



THE CORPORATION OF WALTHAM FOREST COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 JULY 2025

MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION

Antoinette Beekye	apologies	Staff Member
John Bell	present	Member
Paul Butler	present	Member, Chair of the Corporation, Safeguarding Champion
Paul Clarke	present	Member
Simon Deschenes	present	Member
Janet Gardner	present	Member, Principal & Chief Executive Member
Andrew Hall	present	Member, sustainability champion
Susannah Hume	present	Member, SEND Champion
Thamilarasi Jasitharan	present	Staff Member
Remi Iyun	present	Member, EDI Champion
Bryan Johnston	apologies	Member
Alison Morris	apologies	Member, Corporation Vice Chair, Chair of C & Q, Skills Champion
Renatta Nzomono	apologies	Member, Chair of A & R
Amir Seyyad	present	Member, Chair of F & R
Leon Smith	present	Member, Health & Safety Champion
Gbeminiyi Soyinka	present	Member
Ridoan Hoque	apologies	Student Member
Kwasi Owusu-Mensah	apologies	Student Member

CLERK TO THE CORPORATION

Naomi Shoffman Director of Governance (DoGov)

IN ATTENDANCE

Jack McCabe	Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality (DPCQ)
Abena Rodman -Tay	Deputy Principal Finance & Resources (DPFR)
Kathryn Davies	Governor designate observing
Amir Ahmed	Vice Principal (VP)

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) the Corporation agreed that meetings may be held using Teams videoconferencing as per the Waltham Forest College Instrument & Articles, Instrument 1 (g).

26.25 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

i. The Chair, formally opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. The Chair then warmly congratulated the Principal on being awarded an OBE in the the King’s birthday honours list, which was a well deserved accolade. All present added their good wishes.

ii. Apologies for absence were received from Ms Beekye who is on maternity leave, Ms Nzomono due to a last minute work commitment, Ms Morris who was overseas and both student governors due to personal commitments. Apologies for lateness were received from Mr Clarke who joined the meeting at 6.45pm.

The Chair reminded everyone that the papers will be taken as read, most of which have already been scrutinized by th relevant committees, and asked that presenters highlight key points in their reports in order to allow sufficient time for discussion debate and questions

27.25 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None

28.25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS CORPORATION MEETING 1 APRIL 2025

i The Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 1 April 2025, were agreed by the Corporation to be signed by the Chair as a true record.

The DoGov confirmed that all actions have either been completed or have not yet reached target date.

ii. Chair’s Action Report:

- Approval of utilities contracts essential for operational continuity.
- Endorsement of catering subcontracting arrangements

It was noted that the proposals for both contracts had been circulated to all members and approved without any objections. The Chair emphasised the importance of transparency and proper documentation in these actions.

iii. Use of Corporation Seal

The College Seal was applied to Collateral warranty agreements for ongoing capital works.

29.25 MATTERS ARISING

None

30.25 PRINCIPAL’S COLLEGE REPORT

The Principal provided a detailed report on recent developments, challenges, and achievements at Waltham Forest College. Overall, the College continues to perform well against its strategic priorities, with key updates in funding, policies, performance, staffing, estates, partnerships, and reputation. The Principal highlighted the following points:

• Academic Quality & Innovation

- Most quality KPIs are being met or exceeded, though student attendance remains a key focus area, particularly in light of Ofsted's increased emphasis on this.
- Retention and outcomes are strong and within predicted ranges.
- The College continues to enhance student opportunities through initiatives like the Duke of Edinburgh Programme and a diverse range of enrichment and employer and real work opportunities The College was successfully accredited as a College of Sanctuary, affirming its commitment to inclusivity and community engagement.

• Funding & Financial Management

- Increased government funding for 16–18 learners—especially in construction and engineering—has led to a revision of the College's budget, enabling enhancements in staffing and student provision.
- Adult learning funding has been cut, and apprenticeship funding has remained static.
- The College has proactively submitted competitive bids for revenue funding aligned with national priorities and sectoral growth plans.
- Strategic alignment with the UK Industrial Strategy (IS 8 + 2) is evident in curriculum growth areas like digital, green technologies, and the built environment.

