

Corporation

Tuesday 17th June 2025, 6:00-8:10pm
Block 10 seminar room (10.107)



Meeting papers link: [17 June 2025](#) (GovernorHub)

Corporation members in attendance:

Jacquie Carman, CEO & Principal (Items 1-5)
Shabir Chagan
Jo Chilton, Chair of the Corporation
Sarah Dawson
Stuart Fisher
Andrew Hanson
Grant Johnson
Tiffany Harvey-Pallent
Ian Hughes, Vice Chair of the Corporation
Alison Jarrett
Raj Joshi, Vice Chair of the Corporation
Oli Preece
Gail Rothnie
Anna Sutton

Officers in attendance:

Steph Morley, Director of Governance
Jon Priest, CIO (Items 1-5)
Craig Tucker, Assistant Principal (Items 1-5)
Andrew Woodford, Vice Principal & CFO (Items 1-5)
Jo Williams, Deputy Principal & CEO (Items 1-5)

STRATEGIC REVIEW – MINUTES (APPROVED)

Item	Discussion	Action
1	Welcome and introductions The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance, in particular G. Johnson to his first meeting of the Corporation.	
2	Procedural matters	
2.1	<u>Apologies</u> Apologies were received and accepted from T. Powers and M. Sterling.	
2.2	<u>Declarations of interest</u> There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.	
3	Strategy and goals	
3.1	<u>Strategic Plan 2025</u> J. Carman presented the Strategic Plan 2025 for formal approval, after undergoing consultation with governors, staff, students and stakeholders. The Corporation asked if the decision had been taken not to date the strategy. J. Carman confirmed this had been debated and, given the frequency and pace of change within the sector, it had been decided not to specify a timeframe for the strategy. The Corporation acknowledged the rationale and requested a	

publication date be incorporated into the document to assist with version control.

The Chair advised the proposed strategy incorporated an updated statement regarding the college's educational character to reflect the sector landscape. The Corporation acknowledged the reasoning for this change and **approved** the updated educational character as outlined within the plan.

The Corporation **approved** the Strategic Plan 2025, subject to agreed amendment identified above.

3.2 Accountability Agreement 2025

J. Carman presented this year's Accountability Agreement and confirmed the format and content in this year's document had been updated to reflect the requirements set out in the updated guidance.

The Corporation noted the clarity within the document regarding how the college met skills need, not just locally but also at both regional and national levels, as well as evidencing effective stakeholder engagement and the college's improvement journey over the last two years.

The Corporation thanked the Principal and senior team for the work undertaken to produce the document and requested a number of presentation and language amendments prior to finalisation/submission.

JCa

The Corporation **approved** the Accountability Agreement 2025, subject to the discussed presentation/language amendments identified above.

3.3 Annual plan 2025/26 (DRAFT)

J. Carman presented the working draft of next year's annual plan and sought feedback from the Corporation prior to its formal presentation at the next meeting.

The Corporation asked if the utilisation of artificial intelligence (AI) needed greater prominence within the plan, from both an opportunity and risk perspective. J. Carman confirmed an AI-specific plan was in development and would be presented to governors during the Autumn term. The pace of change in this area was acknowledged and the incorporation of a generic/holding statement within documents was suggested.

The Corporation discussed the importance of striking the balance between aspirational and realistic targets, and the use of year-on-year improvement targets to drive steady progress.

The Corporation asked if there were clear links between the plan and the risk register. J. Carman confirmed the plan and the risk register reflected one another and A. Woodford informed the Corporation about continued improvements being made to risk management/reporting, including risk discussions on the agendas for all committees.

Corporation members were asked to provide their feedback to J. Carman for consideration when finalising the draft by 27/06/25, which governors acknowledged would delay the circulation of the final draft for the next Corporation meeting.

3.4 DfE annual strategic conversation (10/06/25)

J. Carman and J. Chilton informed the Corporation the annual strategic conversation (ASC) with DfE and FE Commissioner team colleagues had been a positive dialogue about the college's progress, which had been strengthened by the use of student case studies throughout the meeting.

The Corporation thanked J. Carman, J. Williams and A. Woodford for their hard work to prepare for the ASC and looked forward to receiving the resulting letter.

3.5 Levelling Up Fund (LUF) project

Note – this item was treated as confidential at the time of the meeting; however, information was made public by the local authority within days of the meeting.

A verbal update on the LUF project was provided by A. Woodford, explaining how the project had evolved from proposed rebuild to the refurbishment of different units/buildings within Halesowen town centre. The plans would not only create additional teaching space and facilities, but would also help to alleviate the pressures at Whittingham Road, especially social space and the removing the need to hire external facilities. He confirmed funding totalling approx. £15.5m had been assigned to the college's part of project, which would need to be spent by March 2028.

The Corporation asked if the funding would cover the total cost of the project, particularly as it had been two years since the original joint bid with the local authority had been submitted. A. Woodford confirmed it would. J. Carman advised they had been clear with both the local authority and MHCLG that the college could not financially contribute to the project, which had been accepted; however, the match funding requirement could be met by the investment already made by the college into Trinity Point/Shenstone House due to the funding's timescales.

The Corporation enquired about the project's outputs/milestones and any penalties for failing to achieve them. J. Carman confirmed the outputs were achievable, particularly as baselines had been set at 2020 levels, and advised no information had been shared at this point regarding penalties.

The Corporation discussed the facilities that would be created via this project and were informed about discussions with the local authority to ensure the college would not be financially disadvantaged by taking on the management of the town hall. It was confirmed a range of parking options were available to staff and students at nearby locations throughout the town centre.

