Meeting of Kendal College Corporation
20th May 2026 5.00pm Conference Room 2
MINUTES

Present:
Tracy Houlden (Governor)
Neil Boggin (Governor)
Daniel Waterhouse (Governor)
Mary Osmaston (Governor)
John Mansergh (Governor)
Andrew Lord (Governor)
Jane Barker (Staff Governor)
Molly Downes (Student Governor)
Kevin Boles (Chair)

In attendance:
Tamara Breeze (Director of Governance and Compliance) DGC
Jason Turton (Principal and CEO)
Richard Evans (Deputy Principal, Education and Standards) DPES
Sinéad Kay (Chief Operating Officer) COO
Cath Dutton MBE (Strategic Careers Lead)

Presentation by Cath Dutton

Cath Dutton provided an overview of regional strategic developments including the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) led by Cumbria Chamber of Commerce and the broader "Thriving Together / Going for Growth" strategy.
Key points included:

- Economic focus areas across Cumbria such as land-based industries, visitor economy, leisure, arts and crafts.
- Concern that engineering provision risks being overshadowed by regional focus in other areas (particularly Furness and the Lakes).
- Ongoing collaboration between Cumbria's four colleges to align provision with economic need.
- Anticipated developments in Mayoral Combined Authorities (planned for May 2027), with optimism about local impact and Kendal College's involvement.

Careers provision discussion included:

- Statutory guidance expectations and the importance of embedding careers across the curriculum.
- The need to strengthen recording of all career conversations across the college.
- Use of the updated Gatsby Benchmarks and Careers Impact System (currently assessed at Benchmark 3).
- Importance of destination data and tracking outcomes.
- Development of meaningful work experience, with emphasis on quality, two-way engagement, and measurable impact.
- Ensuring encounters with FE and HE are embedded.
- Proposal to improve parental engagement via website links and communications.

Governors noted that Internal Leadership Reviews should include careers more explicitly.

2497	**Apologies for Absence - Chair** Kath Atherton, Aaron Blakeman, Sue Keenan, Niamh Holliday, Richard Quinn (Governor), Elaine Davies, Andy Lord (Online) The Chair welcomed Alison Robinson, the External Board Reviewer, as an observer to the meeting and the two governors observing form Trafford and Stockport College group. The Chair thanked Mike Watts for 7 years of service as a staff governor and his valuable contributions
2498	**Declaration of Interests - Chair** N/A
2499	**To approve the Minutes of the last meeting - Chair** Approved
2500	**Matters Arising from the Minutes and Progress against the Action Plan - Chair** N/A
2501	**KPI Dashboard - Principal** Jason Turton reported no significant changes. KPI's dashboard continues to be developed as part of the strategic plan. Committees are looking at specific KPIs.
2502	**Ful time application report - COO** Headline - 3% down on fulltime applications - Down: A levels, Sport, Engineering - Growth in Animal management SK noted that the level of volatility is normal and progressions were not fully included yet. Marketing and Comms are the key to increasing applications – working with Sowden and Sowden to address lower recruitment areas. Mary Osmaston asked if there are any themes in levels. Concerns: Engineering and A levels – Richard Evans identified Mary Osmaston highlighted that A levels has a lot of different subjects and a drop could impact lots of small groups therefore riskier. It was acknowledged that smaller group sizes are tolerated in A levels as they attract others. 6 subjects have fallen out this year due to low levels. Governors appreciated the detail on conversion rates. What are the root causes of lower applications? Neil Boggin asked about Demographic data – slightly declining locally. Kendal College has bucked the trend in recent years with increased level 3 students. Strategy document – aim is 60% market share – currently high 40s in South Lakes – currently high 20s in broader geographic area. Foundation learning numbers increased. Governors questioned whether SEND provision would be there to support these learners. SEND reform has led to growth. Longer term plans – Sandgate provision continuing. Local authority are submitting their response to the SEND reform imminently. Access offer has been reduced to science only.

