the financial statements;
- Reviewing the self-assessment questionnaire which supports the representations included in the Chair of Governors and Accounting Officer's statement on regularity, propriety and compliance with the framework of authorities;

- Testing a sample of transactions with related parties;
- Confirming through enquiry and sample testing that the Corporation has complied with its procurement policies and that these policies comply with delegated authorities; and
- Reviewing any evidence of impropriety resulting from our work and determining whether it was significant enough to be referred to in our regularity report.

This work was integrated with our audit of the financial statements and evidence was also derived from the conduct of that audit to the extent it supports the regularity conclusion.

Conclusion

In the course of our work nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Signed:

Beeva and Struthers

For and on behalf of

BEEVER AND STRUTHERS
Suite 16b
The Beehive
Lions Drive
Shadsworth Business Park
Blackburn
BB1 2QS

Date: *12 December 2024*

Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 31 July 2024

	Notes	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Income			
Funding body grants	2	26,167	24,465
Tuition fees and education contracts	3	7,629	8,969
Other grants and contracts	4	571	1,061
Other income	5	2,475	2,437
Investment income	6	847	507
Net return on pension scheme	6	975	38
Total income		38,664	37,477
Expenditure			
Staff costs	7	23,781	22,876
Restructuring costs	7	261	247
Other operating expenses	8	8,754	8,749
Depreciation	13	4,062	3,726
Interest and other finance costs	9	421	477
Total expenditure		37,279	36,075
Surplus before other gains and losses		1,385	1,402
Surplus on disposal of assets		2	327
Surplus before tax		1,387	1,729
Taxation	11	-	-
Surplus for the year		1,387	1,729
Actuarial (loss)/gain in respect of pensions scheme	24	(975)	538
Total comprehensive income for the year		412	2,267

All items of income and expenditure relate to continuing activities.

The notes on pages 34 to 57 form part of these financial statements

Statement of Changes in Reserves

	Income and expenditure reserve £'000	Revaluation reserve £'000	Restricted reserve £'000	Total £'000
Balance at 1 August 2022	33,724	2,093	60	35,877
Surplus from the Statement of Comprehensive Income	1,729	-	-	1,729
Other comprehensive income (Pension defined benefit adjustment, as per note 24)	538	-	-	538
Transfers between revaluation and income and expenditure reserves	129	(129)	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	2,396	(129)	-	2,267
Balance at 31 July 2023	36,120	1,964	60	38,144
Surplus from the Statement of Comprehensive Income	1,387	-	-	1,387
Other comprehensive income (Pension defined benefit adjustment, as per note 24)	(975)	-	-	(975)
Transfers between revaluation and income and expenditure reserves	52	(52)	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	464	(52)	-	412
Balance at 31 July 2024	36,584	1,912	60	38,556

The notes on pages 34 to 57 form part of these financial statements


Statement of Financial Position as at 31 July 2024

	Notes	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Non-Current Assets			
Tangible fixed assets	13	48,922	48,635
Endowment assets	15	60	60
		48,982	48,695
Current assets			
Trade debtors and other receivables	16	3,231	3,205
Cash and cash equivalents	21	16,180	13,883
		19,411	17,088
Less: Creditors - amounts falling due within one year	17	(10,209)	(8,096)
Net Current assets		9,202	8,992
Total assets less current liabilities			
		58,184	57,687
Creditors - amounts falling due after more than one year	18	(18,570)	(18,529)
Provisions			
Defined benefit obligations	24	-	-
Other provisions	20	(1,058)	(1,014)
Net assets		38,556	38,144
Restricted reserves			
Income and expenditure account – Endowment reserve		60	60
Unrestricted reserves			
Income and expenditure account - unrestricted		36,584	36,120
Revaluation reserve		1,912	1,964
Total unrestricted reserves		38,496	38,084
Total reserves		38,556	38,144

The financial statements on pages 30 to 57 were approved and authorised for issue by the Corporation on 6 December 2024 and were signed on its behalf on that date by:



Mark Allanson
Chair to the Corporation



Dr Fazal Dad
Principal and Chief Executive
(Accounting Officer)

The notes on pages 34 to 57 form part of these financial statements

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 July 2024

	Notes	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Cash flow from operating activities			
Surplus for the year		1,387	1,729
Adjustment for non-cash items			
Depreciation	13	4,062	3,726
(Increase) in debtors	16	(511)	(970)
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors due within one year	17	2,597	(55)
Increase in creditors due after one year	18	598	1,109
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	20	44	(201)
Pensions costs less contributions payable	24	(975)	538
Adjustment for investing or financing activities			
Investment income	6	(847)	(545)
Interest payable	9	370	437
Profit on sale of fixed assets		(2)	(327)
Net cash inflow from operating activities		6,723	5,441
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds on sale of fixed assets		2	427
Investment income	6	847	545
Payments made to acquire fixed assets	13	(4,349)	(3,622)
		(3,500)	(2,650)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Interest paid	9	(370)	(437)
Repayments of amounts borrowed	21	(556)	(4,556)
		(926)	(4,993)
Increase/(Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		2,297	(2,202)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	21	13,883	16,085
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year	21	16,180	13,883

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Statement of accounting policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the financial statements.

Basis of Preparation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2019* (the 2019 FE HE SORP), the *ESFA College Accounts Direction for 2023-24* and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 – “*The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland*” (FRS 102). The College is a public benefit entity and has therefore applied the relevant public benefit requirements of FRS 102.

