Corporation – strategic review

Wednesday 17th June 2026, 6:00-8:15pm
Block 10 seminar room (10.107)

Meeting papers link: 17 June 2026

Corporation members:

Jacquie Carman, Chief Executive/Principal
Shabir Chagan
Jo Chilton, Chair of the Corporation
Sarah Dawson
Ian Hughes, Vice Chair
Balraj Singh Jagdev
Alison Jarrett
Grant Johnson
Raj Joshi, Vice Chair of the Corporation
Gail Rothnie
Mark Sterling
Anna Sutton

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Bullus, Asst Principal – Students & Safeguarding (training item)
Steph Morley, Director of Governance
Jon Priest, Asst Principal - CIO
Jo Williams, Deputy Principal & CEO
Andrew Woodford, Vice Principal & CFO

STRATEGIC REVIEW MINUTES (APPROVED)

Item	Discussion	Action
-	**Governor training – Inclusion** S.Bullus delivered a presentation (to be uploaded to GovernorHub) setting out the college's new approach to inclusion, which focused on inclusive practice being a golden thread throughout the work and culture of the college rather than an additional service.	**SM**
	The Corporation welcomed the noticeably different approach, acknowledging the need for mainstreamed inclusion practice, and asked for more information about the Life Hack Academy. J. Carman advised the Life Hack Academy focused on life skills and independence, rather than employment, and agreed to circulate further information to the Corporation.	**JCa**
4	**Discussion and updates (Part 1)**	
4.1	Defining disadvantage Building on the discussion during the previous item, J. Carman reminded governors how disadvantage remained a central concern, with 69% of learners coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds (IMD deciles 1-4) and facing multiple barriers to achievement and progression. She advised the FE sector lacked a single, consistently applied operational definition of disadvantage; therefore, it was important for the college to define its own parameters to be able to identify, track, and effectively support all learners.	

J. Carman presented to the Corporation the following proposed working definition of disadvantage for the college:

> *Disadvantaged learners are those whose socio-economic background and /or personal circumstances create barriers to their access, participation, achievement, or progression in education, training, or employment.*

The Corporation supported the proposal and highlighted the importance of students as well as staff members being able to articulate this approach. J. Carman agreed and informed governors that a number of small but key messages would be delivered to communicate the definition.

The Corporation asked if there was confidence that the definition covered all student groups, in particular adults and apprenticeships. J. Carman confirmed there was and spoke about the whole college shift towards ‘learners’ referring to all learners.

The Corporation **approved** the proposed working definition of disadvantage for the college.

1 Welcome and procedural matters

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from I. Evans, S. Fisher, A. Hanson, A. Wood and D. Woods.

The Corporation was informed of R. Marmeleiro’s resignation as student governor earlier that week and noted I. Evans would be attending her last meeting (SCQC) the following week.

It was confirmed the meeting was quorate for all items on the agenda.

1.2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest for the meeting.

1.3 Confidential item(s)

It was noted Item 7 (Senior Post Holder update) would be held in Confidential session due to employment matters being discussed.

1.4 Approvals since last meeting

There had been no approvals to report.

2 Reviewing the strategic plan – current position

2.1 Annual plan 2025/26 update

J. Carman presented the report, which provided an update on the implementation of the current year’s annual plan. She advised progress had been made since the last report, outstanding actions were nearing completion and there was nothing of concern to highlight to the Corporation.

The Corporation welcomed the format and acknowledged the progress made since the last report. It was noted Action 4iii (Shenstone House refurbishment) was reported as 100% complete but had an Amber RAG rating. J. Carman confirmed the project itself was complete; however, the Amber rating would remain until the snagging issues had been resolved.

The Corporation **noted** the Summer term position against this year's annual plan.

2.2 Performance

J. Priest presented the latest performance information via the PowerBi dashboard, covering retention by level and provision type, attendance, lesson observations, Value Added, financial metrics, staff absence and staffing profile.

The Corporation acknowledged the improved performance for adult skills retention and asked how this had been achieved. J. Priest advised the provision had been changed to more short-form courses with multiple recruitment rounds throughout the year, both of which had positively impacted on retention.