- **People & Culture**
 - Staff morale is high, supported by clear communication, recognition schemes, and strong employee engagement.
 - The College was named one of The Sunday Times Best Places to Work, reflecting progress in wellbeing and organisational culture.
 - All recognised trade unions accepted the proposed pay offer, which includes non-consolidated payments and base salary enhancements.
 - Recognition and reward strategies continue to be well received by staff and are having a positive impact.
- **Skills & Future Careers**
 - Strategic partnerships and collaborations with higher and Further education providers are in train. These initiatives are in preparation for national reforms such as the Lifelong Learning Entitlement and to mitigate the pause on OfS registrations.
- **Growth, Estates & Infrastructure**
 - Applications for the new academic year have risen, continuing a year on year positive trend driven by improved outreach, student experience, and reputation.
 - Rising enrolments—particularly at Level 3—are driving increased pressure on physical space due to higher GLH.
 - The Estate strategies under development - Space planning also has to factor in the higher learning hour demands of new qualifications like T Levels. an update on the next phase of the estates plan was given.
- **Stakeholder Engagement & Reputation**
 - The College has expanded its influence through a range of high-level partnerships, participation and representation in regional and national forums.
 - The College has been recognised for best practice in collaboration with Job Centre Plus and inclusive hiring.
 - Public visibility has grown through media coverage of green careers and sectoral leadership and sector accreditations, including the Matrix Standard and Beacon Awards

Discussion points:

The impact of reduced Adult Budget

Ongoing national qualifications and assessment review

HE Strategy and collaboration with Portsmouth university: The Principal clarified that the goal is not to become a large-scale HE provider or to offer degrees, but to offer technical progression routes and protect the College from potential future policy shifts, such as revised lifelong learning entitlements.

THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:

- **NOTE THE POSITIVE PROGRESS AGAINST QUALITY AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE KPIS FOR 2024/25**
- **NOTE THE CONTINUED POSITIVE PROGRESS TO FURTHER INFLUENCE THE REPUTATION OF THE COLLEGE AND WIDER SECTOR**
- **MONITOR THE IMPACT OF ONGOING CHANGES TO THE QUALIFICATION AND FUNDING LANDSCAPE**

31.25 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BUDGET 2025-26 AND THREE-YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST

The DPFR presented the Income and Expenditure Budget 2025-26 which had been scrutinised by the Finance and Resources Committee and recommended for approval to the Corporation. The DPFR then highlighted the following points:

- Assumptions and explanation for the key variances
- The financial objectives of the College and how specifically, these objectives will be achieved by maintaining a sound financial base in line with our Financial Risk Management KPIs
- The budgeted Key Performance Indicators using revised FEC benchmarks.
- Key budget assumptions for Income and Expenditure and Cash flow forecast.
- Prudent budgeting using guaranteed allocations only.
- The 2025-26 Budget shows a surplus.
- The pay increase assumed in the budget, with increments for those not at the top of their pay scale.

- The budget assumes an increase in student numbers, impacting costs and income.
- Sub-contracted amounts
- DFE Capital allocation and associated spend.
- The contingency included to account for uncertainties.
- Anticipated student growth, particularly in priority vocational sectors.
- Conservative income estimates that accounted for unfunded growth risks and how risk of under recruitment will be mitigated against .
- Pension liabilities — especially discrepancies in local government pension contributions — remain under negotiation with Waltham Forest Council and the board noted these as a continuing risk.

Discussion points:

- Sensitivity analysis - The board reviewed sensitivity analysis scenarios and was reassured of the college's financial resilience amid potential changes in enrolment, policy, and funding.
- Process for setting of Risk Criteria.
- Impact of new FEC ratios on Financial Health rating.
A Level programme - The Board discussed the continuation of the new A Level programme as a strategic response to qualification reform. The ongoing risks were highlighted, and it was agreed to closely monitor and for the Executive to take necessary actions with close monitoring of policy developments, recruitment and flexibility to adjust staffing if required.

THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:

- **APPROVE THE 2025–2026 BUDGET WAS APPROVED, INCORPORATING GROWTH PROJECTIONS AND STRATEGIC RESERVES.**
- **APPROVE THE STAFF PAY INCREASE — INCLUSIVE OF CONSOLIDATED STEPS AND A ONE-OFF NON-CONSOLIDATED PAYMENT**

32.25 Policies for Approval

The DPFR presented the following key policies and plan for review and approval:

- i. **Internal Audit Plan 2025-26**
- ii. **Financial Regulations** - Updated for legislative changes and operational relevance. Includes fraud training and ECCTA compliance.
- iii. **Procurement Policy** - aligned with new procurement law.
- iv. **Health & Safety Policy** - minor updates; statement of intent added.
- v. **Treasury Management Policy** - will be amended further to reflect new FEC benchmark cash reserve requirement from 30 to 40 days.
- vi. **Reserves Policy** - Clarified definitions and added investment oversight provisions.
- vii. **College Fees Policy** - updated DfE & GLA funding eligibility.
- viii. **HE Fees Policy** – New HE fees cap from OFS.
- ix. **Sustainability and Decarbonisation Policy** - updated in line with various government policies and changes and with the internal auditor's recommendations.
- x. **Provision of Security Guarding Contract** - the DPFR provided details of the security services contract, recognising the selected provider's superior overall value and operational suitability following a rigorous and transparent procurement process involving 27 bids and comprehensive evaluations. The Board commended the depth of evaluation and transparency of the process.