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgement in applying the College's accounting policies.

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

Going Concern

The activities of the College, together with the factors likely to affect its future development and performance are set out in the Strategic Report. The financial position of the College, its cashflow, liquidity and borrowings are described in the financial statements and accompanying notes.

The College has strong year-end cash balances of £16.2m and has £5.8m borrowings with bankers, a 25-year term loan running until July 2034.

To ensure financial stability the College operates an ongoing cost reduction and efficiency review as part of Business Planning (planning for the year) and Performance Monitoring (during the year). These reviews allow the College to be responsive to the changing economic environment in respect of recruitment and changes in Government policy and associated grant funding.

The College's forecasts and financial projections indicate that it will be able to operate within this existing facility and covenants for the foreseeable future.

Accordingly, the College has a reasonable expectation that it has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and for this reason has continued to adopt the going concern basis in the preparation of its financial statements.

Recognition of income

Revenue grant funding

Government revenue grants include funding body recurrent grants and other grants and are accounted for under the accruals model as permitted by FRS 102. Funding body recurrent grants are measured in line with best estimates for the period of what is receivable and depend on the particular income stream involved. Any under achievement for the Adult Education Budget is adjusted for and reflected in the level of recurrent grant recognised in the income and expenditure account. The final grant income is normally determined with the conclusion of the year end reconciliation process with the funding body following the accounting period end, and the results of any funding audits. 16-19 learner funding is not normally subject to reconciliation and is therefore not subject to contract adjustments.

The recurrent grant from Office for Students represents the funding allocations attributable to the current financial year and is credited to the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Grants (including research grants) from non-government sources are recognised in income when the College is entitled to the income and performance related conditions have been met. Income received in advance of

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

1. Statement of accounting policies (continued)

performance related conditions being met is recognised as deferred income within creditors on the Statement of Financial Position and released to income as the conditions are met.

Capital grant funding

Government capital grants are capitalised, held as deferred income and recognised in income over the expected useful life of the asset, under the accruals model as permitted by FRS 102. Other capital grants are recognised in income when the College is entitled to the funds subject to any performance related conditions being met. Income received in advance of performance related conditions being met is recognised as deferred income within creditors on the Statement of Financial Position and released to income as conditions are met.

Fee income

Income from tuition fees is stated gross of any expenditure which is not a discount and is recognised in the period for which it is received and includes all fees payable by students or their sponsors. Rebates and discounts are offered in exceptional circumstances, as approved by the Executive Team.

Investment income

All income from short-term deposits is credited to the income and expenditure account in the period in which it is earned on a receivable basis. Income from restricted endowment funds is not expended in accordance with the restrictions of the endowment in the period, it is transferred from the Statement of Comprehensive Income to accumulated income within endowments funds.

Agency arrangements

The College acts as an agent in the collection and payment of certain discretionary support funds. Related payments received from the funding bodies and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the income and expenditure of the College where the College is exposed to minimal risk or enjoys minimal economic benefit related to the transaction.

Accounting for post-employment benefits

Post-employment benefits to employees of the College are principally provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS)

The TPS is an unfunded scheme. Contributions to the TPS are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the College in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of valuations using a prospective benefit method.

The TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution plan and the contributions recognised as an expense in the income statement in the periods during which services are rendered by employees.

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The LGPS is a funded scheme. The assets of the LGPS are measured using closing fair values. LGPS liabilities are measured using the projected unit credit method and discounted at the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The carrying value of any resulting pension scheme asset is restricted to the extent that the College is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the scheme. For the year ended July 2024 no refunds or reductions in contributions have been received, or can be expected to be received, therefore, managements judgement to adopt the requirements of FRS 102 (para 28.22) and recognise a balance of nil for the pension asset. The net surplus or deficit is presented separately from other assets on the Statement of financial Position. Where applicable, the amounts charged to the operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred as applicable.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

1. Statement of accounting policies (continued)

Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in investment income or interest and other finance costs as applicable.

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in actuarial gains and losses in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Short term employment benefits

Short term employment benefits such as salaries and compensated absences (holiday pay) are recognised as an expense in the year in which the employees render service to the College. Any unused benefits are accrued and measured as the additional amount the College expects to pay as a result of the unused entitlement.

Enhanced pensions

The actual cost of any enhanced ongoing pension to a former member of staff is paid by the College annually. An estimate of the expected future cost of any enhancement to the ongoing pension of a former member of staff is charged in full to the College's income in the year that the member of staff retires. In subsequent years a charge is made to provisions in the Statement of Financial Position using the enhanced pension spreadsheet provided by the funding bodies.

Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at deemed cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Certain items of fixed assets that had been revalued to fair value on or prior to the date of transition to the 2019 FE HE SORP, are measured on the basis of deemed cost, being the revalued amount at the date of that revaluation.

The cost of tangible fixed assets includes the original purchase price of the asset and the costs attributable to bringing the asset to its working condition for its intended purpose.

Land and buildings

Freehold buildings are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their expected useful lives as follows:

- Harrison Centre – 40 years
- Beacon Centre – 40 years
- Construction Centre – 50 years
- Elizabeth Building – 50 years
- University Centre – 40 years
- Regional Automotive Technology Hub – 40 years
- Sixth Form Centre – 40 years
- Blackburn Sports and Leisure Centre – 40 years
- Futures Centre – 40 years
- Victoria Building – 40 years

Freehold land is not depreciated as it is considered to have an infinite useful life. Within each building there are elements which are charged at a range of rates of depreciation to represent their expected useful life.

