

Meeting of Kendal College Corporation
9th July 2025 5.00pm
Conference Room 2
MINUTES



Present: Rob Trimble (Chair) Kevin Boles (Vice Chair) Neil Boggin (Governor) Jane Barker (Staff Governor) on Teams Elaine Davies (Governor) Richard Evans (Interim Principal) Andrew Lord (Governor) John Mansergh (Governor) Mary Osmaston (Co-opted Governor) Michael Watts (Staff Governor) (Attendance: 71%) In attendance: Tamara Breeze (Director of Governance and Compliance) DGC Craig Owen (Vice Principal, Data, Finance & Funding) VPDF and (Chief Finance Officer) CFO Gayle Salt (Director of Curriculum) DoC Sinead Kay (Director of Curriculum) DoC Hilary Pezet (Director of Student Experience, Services and Support) Elaine Gilpin (Finance Manager) Jason Turton (Observing)	
Presentation from Sarah Neil (Animal Care Lecturer) on her Fd Marine Biology field trip to Egypt	
2416	Apologies for Absence Rachel Tyson (Governor) Richard Quinn (Governor) Ben Matthews (Governor) Mike Seaton (Governor)
2417	Declaration of Interests There were no declarations of interest not already noted.
2418	Minutes of the last meeting The minutes of the meeting held on the 29 th January 2025 were approved as an accurate record.
2419	Matters arising and action plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution analysis will be provided by iTrent in coming year • Environmental Sustainability- no progress • Sandgate – update tonight from Sinead • Task and Finish group update postponed to October • Croga - little progress – full report move to October 25 New liquidators had been appointed for Croga Studio Builds Ltd: Benjamin Jones and Arvindar Singh of FRP Advisory Trading Limited.
2420	Chair's Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair described the recent Annual Strategic Conversation with the FE Commissioner's team. Following the annual strategic conversation with the FE Commissioner's representative - Phil Cook, the College had engaged with two recommended support providers. One specialising in apprenticeships had been scheduled to visit in September. The other, a pedagogy specialist, had held initial planning discussions focused on A-Level provision. These engagements were advisory and did not follow Ofsted methodology.

