MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 2 MARCH 2026

PRESENT:

Arif Patel	Chair
Asif Ali*	Member
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Michael Lee	Member
Paul Morris	Member
Ridwaan Omar	Member
Bryan Welch	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

*Denotes joined the meeting via MS Teams

The meeting commenced at 3pm and was quorate.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that there was a lot to cover in a packed Agenda, including a PARTII for members.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received in advance from Corinne McMillan and Rachel Tarplee.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2025

The Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 24 November 2025 as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the updates on the actions from the previous meeting and that the HR matter would be covered by the HR Report Item on this Agenda.

The Chair proposed that Items 9, 10, 11 be presented by the Director of Facilities and Estates before returning to the Agenda. This was agreed by the Committee, but for the purposes of the recording of these minutes, items reflect the agenda order.

5. PRESENTATION ON HR ROADMAP

The Executive Director of People and Change presented the slides to support this Item and provided the additional narrative.

The Executive Director explained that the HR Roadmap:

- **Supported the Strategic Plan:** right people, skills and culture to deliver high- quality education and transform students' lives
- Delivered the **People Strategy:** strengthening leadership, performance, recognition, wellbeing and inclusion
- Built **organisational capability:** improved recruitment, retention and management practice
- Created a **consistent, values-led culture:** commitment to fairness, transparency and professional behaviours
- **Improved compliance and reduced risk:** Employment Rights Act 2025, employment legislation, DfE guidance and governance expectations

The slides and verbal update covered:

- Improvements that the College had already made and what it did well
- A data informed approach to HR ensuring improvements driven by reliable data rather than assumptions, that culture change was measurable and trends identified, for example, areas to take action
- Fair, consistent and supportive staff experience for ALL staff
- Improved staff welfare and staff Well-being policy
- College 'Be kind, Be Inclusive' strategy developed
- Increased promotion of Employee Assistance Programme and many benefits
- Looking to improve staff Performance Management processes

The College was preparing for the Employee Rights Act 2025 (ERA) with some changes happening from April 2026, and other changes being introduced incrementally. To mitigate risks and ensure compliance, the College was reviewing, and strengthening its policies and procedures, introducing staff training and had a structured plan to communicate the changes effectively. An Implementation Task Group would work on introducing and communicating the changes on, for example, the unfair dismissal qualifying period reducing to 6 months.

The Executive Director said that Erwin Michell were providing legal advice and support on the ERA implementation to all Colleges and assured the Committee that the College would be ready.

The Committee thanked the Executive Director of People and Change for the presentation.

The Chair suggested that the HR Report, Item 12, follow this discussion and for the purposes of these Minutes, Items are recorded in Agenda order.

6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

(i) Management Accounts to 31 December 2025

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained the budget position as at 31 December 2025 and detailed in the Report.

The Committee noted the content of the Report and a member enquired about the loan covenants not being met and the Vice-Principal explained that these were measured once a year, Banks understood the budget fluctuations throughout the year and confirmed that the Santander loan covenants would be met.

A verbal update on the January Management Accounts followed in the next Item.

(ii) Management Accounts to 31 January 2026

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services reported that Colleges were still awaiting the DfE announcement regarding in year growth funding payments and that the budget would be reforecast towards the end of the year once these were known. There was discussion of additional student numbers and costs, but whilst uncertainty remained re: funding, the College maintained a prudent approach.

The balance sheet remained strong and cash balances had increased. A number of lines continued to be closely monitored including HE and Apprenticeship income.

The Management Accounts to 31 January 2026 would be considered by the Corporation Board at its March meeting.

7. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that the Financial Regulations set the rules by which the College finances were operated and how they were governed. The regulations were reviewed on a biennial basis or when there was a change to the control environment, in this instance, changes in terms of:

- The change from Financial Memorandum to Accountability Agreement;
- Managing Public Money – changes to financial procurement thresholds;
- The Post 16 Audit Code of Practice being replaced by the Framework and Guide for Reporting Accountants of Colleges;
- Impact of 'Failure to Prevent Fraud';
- Changes to the Principals responsibilities
- Changes to Committee Terms of Reference

The proposed changes were highlighted in the Appendix using track changes.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the proposed changes to the Financial Regulations to the Corporation Board for approval.

8. CODE OF PRACTICE ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The Committee considered the Colleges' current Code of Practice on the Freedom of Speech, noted that there were no amendments and that the Code remained fit for purpose.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech to the Corporation Board for approval.

9. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

The Director of Facilities and Estates summarised the content of the Report, highlighting the further delays to the current agreed handover of January 2027. The expectation is that the building would be handed over in advance of the 2027/28 academic year.

The planned summer 2026 work on the refurbishment of four science labs and hospitality teaching kitchens was out to tender.

10. NET CARBON ZERO

The Director of Estates and Facilities Management provided an update on progress towards the 40-step FE Climate Change Roadmap. Significant progress has been made already in 2025/26, and this was detailed in Appendix one, rising from 35% completion (2024/25) to 65% (2025/26). The remaining 14 steps were all work in progress, and the majority have seen progress towards completion, examples included:

- *Embed climate responsibility into all staff development'*- working with Director of Quality Innovation to ensure this a golden thread in staff development.

- '*Include sustainability in learner progression IAG'*- working with Executive Director of Student Support and Experience to ensure this was integral in their service offering in IAG.

- '*Participate in Global Goals Teach In'- the College was* registering with Global Goals Teach-In 2026

- '*Deliver carbon literacy training to all staff and students'*-developing a programme with a third-party provider to produce a package suitable for both staff and students.

The Committee noted the good progress being made.

11. HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

This report provided information on key health and safety activities during the academic year 2025/26 including incident statistics, Health & Safety Committee, and off-site trips and visits (Evolve).

The Committee thanked the Director of Estates and Facilities Management for his Reports.

Steve Nunwick left the meeting at 15.23pm

12. HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) UPDATE AT 31 JANUARY 2026

The Executive Director of People and Culture summarised this Report and supporting Appendix providing the core Human Resources (HR) data for the period 1 August 2025 - 31 January 2026.

The Committee noted the content of the Report and thanked the Executive Director of People and Culture.

13. STRATEGIC PLAN – ANNUAL OPERATING STATEMENT

(i) 2025/26 progress at 31 January 2026

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services talked through the Report and highlighted the detail within the attached Appendix.

Members noted the progress made so far in year and the updates within the attachment. The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that at this stage in the year, some of the targets were not reportable and the data was not available until the end of the year.

No further comments were made.

14. COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

(i) 2025/26 progress at 31 January 2026

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services introduced this Report.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the KPI Report for 2025/26 to the Board for approval.

15. COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY 2025/26 TERMLY UPDATE

The Executive Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement elaborated on the detail within the Report.

The College's commercial delivery continued to focus on Trades with Gas and Electrical as these were popular and performing well in addition, to new developments in Motor Vehicle and Engineering.

Partnership work was underway to support the digital and cyber eco-system in Blackburn.

The College had various bids supporting significant investment in accommodation, kit, staff/staff development and delivery. Current projects of particular focus at that time included: UK Shared Prosperity - Cyber Hub located in the Industry Collaboration Zone, the Turing Scheme supporting student education experiences abroad and the DfE Lancashire Skills Bootcamps Wave 6 for Levels 3 and 4 Electric/Hybrid Vehicle delivery.

Work continued to maximise opportunities from previous funding bids providing significant investment in cyber, digital, e-sports, film, for example. The summary attached provided an update of External Funding bids secured, those submitted awaiting an outcome, and those in the process of being submitted.

The Executive Director highlighted the College had been working with Lancashire Police Road Traffic CSI investigators to successfully deliver the IMI Level 2 roadside/responders' qualification to members of their staff and mechanical technicians from Lancashire Ambulance Service to complete their MOT qualification.

The Committee noted the content of the Report and thanked the Executive Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement for the update.

16. FE FUNDING UPDATE 2026/27

This Report was supplied for information and updated members on the position regarding the DfE FE Funding contracts 2026/27. The DfE Funding allocations had not all been received and the College awaited news on the allocations to support decision making.

17. LANCASHIRE COLLEGES HEADLINE BENCHMARKING 2024/25

This Report was provided for information. The Annex supplied compared the headline financial position of seven of the nine Lancashire Colleges showing movement for the last three years.

It was noted that the income of all of the Colleges had increased with five of the seven making a surplus.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair canvassed attendees and there were no Items of Any Other Business.

19. REVIEW OF THE MEETING

The Chair thanked the Executive Team for their Reports and members for the interesting discussions. This was the final Policy and Resources Committee meeting for Mr Paul Morris who was stepping down as a Governor from 13 March 2026 having served for six years. Members and the Executive thanked Mr Morris for his rigour and critique and added that he would be missed, before wishing him all the best for the future.

20. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT POLICY AND RESOURCES MEETING

Monday 11 May 2026 at 5pm in the Exchange Boardroom and via MS Teams.