Freehold buildings are depreciated over their expected useful economic life to the College of between 5 and 50 years. The College has a policy of depreciating major adaptations to buildings over the period of their useful economic life of between 5 and 50 years.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

1. Statement of accounting policies (continued)

Where land and buildings are acquired with the aid of specific grants, they are capitalised and depreciated as above. The related grants are credited to a deferred income account within creditors and are released to the income and expenditure account over the expected useful economic life of the related asset on a systematic basis consistent with the depreciation policy. The deferred income is allocated between creditors due within one year and those due after more than one year. Where freehold land is acquired with the aid of specific grants, the value of the grant received is deducted from the cost of the land.

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of any fixed asset may not be recoverable. No concerns identified.

Any plant and machinery relating to buildings is shown separately from land and buildings in note 12 and is depreciated over its expected useful economic life to the College of between 10 and 40 years.

On adoption of FRS 102, the College followed the transitional provision to retain the book value of land and buildings, which were revalued as at 1 August 2014, as deemed cost but not to adopt a policy of revaluations of these properties in the future.

Assets under construction

Assets under construction are accounted for at cost, based on the value of architects' certificates and other direct costs, incurred to 31 July 2024. They are not depreciated until they are brought into use.

Victoria Building Refurbishment Project

In 2022/23 the DFE approved plans to fund the refurbishment of the Victoria building for Blackburn College. The project is expected to be completed in summer 2026. The College contribution to the refurbishment is a fixed amount of £3.3m, £1.1m per year payable over 3 years in advance by 31 July of that year. Each year the payment in advance is recorded as a prepayment and then released and recorded as an asset under construction in the following year, no depreciation is recorded until the project is completed.

The cost of the acquired asset is measured at fair value unless the exchange transaction lacks commercial substance or the fair value of neither the asset received, nor the asset given up is reliably measurable. In that case, the asset's cost is measured at the carrying amount of the asset given up.

It is our initial assessment at this stage that the exchange transaction lacks commercial substance, as the fair value of the asset will be far lower than the planned total project cost. Therefore, it is the managements judgement that the recognised increase in value of the Victoria Building would be determined as the cost of the additional spend by the College (representing the College's contribution of £3.3m). Upon completion of the project, the asset under construction will be moved to Land and Buildings and depreciation will begin thereafter in accordance with the accounting policy and revised useful economic life.

Subsequent expenditure on existing fixed assets

Where significant expenditure is incurred on tangible fixed assets it is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Income in the period it is incurred, unless it increases the future benefits to the College, in which case it is capitalised and depreciated on the relevant basis.

Equipment

Equipment items costing less than £1,000 are recognised as expenditure in the period of acquisition. All other equipment is capitalised at cost.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

1. Statement of accounting policies (continued)

Capitalised equipment and building works are depreciated over their useful economic life (UEL) as follows:

- Plant and Machinery - Up to 40 years on a straight-line basis, dependent upon UEL
- Building adaptations - Up to 10 years on a straight-line basis, dependent upon UEL
- Building components - Up to 25 years on a straight-line basis, dependent upon UEL
- Motor vehicles - 5 years on a straight-line basis
- General equipment - 5 years on a straight-line basis
- Computer equipment - 4 years or 7 years on a straight-line basis, dependent upon UEL

Where equipment is acquired with the aid of specific grants, they are capitalised and depreciated as above. The related grants are credited to a deferred income account within creditors and are released to the income and expenditure account over the expected useful economic life of the related asset on a systematic basis consistent with the depreciation policy. The deferred income is allocated between creditors due within one year and those due after more than one year.

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value of any fixed asset may not be recoverable. Shortfalls between the carrying value of fixed assets and their recoverable amounts are recognised as impairments. Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Heritage assets

Inherited equipment has been depreciated on a straight-line basis over its useful economic life and is now fully depreciated.

Borrowing costs

Borrowing costs, including when they are directly attributable to the construction of land and buildings, are recognised as expenditure in the period in which they are incurred.

Leased assets

Costs in respect of operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term to the Statement of Comprehensive Income. Any lease premiums or incentives relating to leases signed after 1 August 2014 are spread over the minimum lease term.

Leasing agreements which transfer to the College substantially all the benefits and risks of ownership of an asset are treated as finance leases.

Assets held under finance leases are recognised initially at the fair value of the leased asset (or, if lower, the present value of minimum lease payments) at the inception of the lease. The corresponding liability to the lessor is included in the Statement of Financial Position as a finance lease obligation. Assets held under finance leases are included in tangible fixed assets and depreciated and assessed for impairment losses in the same way as owned assets.

Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding liability. The finance charges are allocated over the period of the lease in proportion to the capital element outstanding.

Investments and endowment assets

Investments are carried at historical cost plus incidental expenses less any provision for impairment in their value. Current asset investments are included in the Statement of Financial Position at the lower of their original cost

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

1. Statement of accounting policies (continued)

and net realisable value. Investments that form part of endowment assets are included in the Statement of Financial Position at market value.