	<p>The recently appointed Principal, Jason Turton, who was due to start in August was introduced to the group.</p>
2421	<p>1. Interim Principal Update</p> <p>The Corporation noted that the period had been busy as the academic year drew to a close. It had also been a time of celebration, marked by the Student Awards Ceremony at the Town Hall, where the College celebrated the exceptional achievements of a broad cross-section of students. Staff achievements had also been recognised through individual and team awards, following awards following a staff briefing delivered by the interim Principal, and the incoming Principal. The Corporation were informed of the outcome of the recent structure and prospects appraisal involving neighbouring Cumbrian colleges. Lakes College had been approved to remain a standalone institution, and it had been confirmed that Blackpool and The Fylde College would assume operational responsibility for Furness College. Furness College was expected to be dissolved, with its campus continuing under the Blackpool umbrella in a group model; likely retaining the 'Furness' name. The formal transition was scheduled for completion by August 2026. The Corporation received updates on recent partner and stakeholder liaison engagement activities: Members of the SLT team had visited Barking and Dagenham College to initiate a collaborative relationship centred on digital innovation. A reciprocal visit had been proposed, and initial ideas for deeper collaboration, including student interaction had been shared. The Principal had participated in the implementation phase of the Post-16 Area Review, which aimed to inform best practice across Westmorland and Furness.</p> <p>The Corporation noted the following key points in the areas of Curriculum and Quality: The headline KPIs had remained stable or shown further improvement. Results had been confirmed in some areas, and data analysis had commenced to inform the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). Three CPD days had been held for curriculum teams, focusing on apprenticeships, employer engagement, inclusion, and enrichment planning. The staff governor confirmed that the CPD offer had been very well received and was of a good quality. All curriculum teams had completed their self-assessment processes. These were being aggregated with internal validation scheduled for August/September, ahead of a cross-college SAR in early October. Departmental and course improvement plans were due to be reviewed following the release of results. Student satisfaction had increased in Term 3, largely due to improved apprentice satisfaction ratings. A new Head of Faculty for Professional and Academic Studies (including Business and KC Sixth) had been successfully appointed. The Corporation noted the following updates on Capital and Projects Engagement with Westmorland and Furness Council. The Levelling Up Fund (LUF) monies had continued, with additional documentation requests being addressed. Phases 5 and 6 of the Westmorland development had been paused, pending a new tender process. Curriculum timetables and staff workspaces for 2025/2026 had been adjusted accordingly. Coordination between LUF documentation and Westmorland tendering processes had been managed, with attention given to payment profiling and scheduling. The Corporation received the following HR updates: The staff survey had received 136 responses, representing a 40% response rate. The survey was due to close on 12 July, and efforts had been made to increase that participation. Recruitment activity had been high, reflecting the typical turnover period. Summer interviews had been arranged to minimise vacancies in the Autumn term. Two redundancies and three redeployments had taken place to align staffing with operational needs for 2025/2026. One further post remained at risk of redundancy. All affected roles had been student-facing.</p> <p>The Corporation noted the current top five risks:</p> <p>1. Staff retention and recruitment.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Quality hotspots requiring rapid improvement in September. 3. Resumption of the Westmorland development and profiling of LUF spend. 4. Compliance with, and modernisation of College procedures. 5. Refreshing the strategic plan and risk register to reflect the current operational landscape. <p>2. KPI Update The Interim Principal presented the KPI report. Attendance had levelled at 88% overall, and 89% full-time, adults and apprentice attendance was good; English and maths attendance was too low at 72%. Retention figures were above targets, although due to the nature of retention they were lower than reported in May. A full achievement report would be presented at the October board.</p> <p>3. Safeguarding Update Hilary Pezet presented the update. There had been 714 incidents to date, an increase from 508 in the previous year. This was deemed to be caused by increased reporting of pastoral concerns through the system, CPOMs. 309 pastoral concerns had been raised with 70 incidents related to mental health concerns, 11 relating to rape, 24 to sexual harassment, and 14 to suicide attempts/ideation. The governors asked whether the Safeguarding team had capacity to deal with the number of incidences and were informed that there was a plan to expand the team on all sites, and to increase mental health awareness training for all staff. The board were informed that an update would be provided on the implementation of Martyn's Law at the October board.</p>
2422	<p>Full Time Application Update</p> <p>The VPDEF updated the Corporation with a summary of the College's position in relation to full-time application data for the coming year.</p> <p>Full time applications were currently buoyant and continued the college's year on year increase in applications.</p> <p>There were currently 1,599 live applications, with a strong surge of late applications since the 1,470 reported in May. An increase of just over 250 on the same date last year. The volume of growth was most prominent in the following departments: Construction - growth of 71 applications (45%), Animal Management - growth of 52 applications (54%), A-Levels - growth of 49 applications (36%), Engineering/Motor Vehicle - growth of 48 applications (38%).</p> <p>The late surge in applications was predominantly lower-level courses; not unusual, but the volumes were higher than usual, and from a higher position through the Spring. It was expected that 16-18 provision would grow, efforts to maximise conversion rates from applications into enrolments was ongoing. The SLT were scrutinising staffing requirements and group sizes to maximise efficiencies although it was acknowledged that in vocational areas, workshop capacity was a limiting factor. 250+ apprenticeship starts were confidently predicted in the first three months of the academic year, this compared favourably with the last two years. The governors discussed the impact of demographics on application rates and were informed that the SLT expected little impact on expected applications as the College's share of 16-18 year olds in the local area was circa 50%.</p>
2423	<p>Finance & Funding</p>

1. FRC Report

John Mansergh Chair of the Finance and Resources committee presented the key points from the meeting of the 11th June. In relation to the management accounts, progress was noted in forecasting the year end position, although the Chair of Corporation asked for the outturn position to be clarified to board. JM asked the board to note that in line with reporting requirements in 'Managing Public Money', SLT had been asked to take advice from the DfE in relation to the write-offs of the Croga contract (c£200k) and an overpayment to a former member of staff (c£10k). The board were informed that the DfE had sent a letter to the College on the 4th of June stating that there remained sufficient concern regarding the College's financial health to continue their oversight of the quarterly accounts for another year.

The FRC met on the 2nd of July; the Committee received an excellent presentation and two hour walk-through of the key component parts of the draft 2025-2026 Budget and College Financial Forecast Return. The Committee had requested additional assurance from SLT regarding the robustness of the sensitivity analysis. The Committee were keen to ensure that there was adequate provision and flexibility for the Principal to negotiate the annual pay award (including the additional income from DfE being reflected in an increase in teacher pay). Several scenarios had been modelled but the approval of the final pay award would need to be brought back to the Corporation after the usual pay negotiations. The Committee was keen that this was resolved early in the new financial year.