The Corporation asked how the project would be managed and monitored. A. Woodford advised the project would be managed by the Director of Estates and

confirmed detailed reports would be presented to and reviewed by the Finance & Resources Committee, and subsequently shared with the Corporation.

The Corporation thanked A. Woodford for the update and welcomed a more detailed report being presented to the Finance & Resources Committee at its meeting on 25/06/25 (and subsequently shared with Corporation members).

The Corporation **approved** an in-principle agreement to proceed with the LUF project, as outlined during the meeting, subject to there being no financial (capital) cost to the college. It was agreed J. Carman and A. Woodford would have the delegated authority to proceed, on behalf of the Corporation, and that a full business case would be presented to the Finance & Resources Committee at the earliest opportunity.

3.6 Restructure update

Further to the updates provided at previous meetings, J. Carman informed the Corporation about the recent restructure. She spoke about the process that had been followed, which had been subject to ongoing review by the college's solicitors to ensure compliance with both college policy and employment law. Interviews for the new roles had been followed by appointments, redeployment (where appropriate) and, for two members of staff, compulsory redundancy, the appeals for which were being held the following week. She confirmed all vacancies remaining within the new structure had been opened out to all college staff earlier that week and that external recruitment would be undertaken if required.

The Corporation noted the update provided by the Principal and acknowledged the outcome of this restructure.

4 **Governance and regulatory compliance**

4.1 Responding to the FEC report on Weston College

S. Morley referred to the paper, which was a response to the recent publication of an FE Commissioner's report regarding serious governance and financial irregularities at Weston College. She advised the paper was a position statement for Halesowen College against the recommendations within the FEC report and aimed to provide assurance to the Corporation, as well as identifying additional action that would further strengthen the college's governance.

The Corporation thanked S. Morley for the report and the proactive response to sector issues. Governors discussed two elements raised within the report – annual declarations of understanding of a governor's role and responsibilities; and whether terms of office needed to be consecutive in relation to the maximum length of service. S. Morley agreed to consider these points and action as appropriate.

SM

4.2 Policies for approval

- (i) **Conflict of Interest Policy:** S. Morley presented the newly drafted policy, explaining the mandatory requirement set out in the DfE FE Governance Guide

and College Financial Handbook, and the importance of having such a policy in light of the recent FEC report discussed under Item 4.1.

The Corporation requested the draft policy be updated to clarify the different processes involved, responsibility for reviewing declarations, greater reference to financial conflicts of interests and the inclusion of protection of personal information. It was agreed these amendments would be made and the policy re-presented for approval at the next meeting.

SM

- (ii) **Whistleblowing Policy:** A. Woodford presented the policy for approval, which had updated to reflect legal changes regarding employment and sexual harassment, and clarify the reporting procedure in the event of a safeguarding concern.

The Corporation acknowledged the updated policy and asked how it would be promoted with staff members. A. Woodford advised this would be done via a range of methods, including mandatory training, via in-person Principal's briefings and mentions in the weekly staff bulletin.

The Corporation **approved** the Whistleblowing Policy.

4.3 Urgent committee matters

- (i) **Updates from meetings:** there were no urgent updates for this meeting.
- (ii) **Committee membership:** the Corporation **approved** the temporary appointment of R. Joshi to the Finance & Resources Committee and Resources Committee for the remainder of the academic year.

5 **Any other business**

5.1 Colleges of Technical Excellence

J. Carman advised she had been approached by two colleges within the West Midlands requesting support for their application to become a 'college of technical excellence' for construction. The Corporation welcomed the senior team's decision to support the college with more local links and potential opportunities for collaboration.

5.2 Staff away day

J. Carman invited governors to attend the first all-staff away day on 02 July 2025 and spoke about how the programme had been designed to launch the updated strategic plan, address college priorities (eg student behaviour), provide time for staff to spend time together as a team and celebrate this year's achievements. Governors were asked to confirm their attendance with S. Morley by 23/06/25.

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5.3 Meeting arrangements/admin

- (i) **Hospitality 2025/26:** the Chair advised the hospitality provision for Corporation would return to the previous arrangement of drinks and light snacks in the new academic year.

Next Corporation meeting (03/07/25): from a show of hands, it was confirmed the meeting would be quorate.

5.4 Reminders

Corporation members were asked to ensure they booked their 1-1 discussions with the Chair/Vice Chair(s) and completed the Chair's appraisal survey by 23/06/25.

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The Chair closed the open part of the meeting and all staff members, with the exception of the Director of Governance, left at this point.

6 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM – Corporation update**

A separate minute of this item was taken.

There was no further business for discussion and the Chair closed the meeting at 8:10pm.

Actions from meeting

Ref	Action	Owner	Date
3.1	Strategic plan - add published date	JCa	Before publication
3.2	Accountability Agreement - speak with marketing re change of colour	JCa	Before publication
3.2	Accountability Agreement - Incorporate requested changes	JCa	Before publication
3.3	Annual Plan - upload SharePoint link to Word version	SM	ASAP
3.3	Annual Plan - add feedback to the SharePoint version	Corp	27/06/25
4.1	Weston College - consider feedback re declarations and terms of office	SM	Sept 2025
4.2	Conflict of Interest Policy - review and re-present in July	SM	26/06/25
5	Staff away day - advise SM of intent to attend all or part	Corp	24/06/25
5	Book 1-1s and complete Chair's appraisal	Corp	23/06/25