Inventories

Inventories are written off to the Statement Of Comprehensive Income account in the year of purchase.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash includes cash in hand, deposits repayable on demand and overdrafts. Deposits are repayable on demand if they are in practice available within 24 hours without penalty.

Cash equivalents are short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. An investment qualifies as a cash equivalent when it has maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition. None were held at the balance sheet date.

Financial liabilities and equity

Financial liabilities and equity are classified according to the substance of the financial instrument's contractual obligations, rather than the financial instrument's legal form.

All loans, investments and short term deposits held are classified as basic financial instruments in accordance with FRS 102. These instruments are initially recorded at the transaction price less any costs (historical cost). FRS 102 requires that basic financial instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost, however the College has calculated that the difference between the historical cost and amortised cost basis is not material and so these financial instruments are stated on the Statement of Financial Position at historical cost. Loans and investments that are payable or receivable within one year are not discounted.

Foreign currency translation

Transactions denominated in foreign currencies are recorded using the rate of exchange ruling at the date of transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rates of exchange ruling at the end of the financial year with all resulting exchange differences being taken to the income and expenditure account in the period in which they arise.

Taxation

The College is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the College is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by sections 478-488 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

The College is partially exempt in respect of Value Added Tax, so that it can only recover around 3% of the VAT charged on its inputs. Irrecoverable VAT on inputs is included in the costs of such inputs and added to the cost of tangible fixed assets as appropriate, where the inputs themselves are tangible fixed assets by nature.

Provisions and contingent liabilities

Provisions are recognised when:

- the College has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event(s);
- it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required to settle the obligation, and
- a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

1. Statement of accounting policies (continued)

Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the amount expected to be required to settle the obligation is recognised at present value using a pre-tax discount rate. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as a finance cost in the Statement of Comprehensive Income in the period it arises.

A contingent liability arises from a past event that gives the College a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the College. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Statement of Financial Position but are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

Debtors

Debtors with no stated interest rate and receivable within one year are recorded at the transaction price. Where there is a risk of not fully recovering a debt, a bad debt provision is provided for. The provision is calculated dependant on whether the debtor is an existing student, the age, the type and then the value of the debt and is recognised as an expense in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Creditors

Creditors with no stated interest rate and payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. A liability is recognised to the extent of any unused holiday pay entitlement which has accrued at the balance sheet date and carried forward to future periods. This is measured at the salary cost of future holiday entitlement so accrued at the balance sheet date.

Liquid resources

Investments in short term deposits include sums on short-term deposits with recognised banks and building societies and government securities.

Agency arrangements

Related payments received from the funding bodies and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the income and expenditure of the College where the College is exposed to minimal risk or enjoys minimal economic benefit related to the transaction.

Judgements in applying accounting policies

In preparing these financial statements, management have made the following judgements:

- Determine whether leases entered into by the College either as a lessor or a lessee are operating or finance leases. These decisions depend on an assessment of whether the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred from the lessor to the lessee on a lease by lease basis.
- Determine whether there are indicators of impairment of tangible assets, including goodwill. Factors taken into consideration in reaching such a decision include the economic viability and expected future financial performance of the asset and where it is a component of a larger cash-generating unit, the viability and expected future performance of that unit.

Other key sources of estimation uncertainty

- *Tangible fixed assets*
Tangible fixed assets, other than investment properties, are depreciated over their useful lives taking into account residual values, where appropriate. The actual lives of the assets and residual values are assessed

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

1. Statement of accounting policies (continued)

annually and may vary depending on a number of factors. In re-assessing asset lives, factors such as technological innovation and maintenance programmes are taken into account. Residual value assessments consider issues such as future market conditions, the remaining life of the asset and projected disposal values.

- *Local Government Pension Scheme*

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit asset or liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 24, will impact the carrying amount of the pension asset/liability. Furthermore, a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 July 2024. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension asset or liability as applicable.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
2. Funding body grants

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Recurrent grants		
Education and Skills Funding Agency – 16-19	19,949	18,712
Education and Skills Funding Agency – Adult	2,991	3,178
Grant income from the Office for Students (OfS)	358	341
Specific grants		
Teachers' Pension Scheme Grant	1,018	842
FE Reclassification Condition Fund Grant	60	-
Releases of government capital grants: Education and Skills Funding Agency	1,119	808
Releases of capital grants: Office for Students (OfS)	672	584
Total funding body grants	26,167	24,465

As an OfS registered College a single table is required to show grant and fee income for courses at Level 4 and above. The table below summarises this information, which forms part of the disclosures in note 2 and 3;

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Recurrent grants		
Grant income from the Office for Students (OfS)	358	341
Releases of capital grants: Office for Students (OfS)	672	584
Fees for HE loan supported courses	5,493	6,831
Total recurrent OfS grants	6,523	7,756

3. Tuition fees and education contracts

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Adult Education fees	5	11
Education contract – schools	129	56
Apprenticeship fees and contracts	1,841	1,806
Fees for FE loan supported courses	161	265
Fees for HE loan supported courses	5,493	6,831
Total tuition fees and education contracts	7,629	8,969

4. Other grants and contracts

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
European Commission grants	2	87
Other grants and contracts	569	974
Total other grants and contracts	571	1,061

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
5. Other income

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Catering	893	790
Other income generating activities: full cost provision	663	744
Teaching related activities	14	71
Exam and registration cost recovery	30	2
Premises income	86	84
Support and admin activities	596	536
Miscellaneous income	193	210
Total Other income	2,475	2,437