2. 2025/2026 Budget Approval

Budget Summary (2025–2026). Income was forecasted to increase from £17.88m in 2024/2025 to £19.3m in 2025/2026, driven by higher funding rates and student numbers. Conservative assumptions were applied for 2026/2027, with only a 3% inflationary uplift. However, uncertainty remained regarding the level of support from the ESFA for National Insurance increases.

Key budget assumptions were outlined:

16–19 funding was considered low risk due to its lagged nature.

Apprenticeship income was deemed volatile, prompting a sensitivity analysis.

High needs and adult skills funding were projected based on trends.

Commercial and other income were forecasted cautiously due to uncertainties around the income-generating potential of the Westmorland Campus (WMC).

The pay budget was based on contracted staff as of 31st May 2025. Staffing levels were reviewed with Heads of Faculty to ensure accuracy and identify future needs. The Committee requested provision for the incoming Principal to create new roles.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had reviewed and approved staffing assumptions and set agency and casual staff expenditure levels, aiming to reduce costs through strong controls. Accounting estimates (e.g. FRS102 service cost, pension interest, holiday pay accruals) were based on historical trends but excluded from DfE benchmarking due to volatility.

Provisions were made for various pay scenarios

Non-pay expenditure was forecasted to decrease from £6m to £5.8m.

Due to the end of T Level and LSIF grants, no further resource funding was assumed.

Exams and End Point Assessment (EPA) costs were estimated based on student numbers, with a reduction expected following the resolution of a 2024–2025 apprenticeship EPA backlog. Administrative budgets were based on historical spending. Central Administration costs increased due to higher insurance premiums

following a fire claim. The IT Network budget reflected 5% inflationary increase and additional fibre upgrade costs.

Capital expenditure included allocations from the FE Capital Transformation Fund, FE College Capital Allocation (£817k), and Levelling Up Fund (Phases 5 & 6). Confirmation of LUF payment timings was still pending.

The proposed budget projected a surplus of £650k (3.36% of income). After adjustments for capital grant releases and inflationary pressures, the surplus increased to £672k (3.44%). The DfE financial health score was forecasted at 250 (Outstanding), with a strong year-end cash position of £2.7m, including £700k in unspent capital grants.

The governors received assurance that sufficient resilience and buffers had been built into the budget to safeguard the 'Good' financial health score. The educational EBITDA as a percentage of adjusted income was 8.5%, and the ratio of current assets to current liability was strong at 1.8.

The governors discussed the new financial benchmarks published by the FEC and agreed that the proposed budget was a positive when viewed against those measures.

The Finance and Resources Committee recommended approval of the budget and agreed that the corresponding CFFR was sent to Corporation members for approval before submission to the DfE at the end of July.

Budget Approved

3. Financial Regulations and Procurement policy 25-26 approval

The Corporation **approved** the Financial Regulations, after ensuring the alignment with the new College Financial Handbook.

The governors welcomed the Procurement Policy and accepted that process details may change slightly once SLT received the external report on procurement but that the policy aligned with the report's requirements and was therefore **approved**.

The board requested that in future these policies must be submitted to the FRC in the first instance. **They also advised that the College should have a Contracts policy.**

4. Pay Award 2025-2026

The Corporation noted that headroom had been provided in the budget for a substantial pay rise and that negotiations would then take place with unions with Corporation asked to approve an agreed offer. The Corporation instructed SLT to start these negotiations in September at the first JCNC of the academic year.

5. Transport Contract (late paper)

The College had tendered for the service of a weekday termtime bus route to allow students from the North to access college education. These were 'college buses' and therefore solely commissioned for the purpose of accessing college.

Other routes allowed students to access public routes and therefore the bus service itself is not procured. Tickets for these buses would be sold to students; the net cost to the college is expected to be significantly less than the tender value (approx. 40-50% dependent on ticket sales). Members of the Finance committee were given a summary of this and the individual scorecards of the panel members on the evening of the 7th of July and had recommend approval.