THE CORPORATION AGREED TO

- **APPROVE THE REVISED POLICIES.**
- **APPROVE THE PROVISION OF SECURITY GUARDING CONTRACT**

33.25 GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS AND MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The DoGov presented the Governor Appointments and Membership Report, covering new and renewed appointments, committee changes, and succession planning for key leadership roles:

1. Governor and Co-opted Appointments
 - a. Re-Appointments of Governors

Following recommendation from the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee, the Corporation approved the re-appointments of:

Ms Hume – Reappointed for a four-year term commencing 1 September 2025 (to 31 August 2029).

Mr Soyinka – Reappointed for a four-year term commencing 1 September 2025 (to 31 August 2029).

Mr Bell – Approved for a one-year extension from 1 September 2025.

b. Re-Appointment of Co-opted Member

Mr Talbot – Reappointed to the Finance and Resources Committee for one year (from 1 September 2025), in recognition of his capital and estates expertise.

c. Resignation of Co-opted Member

Mr Eichhorn – The Corporation formally noted his resignation from the Finance and Resources Committee.

2. Student Governor Appointments

The Corporation ratified the appointment of the following students as Student Governors for the term 1 September 2025 to 31 July 2026:

Adam Islam

Ozora-Agota Lazar

3. The Corporation approved the extension of Mr Butler – To continue as Chair and Corporation Member until 30 September 2026, as per the updated succession plan.

4. Vice Chair Elections

Two nominations were received for Vice Chair roles:

Alison Morris

Amir Seyyad

In the absence of further nominations, both were approved for two-year terms.

5. Governance Documents Review

The Corporation approved the following updated governance documents for 2025–26, which had been reviewed to ensure statutory compliance and operational clarity:

a. Instrument and Articles

Updated references (e.g., Charities Act 2022, DfE replacing ESFA)

Streamlined responsibilities and clarified Principal's delegation

Amendments to definitions and sealing authority

b. Standing Orders

Clarified authority for Chair's urgent actions

Removed obsolete Associate Member provisions

Ensured alignment with updated regulatory frameworks

c. Scheme of Delegation

Aligned job titles, removed outdated ACOP references

Updated external regulatory references

6. Committee Membership for 2025/26

The Corporation approved the following committee changes:

Mr Johnston – Appointed to the HE Oversight Subcommittee (replacing Mr Hall)

Ms Davies - Appointed to the HE Oversight Subcommittee

Mr Bell – Appointed as the Sustainability Lead Governor (replacing Mr Hall)

It was agreed to seek a new Safeguarding Lead Governor to take over from Mr Butler

7. Committees' Terms of Reference and Work Plan Review

All Committees' ToRs and the Work Plans for 2025–26 were approved unchanged.

8. Governance Action Plan 2024/25

Progress against the current Governance Action Plan was reviewed:

Completed actions were confirmed

Outstanding actions (rated amber) will be carried forward to 2025–26

THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:

- **APPROVE APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS OF GOVERNORS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS**
- **APPROVE STUDENT GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS**
- **APPROVE ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRS**
- **APPROVE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS (INSTRUMENT & ARTICLES, STANDING ORDERS, SCHEME OF DELEGATION)**
- **APPROVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP CHANGES FOR 2025–26**
- **APPROVE COMMITTEES' TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PLAN**
- **APPROVE MEETING DATES AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR 2025–26**
- **NOTE PROGRESS ON THE GOVERNANCE ACTION PLAN**
- **NOTE RESIGNATION OF CO-OPTED MEMBER (MR EICHHORN)**

34.25 STUDENT GOVERNOR REPORT

THE CORPORATION NOTED THE REPORT.

35.25 SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT REPORT

The VP presented a detailed update on safeguarding and prevent measures, with particular focus on the significant rise in safeguarding referrals and the college's response to emerging challenges, especially around mental health.

The VP highlighted the following points:

- A significant increase in safeguarding referrals and learner support cases were reported.
- Mental health continued to be the leading concern, followed by domestic abuse and peer victimisation.
- The team is taking several proactive measures including:
 - Community support meetings across faculties
 - Improved referral protocols
 - Partnership with local authorities for coordinated intervention
- The Prevent Action Plan was revised, with special emphasis on extremism risks.
- The risk register was updated,
- Safeguarding training compliance remains at 100% across staff and Governors.