6. Investment income

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Interest receivable	847	507
Net return on Pension Scheme (Note 24)	975	38
Total Investment income	1,822	545

7. Staff costs

The average number of persons (including Key Management Personnel) employed by the College during the year, described as head counts, was:

	2024	2023
Teaching staff	416	413
Non-teaching staff	286	302
Total	702	715

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Wages and salaries	18,146	17,469
Social security costs	1,652	1,588
Other pension costs:		
Employer contributions	3,417	3,066
Pension defined benefit charge (including Enhanced Pension cost)	112	441
	23,327	22,564
Contracted out staffing services	454	312
	23,781	22,876
Restructuring costs – contractual	261	247
Total staff costs	24,042	23,123

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

7. Staff costs (continued)

Key Management Personnel

Key Management Personnel are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the College and are represented by the Senior Post Holders and College Executive Team which comprises the Principal and Chief Executive, Vice Principal - Finance and Corporate Services, Vice Principal - Curriculum and Quality, Director of Student Support and Experience, Director of Business Development and External Engagement and Director of Governance.

Emoluments of Key Management Personnel, Accounting Officer and other higher paid staff

	2024	2023
The number of Key Management Personnel including the Accounting Officer was:	6	9

The number of key management personnel and other staff who received annual emoluments, excluding pension contributions, payments in lieu of pension and employer's national insurance but including benefits in kind, in the following ranges was:

	Key management personnel		Other staff	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
	No.	No.	No.	No.
£40,001 to £45,000 p.a.	-	1		
£45,001 to £50,000 p.a.	1	-		
£55,001 to £60,000 p.a.	-	1		
£60,001 to £65,000 p.a.	-	-	3	-
£65,001 to £70,000 p.a.	1	-	-	-
£70,001 to £75,000 p.a.	-	3	-	-
£75,001 to £80,000 p.a.	-	1	-	-
£80,001 to £85,001 p.a.	1	-	-	-
£85,001 to £90,000 p.a.	-	1	-	-
£100,000 to £105,000 p.a.	1	-	-	-
£110,001 to £115,000 p.a.	-	1	-	-
£115,001 to £120,000 p.a.	1	-	-	-
£165,001 to £170,000 p.a.	-	1	-	-
£170,001 to £175,000 p.a.	1	-	-	-
	6	9	3	-

The disclosure above is based upon headcount during the year as set out on page two. The total positions in Key Management Personnel was six. During 2023, three Assistant Principals were employed and two individuals held the position of Director of Governance at different points during the year, these are included within the above.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Key Management Personnel (KMP) emoluments are made up as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Salaries – gross of salary sacrifice and waived emoluments	589	683
Payment in lieu of pension	39	34
Pension contributions	91	104
Total KMP emoluments	719	821

7. Staff costs (continued)

There were no amounts due to key management personnel that were waived in the year, nor any salary sacrifice arrangements in place that are not HMRC approved.

The above emoluments include the amounts paid to Principal and Chief Executive who is the Accounting Officer position through the academic year (who is also the highest paid officer) of:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Salaries	173	165
Payment in lieu of pension	39	34
Total	212	199
Pension contributions	-	-
Total emoluments	212	199

The Corporation has adopted AoC's Senior Staff Remuneration Code in July 2019 and will assess pay in line with its principles in future. The remuneration package of those staff designated as Senior Post Holders, including the Principal and Chief Executive, is subject to annual review by the Remuneration Committee of the Governing Body who use benchmarking information to provide objective guidance. The Principal and Chief Executive reports to the Chair of Corporation who undertakes an annual review of their performance against the College's overall objectives using both qualitative and quantitative measures of performance.

Relationship of Principal and Chief Executive pay and remuneration expressed as a multiple;

	2024	2023
Principal's and CEO's basic salary as a multiple of the median of all staff	5.50	5.75
Principal and CEO's total remuneration as a multiple of the median of all staff	5.67	5.91

There was no compensation for loss of office paid to former key management personnel.

The members of the Corporation other than the Accounting Officer and the staff members did not receive any payment from the College other than the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses and costs for any specific courses incurred in the course of their duties.

Severance payments for all staff

The College paid 12 severance payments during the year, disclosed in the following bands:

£0 - £25,000	8
£25,001 - £50,000	4
£50,001 - £100,000	-

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

8. Other operating expenses

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Teaching direct costs	1,052	1,226
Payments for HE course validation	628	737
Bursary support for learners	222	314
Teaching support costs	1,419	1,388
Administration and central services	1,683	1,801
Utilities, rent and insurance	1,858	1,460
Premises maintenance	720	688
Examination fees	976	965
Fees for subcontracted income	196	170
Total other operating expenses	8,754	8,749

Other operating expenses include:	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Auditors' remuneration		
- financial statements audit	39	37
- other audit services provide by external auditor	6	-
- internal audit	28	27
- other audit services provide by internal auditor	-	11

9. Interest and other finance costs

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
On bank loans and other loans	370	437
	370	437
Enhanced pension costs	51	40
Total Interest and other finance costs	421	477

10. Access and participation spending

The total of the approved expenditure in our Access and Participation Plan for the year ended 31 July 2024 was £1.73m, this amount was based on projected Higher Fee Income of £3.4m, HE Higher Fee Income for the year ended 31 July 2024 was £1.4m, the actual spend was £1.374m and a breakdown is shown below. Details of the approved plan can be found at:

https://apis.officeforstudents.org.uk/accessplansdownloads/2024/BlackburnCollege_APP_2020-21_V1_10000747.pdf

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Access Investment	1,027	1,212
Financial support provided to students	199	296
Support for disabled students	148	142
Research and evaluation expenditure	-	4
Total Access and Participation spending	1,374	1,654

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

11. Taxation

The members do not believe that the College was liable for any Corporation Tax arising out of its activities during either year.