The Corporation **noted** the performance update provided.

Impact assessment 2025/26

J. Carman presented the draft College Impact Assessment for 2025/26, which helped to demonstrate the positive impact the college had within the local community as a large employer and customer of local services/businesses.

The Corporation welcomed the impact assessment and recognised the benefit of producing such a document. Governors asked how the economic impact of the college was calculated. J. Carman advised the HM Treasury's measure of economic impact was used.

The Corporation **approved** the 2025/26 Impact Assessment.

2.3 Finance

A. Woodford presented this item and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- The college was on track for finances to be slightly ahead of budget at year-end
- Confirmation of the in-year growth fund had been received, which had been more than prudent estimate incorporated into the original budget
- The financial health score was projected to be at the top end of Good, particularly if requested capital funds arrive from the local authority before year-end

The Corporation noted the current financial position and asked if confirmation of whether the additional requested budget to be discussed under Item 3.6 had been factored into the college budget – A. Woodford confirmed it had.

2.4 Risk

A. Woodford informed the Corporation of the new approach being taken to risk, to a three-tier approach of inherent, mitigated and residual risk, and updates to the risk register system on PowerBi. He referred the Corporation to the action plan shared in advance, advised the main risks to the college at present related to external factors, and highlighted the three significant risks identified by RSM for educational settings of geo-politics, cyber security and AI.

The Corporation **acknowledged** the work done to improve risk monitoring and reporting at the college, and **noted** the current risk position.

3 Planning ahead and accountability with stakeholders

J. Carman delivered her presentation and the following items were addressed in turn:

3.1 Improving quality (Ofsted)

The Corporation **noted** the information provided regarding feedback from colleges inspected since the implementation of the new inspection framework for FE colleges.

3.2 Strategic plan review and Annual Plan 2026/27

J. Carman informed the Corporation about the collaborative approach taken this year with the strategic plan to raise awareness, review and achieve buy-in with managers. She advised this work had informed the formal review of progress against the existing strategic plan and drafting of the annual plan for 2026/27.

The Corporation **approved** the 2026/27 objectives, annual plan and targets.

3.3 Accountability agreement

J. Carman presented this year's Accountability Agreement and confirmed the format and content reflected the requirements set out in the guidance.

The Corporation **approved** the college's Accountability Agreement 2026 and its submission to the DfE by 31/07/26.

3.4 Strategic transition planning statement (STPS)

J. Williams introduced the item and explained the requirement for the college to submit its statement to the DfE as evidence of its preparations for the introduction of reformed technical and vocational qualifications from 2027/28.

The Corporation noted each of the responses within the statement template, including the college's intended A, T and V Level provision, proposed delivery start dates, and the main challenges and risks associated with the implementation of the curriculum and assessment reform. It was noted a more detailed report would be presented to the Students, Curriculum & Quality Committee at its upcoming meeting.

The Corporation acknowledged that the STPS would become an annual requirement moving forward and would likely form part of the Accountability Agreement in future.

The Corporation **approved** the college's Strategic Transition Planning Statement required as part of the planning for the implementation of curriculum reform and its submission to the DfE by 06/07/26. **JCa/JW**

3.5 Annual strategic conversation update

J. Carman and J. Chilton confirmed the annual strategic conversation with DfE representatives had taken place earlier that week, the presentation from which had been shared with governors via GovernorHub. They confirmed the conversation had been positive, with agreement from the DfE to look at the college as a case study for setting up completely new provision (the construction centre) and an acknowledgement of the complex and challenging situation facing FE colleges at the current time.