Discussion points:

Resources needed for mental health ambassadors and causes of mental health. The Board asked that it be provided with a detailed term-by-term analysis of safeguarding referrals to identify systemic issues.

THE CORPORATION NOTED THE REPORT.

The VP withdrew from the meeting.

36.25 HR UPDATE

The Principal presented a comprehensive update covering recent staffing developments, strategic workforce planning, survey outcomes, and actions to address recruitment and retention challenges. She highlighted the following:

- Workforce count has increased steadily over the last three years to support growth and workloads.
- A reduction in turnover and sickness absence rates suggests growing morale and organisational stability.
- All staff completed mandatory training and safeguarding records.
- Performance Reviews have been fully implemented across the college.
- Slight increases in both gender and ethnicity pay gaps were noted, primarily influenced by structural workforce changes (e.g., retirements).
- No evidence of systemic marginalisation. Ethnic minority and female staff showed strong representation in internal promotions.

- Despite positive staff survey results and improved pay awards, qualitative feedback highlighted that pay is still a factor in the staff survey.
- A new centralised platform is being launched to support recruitment, onboarding, and staff development with built-in data and performance tools.
- A bespoke, college-specific initiative is in development to strengthen leadership capacity and support succession planning.
- Recruitment Challenges
- Exit information was reviewed - A proportion of resignations occurred within the first year of employment and improved onboarding process and induction cross college is starting to have a positive impact to improve this. Overall Resignations were largely driven by external career progression and new opportunities. Leavers were more concentrated in lower-paid roles., Local Union Relations and National Union Activity update.

Discussion points:

A discussion explored the unique composition of unions at the college, where all represent overlapping staff groups. Payroll does not handle union subscription tracking, creating ambiguity in representation.

Gender-based pay disparities - Concerns were raised about risks around systemic gender-based pay disparities linked to demographic hiring patterns of certain sectors , Discussions on actions and initiatives will be updated in the next HR report.

Timing, structure and implementation of the Management Development Programme

THE CORPORATION NOTED THE REPORT.

37.25 SUBCONTRACTING REPORT

The DPFR presented an update on the college's current subcontracting arrangements, including performance assessments, strategic planning, and compliance oversight. She highlighted the following points:

- No compliance issues with current subcontractors.
- The college is amid its three-year tendering cycle, particularly for adult skills funding, which has seen strong interest as a result of government cuts.

THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:

- **NOTE CURRENT SUBCONTRACTED ACTIVITY FOR THE YEAR 2024/2025 AS OF R09.**
- **NOTE THAT THE PROPORTION OF SUBCONTRACTED ACTIVITY BETWEEN PROVIDERS MAY VARY ACCORDING TO STAKEHOLDER DEMAND BUT IS UNLIKELY TO INCREASE IN ITS OVERALL VALUE FOR THE YEAR.**
- **NOTE TIMELINE FOR PROCUREMENT PROCESS**
- **NOTE THE MECHANISMS USED BY THE COLLEGE TO MONITOR AND SUPPORT THE QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE OF ALL SUBCONTRACTED ACTIVITIES.**
- **NOTE THAT CHAIRS ACTION/ APPROVAL WILL BE NEEDED FOR SUBCONTRACTING TENDER OUTCOME**

38. 25 CURRICULUM & QUALITY REPORT

The DPCQ presented a detailed report on curriculum performance, quality assurance, student outcomes, and strategic initiatives, highlighting the following:

- Attendance and Achievement Rates - there will be a slight drop in achievement rates as predicted, Owing to the changing profile at the College, such as more Level 3 programmes and courses at all Levels 2 and 3 featuring more external examinations. Attendance to exams was lower than expected and this will be an area of focus. Strategies continue to be deployed to address the attendance particularly to English and maths and there are a range of new options to consider in Term 1 for next academic year.
- Teaching Observations and Retention - Observation results showed majority of staff met the teaching standard, just short of the KPI target. Those below standard are being supported
- While retention remains above national averages, a decline since March signals a need for closer monitoring.
- Student Satisfaction and Apprenticeship Achievement - The latest QDP highlights that perceptions and expectations of outstanding have increased and the college will need to continue to respond to this to retain high satisfaction rates

- Apprenticeship achievement has improved and rose, surpassed the national benchmark.
- Academic Offer & Employer Engagement - Key updates included
 - A Level offers for 2025–26,
 - Continued delivery of BTECs alongside T Levels due to qualification reform uncertainties
 - Introduction of 26 new vocational programmes for the academic year 2025/25 - the impact of these new vocational programmes on staff workload and student achievement rates will be monitored and support mechanisms will be adjusted as needed.
 - Growing participation in employer-led events and Job Centre Plus boot camps

The DPCQ concluded his report saying that at the C&Q committee meeting discussed risks and agreed to increase the Risk level for achievement on the College risk register.