12. Write offs, Guarantees, Letters of Comfort and Indemnities

The College did not write off any debts, provide any guarantees, letters of comfort or indemnities throughout the year.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

13. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold Land and Buildings Freehold £'000	Plant and Machinery £'000	Assets in the course of Construction £'000	Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment £'000	Total £'000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 August 2023	77,097	6,712	216	8,648	92,673
Additions	539	-	1,856	1,954	4,349
Disposals	-	-	-	(4)	(4)
At 31 July 2024	77,636	6,712	2,072	10,598	97,018
Depreciation					
At 1 August 2023	34,892	3,275	-	5,871	44,038
Charge for the year	2,440	193	-	1,429	4,062
Eliminated in respect of disposals	-	-	-	(4)	(4)
At 31 July 2024	37,332	3,468	-	7,296	48,096
Net book value at 31 July 2024	40,304	3,244	2,072	3,302	48,922
Net book value at 31 July 2023	42,205	3,437	216	2,777	48,635

Land and buildings were valued in 1993 at depreciated replacement cost by the District Valuer. Other tangible assets inherited from the local education authority at incorporation were valued by the Corporation on a depreciated replacement cost basis with the assistance of independent professional advice.

Included within Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment are laptops that the DfE gifted to the College to support disadvantaged learners to access remote learning. The College has applied Section 34 of FRS102, which required that donated assets are measured at fair value to the College.

14. Investments

	2024 £	2023 £
Investment in joint venture company at cost	1	1
Total Investments	1	1

At 31 July 2024 the College held a 7% share of the issued share capital of The Lancashire Colleges Limited. This is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The principle business activity of the company is to advise and assist educational institutions in respect of funds and grants that may be available to them.

The Corporation believes that the carrying value for the investments is supported by the underlying net assets.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)
15. Endowment assets

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Balance at 1 August 2023	60	60
Movement in the year	-	-
Balance at 31 July 2024	<u>60</u>	<u>60</u>
Represented by Cash balances	<u>60</u>	<u>60</u>

16. Debtors

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	948	1,215
Prepayments and accrued income	2,283	1,990
Total Debtors	<u>3,231</u>	<u>3,205</u>

17. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Bank loans	556	556
Trade payables	1,748	894
Other taxation and social security	428	511
Pension Creditor	426	357
Accruals and deferred income	4,744	3,950
Accrual for untaken annual leave	485	441
Deferred income - Government capital grants	1,767	1,387
Amounts owed to the ESFA	55	-
Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<u>10,209</u>	<u>8,096</u>

18. Creditors: amounts falling due after one year

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Bank loans	5,228	5,784
Deferred income - Government capital grants	13,342	12,745
Total Creditors: amounts falling due after one year	<u>18,570</u>	<u>18,529</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

19. Maturity of debt

Bank loans and overdrafts are repayable as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
In one year or less	556	556
Between one and two years	556	556
Between two and five years	1,668	1,668
In five years or more	3,004	3,560
Total Debt	5,784	6,340

A secured loan (security held against the 'Beacon Centre') of £13.9m commenced in 2013 of which £12.1m is at 5.92%, £1.8m is subject to SONIA plus margin and repayable by instalments falling due between 24th July 2013 and 23rd July 2034. Amount outstanding at 31 July 2024 was £5.8m (2023 £6.3m).

20. Provisions

	Defined benefit obligations £'000	Enhanced Pension £'000	Total £'000
At 1 August 2023	-	1,014	1,014
Expenditure in the period	(975)	163	(812)
Transferred from statement of comprehensive income	975	(119)	856
At 31 July 2024	-	1,058	1,058

Defined benefit obligations relate to the liabilities under the College's membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Further details are given in Note 24.

The enhanced pension provision includes £28k (2023 £23k) in respect of former Senior Post Holders.

The enhanced pension provision relates to the cost of staff who have already left the College's employment. This provision has been recalculated in accordance with guidance issued by the funding bodies.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

20. Provisions (continued)

The principal assumptions for this calculation are:

	2024	2023
Discount Rate	4.8%	5.0%
Price Inflation	2.8%	2.8%

21. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 August 2023 £'000	Cash flows £'000	Other changes £'000	At 31 July 2024 £'000
Cash and cash equivalents	13,883	2,297	-	16,180
Debt due within one year	(556)	556	(556)	(556)
Debt due after one year	(5,784)		556	(5,228)
Borrowings	(6,340)	556	-	(5,784)
Total changes in net debt	7,543	2,853	-	10,396

22. Capital commitments

The College had £1,206k of capital commitments at year end and £2,072k as an asset under construction as at 31 July 2024 (31 July 2023: capital commitments of £650k and assets under construction of £216k).

23. Lease obligations

The College had no operating lease commitments as at 31 July 2024 (31 July 2023: none).