3.6 Capital programme – Amber Way (Skate Hut)

A. Woodford presented the report requesting approval from the Corporation to progress with the Amber Way (Skate Hut) project and the following was highlighted/discussed:

- Agreement was needed for the Chair of the Corporation to sign the lease (25 years, with a break clause of 15 years), which would enable the required works to commence in time for completion by the start of the new academic year
- A 25-year lease would qualify the college to submit expressions of interest and hopefully bids of up to £5m for the WMCA's Capital Growth and Construction Capital funding programmes, the outcome of which would be released in October 2026. Receipt of this funding was not guaranteed and it was not currently known whether costs already incurred would be covered
- To ensure the building was made safe and able to deliver the new Construction curriculum, an increase of project budget to £1.8m was requested. This had been driven by significant lighting, ventilation and power costs, alongside previously unknown requirements for exam awarding bodies
- Amber Way was critical for the college for three main reasons:- the building provided physical space for new curriculum provision and offices; the new construction curriculum was a key part of the college's approach to reducing NEETs within the local community; and land around the building provided parking facilities for college coaches and therefore helped to address the local community's concerns about parked coaches

The Corporation acknowledged situation outlined above and asked if the increased budget was affordable if the college was not successful with capital funding bids. A. Woodford confirmed the budget increase was affordable in the absence of no funding being received and advised the college would look to reduce and recoup costs wherever possible, particularly given the length of the capital grant bidding process.

The Corporation noted the length of the lease and asked, if plans changed over time, if the building could be used for other purposes. A. Woodford confirmed the office space at Amber Way would be used to relocate staff where needed and that the overall building would be considered as part of the long-term estate strategy. It was also confirmed the building could be sub-let by the college if no longer required.

The Corporation:

- **Noted** the update provided for the college's capital programme **AW**
- **Approved** the signing of the 25-year lease for Amber Way by the Chair of the Corporation
- **Approved** the updated budget for the Amber Way project

4 Updates and discussion (Part 2)

4.2 College conference

J. Carman advised the second whole-college conference, focused on health and wellbeing, was taking place on Monday 06/07/26 and invited governors to attend the day.

5 Governance

S. Morley presented the report, covering the following items:

5.1 Governor appointments/reappointments

The Corporation:

- **Approved** the reappointment of I. Hughes and R. Joshi for their final terms of office (4 years) from 01/08/26 **SM**
- **Approved** the appointment of L. Pass as a governor for her first term of office (1 year) and as safeguarding link governor from 01/09/26
- **Formally thanked** I. Evans and R. Marmeleiro for their contribution as student governors throughout this year and wished them well for their next and future steps

5.2 Role descriptors

The Corporation **approved** the updated Corporation Role Descriptors document.

5.3 Student governor arrangements

The Corporation welcomed the proposal and asked at what point in the academic year students would be informed of the opportunity. S. Morley advised raising awareness would begin prior to the official start of the year, through induction and freshers' week events.

The Corporation **approved** the following proposed changes to student governor arrangements to be in place for the 2026/27 academic year: **SM**

- A change to a two-year term of office
- Overlapping terms of office (after a transition year in 2026/27)
- Aligning the appointment process with existing Students Union elections

5.4 Chair succession process

The Corporation **noted** the internal process for the appointment of the next Chair of the Corporation and the timescales for submitting expressions of interest.

The Corporation asked about the possibility of payment for the role of Chair. S. Morley explained this was rare across the sector and required formal approval from the Charity Commission, which was typically only given in intervention situations and for a fixed period.

6 Any other business

6.1 <u>Annual governor 1-1 meetings</u>
The Chair advised governors would soon be contacted to arrange their annual 1-1 meetings with either herself or one of the Vice Chairs.

There was no further business for discussion and the Chair closed the meeting's general session.

Staff members in attendance left the meeting at this point.

7 CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

7.1 <u>Senior post holder update</u>
A separate minute of this item was taken.

The Chair formally closed the meeting at 8:15pm.

2025/26 meeting dates:

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<tr><th>Corporation</th><th>Audit Committee</th><th>Finance & Resources Committee</th></tr>
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17/12/25
~~23/01/26 (DD)~~
~~24/02/26 (Special)~~
~~17/03/26~~
~~17/06/26 (SS)~~
08/07/26
DD – Development day
SS – Strategy session</td><td>~~25/09/25~~
~~04/12/25~~
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~~27/11/25 (& RemComm)~~
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25/06/26</td></tr>
<tr><th>Personnel Committee</th><th>Students, Curriculum & Quality</th></tr>
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