6. Bank Mandate

	<p>The Finance manager asked for Corporation approval to add Jason Turton as a signatory on the bank mandate. Approved.</p>
2424	<p>Strategic Focus – Sandgate Project</p> <p>Sinead Kay presented a progress report on the Sandgate partnership. This was an update on paper 2377 that had cited the rationale for closer links with Sandgate School (a local SEN specialist provision) and the future proposal of Sandgate School sixth form relocating to Kendal College Milnthorpe Road Campus 'Sandgate@College'. Sandgate School and Kendal College had continued to work in a soft partnership, where Sandgate provided SEN training and support that resulted in clear and sustained evidenced improvement in the Foundation Learning/SEND Provision at the College. A renewed SEND offer for 2025/2026 has been developed 'Link2' and KC has seen a 175% rise in applications from 8 in 2024/2025 to 22 in 2025/2026.</p> <p>Sandgate School and Kendal College had worked with Westmorland & Furness Council (W&FC) to consider the proposal where part of the Sandgate School sixth form would relocate to Kendal College. It was noted that any such proposal would need funding from W&FC to pay for the necessary refit capital works. The proposal in-principle was currently tabled to be reviewed by W&FC in a sufficiency meeting on 30/06/2025. SLT await the outcome of that meeting.</p> <p>The initial Cost/Benefit Analysis to Kendal College of Sandgate@College, including the financial impact was summarised as:</p> <p>Benefits:</p> <p>Enhanced sharing of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) expertise across teaching provisions. Increased transitions from Sandgate@College to Link2, reducing out-of-area placements. Possibly £60k additional income p.a. from 10 additional learners, with funding support. Expand Sandgate School's capacity to meet growing local demand. Improved learner outcomes through smoother transitions and better-prepared staff. Generation of rental income from Sandgate@College (to be negotiated)</p> <p>Costs:</p> <p>Loss of space at MRC, that could be offset by new space from phases 5 and 6 at WMC.</p> <p>Governors received the report and requested a full business plan in the new academic year.</p>
2425	<p>Quality of Education</p> <p>1. QSC Report inc. student survey results T3</p> <p>Andrew Lord, Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee reported on the meeting of the 1st of May. The Committee had received an update on progress against the October 2023 Ofsted recommendations. A preparation and response plan was in place, including leadership training and staff development days. Inspection readiness had improved, though some areas still required focus. The interim Self-Assessment Report (SAR) reflected the current EIF, with notable improvements in apprenticeships and personal development. Seven areas were graded 'Good'. 'Meeting Skills Needs' was rated 'Reasonable' with improvement actions underway. Governors had reviewed a spreadsheet highlighting QIP areas not on track. Members requested the addition of timeframes and milestones; an updated document had been requested from the Quality team.</p> <p>Specific risks identified, included the recruitment and retention of skilled teachers; and no performance reviews for Business Support areas (identified as a risk needing escalation).</p> <p>1. QIP progress and action Plan</p>