24. Defined benefit obligations

The College's employees belong to one of two post-employment benefit plans; the Teachers' Pension Scheme, England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff, which is managed by Lancashire County Council. Both are defined benefit schemes.

The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries. The latest formal actuarial valuation of the TPS was 31 March 2020 and of the LGPS 31 March 2022.

Total Pension Cost for the Year Ended	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Teachers' Pension Scheme: contributions paid	2,284	2,072
Local Government Pension Scheme:		
Contributions paid	1,133	1,000
FRS 102 charge	-	538
FRS 102 charge in interest	-	38
Charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Income	1,133	1,576
Enhanced pension charge to Statement of Comprehensive Income	112	(135)
Total pension cost for year within staff costs	3,529	3,513

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

24. Defined benefit obligations (continued)

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. These regulations apply to teachers in schools, colleges and other educational establishments. Membership is automatic for teachers and lecturers at eligible institutions. Teachers and lecturers are able to opt out of the TPS.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and members contribute on a 'pay as you go basis' – these contributions, along with those made by employers, are credited to the Exchequer under arrangements governed by the above Act. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102 (28.11), the TPS is a multi-employer pension plan. The College is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan.

Accordingly, the College has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined-contribution plan. The College has set out above the information available on the plan and the implications for the College in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

The valuation of the TPS is carried out in line with regulations made under the Public Service Pension Act 2013. Valuations credit the teachers' pension account with a real rate of return assuming funds are invested in notional investments that produce that real rate of return.

The latest actuarial review of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education (the Department) in October 2023. The valuation reported total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service at the effective date of £262 billion, and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222 billion giving a notional past service deficit of £40 billion (compared to £22 billion in the 2016 valuation)

As a result of the valuation, new employer contribution rates rose to 28.68% from April 2024 (compared to 23.68% from 2018/9).

ESFA has agreed to pay a Teachers' Pension Scheme Grant to cover the additional costs again during the 2023/24 academic year.

A full copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation can be found on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website.

The pension contribution paid to TPS in the year amounted to £2.284m (2023: £2.072m)

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined-benefit plan, with the assets held in separate funds administered by Lancashire County Council. The total contributions made for the year ended 31 July 2024 were £1.561m, of which employer's contributions totalled £1.133m and employees' contributions totalled £0.428m. The agreed contribution rates for future years are 16.9% for employers from April 2024 and 17.7% from April 2025 and range from 5.5% to 10.5% for employees, depending on salary.

Principal Actuarial Assumptions

The following information is based upon a full actuarial valuation of the fund at 31 March 2023 updated to 31 July 2024 by a qualified independent actuary.

	At 31 July 2024	At 31 July 2023
Rate of increase in salaries	4.1%	4.2%
Future pensions increases	2.7%	2.8%
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	4.9%	5.1%
Inflation assumption (Consumer Price Index)	2.6%	2.7%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums	50.0%	50.0%

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

24. Defined benefit obligations (continued)

The current mortality assumptions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on retirement at age 65 are:

	31 July 2024	31 July 2023
<i>Retiring today:</i>		
Males	21.0	21.0
Females	23.5	23.4
<i>Retiring in 20 years:</i>		
Males	22.2	22.2
Females	25.3	25.2
Sensitivity analysis of Pension Fund Balance	£'000	£'000
Discount rate +0.5%	(4,480)	(4,209)
Inflation rate +0.25%	2,381	2,235
Pay growth - +0.25%	335	317
Mortality assumption – 1 year increase	1,305	1,200

The College's share of the assets in the scheme and the expected rates of return were:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Equities instruments	36,918	35,229
Government Bonds	77	291
Other Bonds	77	-
Property	6,578	6,915
Cash	1,084	437
Other	32,660	29,916
Total fair value of plan assets	77,394	72,788
Actual return on plan assets	4,913	1,618

The amount included in the Statement of Financial Position in respect of the defined benefit pension plan is as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Fair value of plan assets	77,394	72,788
Present value of plan liabilities	(57,185)	(54,230)
Present value of unfunded liabilities	(25)	(27)
Net pensions asset*	20,184	18,531

*FRS 102 section 28.22 inhibits the recognition of the net defined asset only to the extent that we are able to recover the surplus through reduced contributions in the future. The surplus cannot be recovered, the balance of the net defined asset has been written off through the Statement of Comprehensive Income. The net asset/liability is therefore NIL.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

24. Defined benefit obligations (continued)

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income in respect of the plan are as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Amounts included in staff costs		
Current service cost	1,093	1,541
Past service cost	-	-
Curtailments	25	-
Total	1,118	1,541
Amounts included in interest and other finance costs		
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Net interest return	975	38
Amount recognised in Other Comprehensive Income		
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Return on pension plan assets	4,913	1,618
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of plan liabilities	(4,235)	16,868
	678	18,486
Effect of Asset Ceiling	(1,653)	(17,948)
Amount recognised in Other Comprehensive Income*	(975)	538
Movement in net defined benefit (liability) / asset during year		
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Net defined asset at 1 August	18,531	583
Movement in year:		
Current service cost	(1,093)	(1,541)
Employer contributions	1,159	1,000
Past service costs	-	-
Curtailments	(25)	-
Administration expenses	(41)	(35)
Net interest on the defined asset	975	38
Actuarial gain	678	18,486
	20,184	18,531
Effect of 'asset ceiling' – prior year	(18,531)	(583)
Effect of 'asset ceiling' – current year	(1,653)	(17,948)
Net defined asset at 31 July*	-	-