Discussion points:

Review of the structure of the English and maths department to incorporate lessons learned from apprenticeship programme improvements.

WFC attendance rates compared to national benchmarks – The DPCQ advised there are no national benchmarks for attendance as these are measured in different way across the sector.

The implications of the new Ofsted Toolkit and the change in judgment areas were discussed.

THE CORPORATION AGREED TO NOTE THE PROGRESS ON THE KEY ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM AND QUALITY.

39.25 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2024–25 – MONTHLY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (AS OF 31 MAY 2025)

The DPFR presented the monthly financial report for January 2025, assessing the college's income, expenditure, budget forecasts, and key financial risks and opportunities for the remainder of the 2024–25 financial year.

- Surplus revised upwards.
- Financial health: Outstanding.
- Key indicators are being monitored against revised FEC benchmark

Discussion point:

Comparative pay ratios across the sector.

THE CORPORATION:

- RECEIVED AND NOTED THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 31 MAY 2025 RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF WALTHAM FOREST COLLEGE.
- NOTED THE KEY FINANCIAL RISKS BEING MANAGED AND THE MITIGATING ACTIONS BEING TAKEN BY THE COLLEGE.

40.25 UPDATE ON CAPITAL PROJECTS

The DPFR presented the a detailed update on the progress of capital projects, and highlighted the following:

- West Wing Project: Completed successfully with all returns submitted to DfE.
- Pool Project: Managed within budget despite asbestos-related costs with reports submitted to the DfE.
- Passivhaus : All works completed, reports submitted.
- Engineering Building: Planning application pending; funding not yet secured.

THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:

- NOTE THE COMPLETION OF THE CAPITAL PROJECTS AND THE ASSOCIATED FINAL COSTS.
- NOTE THE PLANNING PROGRESS MADE ON THE PROPOSED ENGINEERING BUILDING.

41.25 HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE

The DPFR presented a detailed update on health and safety performance, compliance, risk management, and emergency preparedness initiatives and highlighted the following:.

- Regular risk assessments

- Evacuation and cyberattack simulation exercises
- Business continuity improvements, including new tunnel infrastructure across campus to aid emergency evacuation.

THE CORPORATION AGREED TO:

- **NOTE THE CONTENTS OF HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE REPORT.**
- **NOTE THE KEY RISKS BEING MANAGED BY THE COLLEGE AND ACTIONS TAKEN.**

42.25 RISK MANAGEMENT -REVIEW OF THE UPDATED RISK REGISTER

The DPFR provided a detailed update on the College Risk Register, focusing on strategic risks, mitigation measures, and alignment with the college's moderate risk appetite. She highlighted the following points:

- Risk register has mapped to College Risk Appetite Statements(RAS)
- Some risks remain above tolerance levels despite mitigation efforts.
- Additional action plans provided for risk out of tolerance levels
- The top-tier risks, including Achievement, Estates management and Cybersecurity
- Details of Cybersecurity Response to test staff awareness and training provided.
- The College works in partnership with JISC for secure system implementation.

THE CORPORATION NOTED THE RISK REGISTER AND THE MITIGATING ACTIONS BEING TAKEN.

43.25 THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AUDIT FOR THE COLLEGE FOR 2024/25

THE CORPORATION AGREED TO NOTE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE COLLEGE FOR 2024/25

44.25 - INFORMATION ITEMS

The following items were provided for information:

- The draft minutes of the Summer Term's Curriculum & Quality, Audit & Risk, and Finance & Resources committees meetings
- Finance Update: Financial Health Rating
- Internal Audit Service Annual Report 2024-25

45.25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- The Principal provided an update on the progress of the newly established College AI Ethics Committee and thanked Mr Bell and Mr Soyinka for joining its membership and their valuable input.
- The Chair concluded with two recognitions:
 - Dr Hume was congratulated on her recent academic achievement .
 - Mr Hall was thanked for his years of service, particularly during stressful periods such as the Ofsted inspection cycle. His contribution was noted with appreciation.

46.25 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

21 October 2025

Staff Governors and staff members withdrew from the meeting.

Minutes 47.25 -49.25 recorded under Part 2

The meeting concluded at **20:40**.

These minutes have been approved by the Corporation as a correct record.