	<p>Achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment & Feedback (QIP 1): Actions on track; a more consistent and tailored approach was now embedded across the College. • Apprenticeship Provision (QIP 5): Significant improvement in achievement and high-grade rates; predicted outcomes exceed sector averages. • High Needs Learners (QIP 6): Learners with EHCPs are progressing well, with no current gap in achievement compared to peers. <p>Current Areas for Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing & Teaching Practice (QIP 4): Need to implement business support reviews and well-being strategies; digital workload solutions are being developed. • Learner Experience (QIP 7): Broader experiences being developed through clearer course offers and campus collaboration. • Learner Outcomes (QIP 10): A targeted plan for improving A-Level outcomes is in development. <p>Upcoming Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QIP 7: Ensure all courses have a planned programme of enrichment and stakeholder engagement for 2025/2026. • QIP 9: Prepare for funding and guidance changes in apprenticeships through CPD and revised quality processes. • All QIPs (except QIP 4): Use CPD events to support Ofsted readiness. <p>Governors questioned whether 76% progress against the QIP was acceptable, and was assured that teachers, managers and SLT understood the areas where they needed to improve and that quality systems were in place to address these. There was a discussion on how to set KPIs that were both aspirational and appropriate. The staff governor pointed out that another college, recently inspected had been criticised for over optimism in their SAR.</p> <p>The board members agreed that they needed more awareness of all the good things happening at the College and suggested that the Head of Faculty presentations on 'meeting the need' are reintroduced in the new academic year.</p>
2426	<p>2. Best case Achievement Rates</p> <p>HR & People</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Task & Finish group update – postponed due to absence of group Chair, Mike Seaton. The Chair suggested that the findings from the group are circulated to all board members prior to the October board. 2. Annual HR report – The Committee received the HR Annual Report, highlighting key developments in staffing, wellbeing, and workforce planning. The College's staff were recognised as the enabler of everything that it achieves. Recruiting, retaining and managing staff successfully was of pivotal importance to achieving its operational and strategic goals. The HR annual report summarised the key quantitative and qualitative points from the previous academic year from a HR perspective. <p>Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the new HR/payroll system (iTrent). • Workforce of 338 staff; 55 new appointments; 15.1% turnover. • Recruitment challenges in specialist areas continue. • Enhanced onboarding and CPD provision, including 5 CPD days and 100% safeguarding training completion. • Progress in EDI, with new staff networks and positive survey feedback. • Wellbeing initiatives included counselling, flexible working, and occupational health referrals.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 disciplinary cases and 5 grievances were reported. <p>The Priorities for 2025–2026 were identified as: developing a new People Strategy, improving recruitment and absence management, and embedding iTrent reporting. The Corporation noted the report and endorsed the outlined priorities, adding that teacher workload and pay must play a significant role in any plans going forward.</p>
2427	<p>Policies & Reporting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fees Policy 2025-2026. Approved 2. Hospitality, Gifts and Anti- Bribery. Approved 3. Student Involvement Approved with a note that wording on inclusion should be updated 4. Bullying and Harassment. Approved 5. Risk Management. Approved 6. Health and Safety. Approved 7. Equality Policy. Approved 8. English and Maths. Approved with a note to add stipulation of 100 hours 9. Grievance procedure for employees. Referred to the Search and Governance Committee September 25 10. Complaints and Compliments. - Log received and it was noted that there were consistent numbers of complaints and compliments. Policy Approved 11. Fraud Prevention Policy. Approved Governors discussed training on this for the members; it was agreed that TB would circulate the recent RSM webinar that focussed on how to prevent fraud by the college or its employees and then to commission Armstrong Watson to provide training on preventing fraud in the wider context to the board at the October meeting. 12. Travel and Subsistence Policy. Approved with note to strengthen the statement on reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities 13. Learner Support Funding Policy. Approved <p>The Corporation acknowledged that policies needed to be scrutinised by relevant committees prior to board approval during 2025-2026.</p>
2428	<p>Governance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report from Audit and Risk meeting of the 16th of June. <p>Neil Boggin (Chair) outlined four key points for the board to note. Firstly, the audit into apprenticeship strategy and delivery had been thorough and gaps identified had been rapidly closed by the SLT. Secondly, the audit tracker continued to highlight overdue actions relating to the lack of a HR strategy, and although the operational risks had been mitigated there were longer term requirements for a people strategy and the monitoring of this by FRC. It was agreed that the board needed a HR expert and would seek to recruit one to the FRC. The third point was an update on the situation</p>

	<p>with Croga and the liquidation of that company. Finally, the board were informed that the new Internal Auditors had been to the first meeting and would be working with the College for the next 3 years.</p> <p>2. Instruments and Articles These had been updated in line with the DfE guidance on voting rights for student governors under 18 years of age. Approved</p> <p>3. Standing Orders These had been updated to reflect the committee structure. Approved</p> <p>4. Scheme of Delegation Updated to reflect the new committees and new Terms of Reference for all. Approved</p> <p>5. Appointment of Chairs 25-26 The following positions were confirmed for 2025-2026 Chair: Robert Trimble Vice Chair: Kevin Boles Vice Chair Designate: Mike Seaton Chair of Audit & Risk Committee: Neil Boggin Chair of Finance and Resources Committee: John Mansergh Chair of Search & Governance Committee: Kevin Boles Chair of Remuneration Committee: Kevin Boles Chair of Quality and Standards Committee: Andrew Lord</p> <p>The board members noted with regret the recent resignation of Jane McCormick and thanked her for her work since joining the board. The Governance Professional updated the board on the vacancies now advertised; Safeguarding, Finance, HR legal, and SEND.</p> <p>6. Senior Postholder Policies There was a discussion on the policies, and it was agreed that there was still work to do on aligning all Senior Post Holder Policies in order that the Corporation could be assured that all process and procedures were in place to effectively manage the employment and performance of all senior post holders. It was noted that joining the policies would help to reduce duplication and minimise the risks of inconsistencies. It was also decided that that all policies needed to differentiate between the SPH managed by the Chair of the Corporation, and those who's management was delegated by the Corporation to the Principal. The Chair of SGC and the GP would work on those and send out a written resolution for approval during July.</p>
2429	<p>Any Other Business The Interim Principal asked that the College's insurance quote be approved at the meeting as it had to be renewed by the end of July. The Chair asked that a paper be submitted to the board outlining the processes followed prior to the renewal and then to distribute for approval. The board agreed to delegate authority to the Chair of Corporation and the Chair of Finance and Resource Committee to approve the insurance quote within the given timeframe.</p>
2430	<p>Reserved Business Independent Governors Only</p>
2431	<p>Next meeting: 22nd October 2025</p>