*FRS 102 section 28.22 inhibits the recognition of the net defined asset only to the extent that we are able to recover the surplus through reduced contributions in the future. The surplus cannot be recovered, the balance of the net defined asset has been written off through the Statement of Comprehensive Income. The net asset/liability is therefore NIL.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

24. Defined benefit obligations (continued)

Asset and Liability Reconciliation

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations		
Defined benefit obligations at start of year	54,257	72,941
Current service cost	1,093	1,541
Interest cost	2,730	2,533
Past service costs	-	-
Contributions by scheme participants	429	389
Changes in financial assumptions	530	(21,636)
Estimated benefits paid	(1,854)	(1,511)
Curtailments	25	-
Defined benefit obligations at end of year	57,210	54,257
Changes in fair value of plan assets		
Fair value of plan assets at start of year	72,788	73,524
Interest on plan assets	3,705	2,571
Return / (loss) on plan assets	1,208	(3,150)
Administration expenses	(41)	(35)
Employer contributions	1,159	1,000
Contributions by scheme participants	429	389
Estimated benefits paid	(1,854)	(1,511)
Fair value of plan assets at end of year	77,394	72,788

The College is aware of the 2023 ruling in the Virgin Media vs NTL Pension Trustee case and subsequent court of appeal ruling published in July 2024. These ruled that certain amendments made to the NTL Pension Plan were invalid because they were not accompanied by the correct actuarial confirmation. There remains significant uncertainty as to whether the judgments will result in additional liabilities for UK pension schemes, and it is possible that the Department of Work & Pensions will introduce legislation to allow changes to be certified retrospectively. A detailed review of historic documentation will be needed to determine whether the changes made by the Scheme were valid (assuming retrospective certification does not become an option), and such a review will take some time to complete. As a result, the College cannot be certain of the potential implications (if any) and therefore a sufficiently reliable estimate of any effect on the obligation cannot be made.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

25. Related party transactions

Owing to the nature of the College's operations and the composition of the Board of Governors being drawn from local public and private sector organisations it is inevitable that transactions will take place with organisations in which a member of the Board of Governors may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the College's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures.

The total expenses paid to or on behalf of the Governors, including the Director of Governance, during the year was £1,222; 3 individuals (2023: £2,500). This represents travel and subsistence expenses, training and other out of pocket expenses incurred in attending Governor meetings and charity and other events in their official capacity.

No Governor has received any remuneration or waived payments from the College during the year (2023: None).

Transactions are detailed below:

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Key Management Personnel: the College incurred expenditure of £226k (2023 – £220k), and earned income of £654k (2023 – £493k).

Blackburn Rovers Ltd and Blackburn Rovers Community Trust are organisations in which a Governor has declared influence as Key Management Personnel, with Joint Control: the College incurred expenditure of £181k (2023 - £138k), and earned income of £nil (2023 - £nil).

P M & M Solutions is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Key Management Personnel: the College incurred expenditure of £nil (2023 - £nil), and earned income of £nil (2023 - £0.9k).

East Lancashire NHS Trust is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Key Management Personnel: the College incurred expenditure of £50k (2023 - £43k) and earned income of £nil (2023 - £3k).

Lancaster University is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Key Management Personnel: the College incurred expenditure of £468k (2023 - £575k) (Degree validation) and earned income of £1k (2023 - £1k). The Governor is not involved in these arrangements.

Manchester College is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Joint Control: the College incurred expenditure of £nil (2023 - £1k) and earned income of £4.5k (2023 - £nil).

Barnfield Blackburn is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Management Personnel: the College earned income of £nil (2023 - £430k).

Samlesbury Hall Trust is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Management Personnel: the College earned income of £nil (2023 - £1k).

Lancashire Colleges Principals Group is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Key Management Personnel: the College incurred expenditure of £5k (2023 - £5k).

Forbes Solicitors is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Joint Control the College incurred expenditure of £5k (2023 - £13k) and earned income of £0.1k.

Nybble Interactive is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Full Control: the College incurred expenditure of £4.5k (2023 - £40k).

Edgehill University is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Key Management Personnel: the College received income of £2k (2023 - £2k).

The Lancashire Training Colleges is an organisation in which a Governor has declared influence as Director: the College earned income of £nil (2023 - £23k).

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

QAA is an organisation which a Governor has declared influence as Key Management Personnel: the College incurred expenditure of £10k (2023 - £nil).

Panaz is an organisation which a Governor has declared influence as Key Management Personnel: the College earned income of £0.6k (2023 - £nil).

Walton-le-Dale High School is an organisation which a Governor has declared influence as Key Management Personnel: the College earned income of £5,000 (2023 - £nil).

Transactions with the ESFA and Office for Students are detailed in notes 2, and 17.

26. Amounts Disbursed as agent

Learner Support Funds	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Funding body grants – bursary support	107	69
Funding body grants – discretionary learner support	1,172	1,122
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,279	1,191
Disbursed to Students	(965)	(819)
Administration costs	(41)	(40)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance unspent at 31 July, included in creditors	273	332
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Funding body grants are available solely for students. In the majority of instances, the College only acts as a paying agent. In these circumstances, the grants and related disbursements are therefore excluded from the Statement of Comprehensive Income.