	Looking to reset the curriculum and focus on getting the quality right. **ACTION – See the application report again in July. (TB to add to agenda.)**
2503	**Human Resources – Michelle Croukamp** 'You said - We did' based on meetings between Jason Turton and Michelle Croukamp with staff. Staff Governor confirmed a positive shift in communication. Thank you to Michelle Croukamp. Inconsistent visibility of strategy – how can Governor's help? That is one that has been addresses. Governor presence has improved. Governors have had strong involvement in the Strategic plan. Review of teaching hours – looking to reduce, finalising costings. Finances and Resources Committee – capacity and workload issues will be included in 11th June meeting of FRC. **Preventing Sexual Harassment** Tracy Houlden and Jane Barker met with Michelle Croukamp. Both confident with progress against the risk assessment and plan. No 'high risks' after mitigations put in place. It is robust and achievable. Governors are assured that SLT are taking this seriously and it is a priority and embedded at Exec and SLT – the rest of the college will follow. Governors checked the measures to prevent peer to peer harassment. SLT have identified the need to include these policies. Corporation notes ready for October 2026. Risk profile – twice a year. Training for staff – share with Governors. At end of year.
2504	**Finance Funding and Resource - COO** Monthly M1 – March accounts – straight to board rather than through FRC – due to alignment difficulties due to Ofsted. The money is very tight. Under delivering on adult skills budget – risk area for us. Controls – action plan. Clear comms to whole of college. Rates review in place – engaged a company and predicting a rebate. Increased scrutiny on casual staffing requests. The finance team are working hard to predict the bottom line, currently showing a reduction in bottom line – this was questioned further by Finance governors. SK providing realistic picture so there are no surprises. Long term sickness is a risk area. Adult skills fund us still in the balance and must be delivered upon. Also, a risk for Apprenticeship completion payments. No other claw back expected. DfE intervention will stop when LUF money goes in. DfE are changing requirements so that every college will submit quarterly returns from next financial year. Budget discussion at the next meeting - board encouraged to align expectations with how the budget has been realised this year. Efficiencies are the way we create additional budget. Income is not the key factor. Report is clearer and references benchmarks, and this was welcomed. **Westmorland Update** Absent colleagues have agreed in principle with the purchase of the units. QS report has been done – recent predicted costs. Costs of altering the entrance not included but would come to a further meeting. It will be included in the spend. Capital spends of £244k – Neil Boggin asked 'Is this the best way to spend this capital?' Options were considered. Enhanced security and appropriate use of shops outweighed other options.

	Governors asked whether we will make the best use of the space – Exec said yes. Board felt that we needed this space. How much is generated from commercial use – currently £15k – very low. But new units can be used for commercial use/revenue to be generated. Employer use. Designed with flexibility in mind. This aligns with the council vision of the market place etc. Governors would like to see WMC – suggest meetings to be held there. Student Governor – Students would welcome additional space at the WMC. Board resolved to approve the purchase. Neil Boggin proposed, John Mansergh seconded – unanimously agreed.
2505	**Student Voice – Student Governor** Richard Evans fed back to Student Governor. More prep for life-after-college and advice on all options – Tutorials have been updated with more focus on wrap around skills. Block timetables will allow the college to offer finance masterclass, specialist info for students and Wider careers options. Molly Downes and Kai Karahan. L1 Construction student moving onto L2 Production Arts – lessons/teaching is good – thorough – make content 'simple'. High turnover of Construction tutors leading to a lack of consistency. Theory class too long - three hours. L2 Art and Design. Requires a merit for L3 Games Design. Stress around FMP. 'Amazing and Great' learning. Students in the class can be unruly when the teacher leaves the class – to be followed up by RE. The chair thanked Molly and Kai for their positive contributions this year.
2506	**Quality of education – Andy Lord, Richard Evans** Update 30th April 2026. Deep dive into HE provision at the last meeting. Board asked whether HE has a place at Kendal College. Richard Evans said we need to operate in spaces where we do well. Very competitive market. Planned withdrawal in some areas but degree programmes less so. Franchised degree programmes too much demand/work etc within the FE Context. HE is not going to be a strategic lynchpin. Teach out of two-degree programmes. L4 opportunity – operate in niches – can we support.? 'Enabler' to higher level study L3 Skills taught at L4 – but modernised – to meet employer needs. Operational or strategic decisions. Do the governors have oversight of courses – curriculum plan – should this be signed off by board? Governors asked whether there are progression routes being protected – Yes. Staffing of HE – discussed – Governors questioned whether teachers are at risk. Staff Governor stated an interest but was asked for an opinion. Very proud of that provision in HR qualifications and AAT. Niche – people can deliver to a high standard. Low risk decision due to very low numbers. Weight of numbers needed to fund university level provision and meet expectations. Mitigations – engage staff in higher level CPD. QSC –reporting (AL)English and Maths attendance monitoring is a standing item in the agenda; attendance remains a concern. There is a gap between this and vocational attendance. Committee are assured that actions are being taken but it remained an area of risk. Ofsted report – draft received – verbal update – positive report acknowledged and hard work that has gone into that successful inspection. Matrix – Richard Evans – accreditation was successful in March 2026. Process was rigorous and best practice identified in many places. Achievement very positive – acknowledged – achieving matrix and Ofsted in the same month. Ofsted formal report is now released. Hard earned Expected Standard in each inspection area.

	Secure fit methodology prevented ‘Strong Standard’ achievement in many areas. However, the inspectors left with a better sense of learner experience at Kendal College than in the last inspection. Recommendations reflected our QIP - areas to improve well known previously. With the current result this then means that inspection will happen again in four years. Annual strategic conversations with DfE will discuss actions etc. Governors questioned how we get visibility on achieving the four key points. Board agreed that PR campaigns can address these publicly. Lessons learned activity – what is the output and will it be shared with QSC? **Action – added to QSC Schedule of Business.** **ACTION put on agenda for next QSC output shed.**
2507	**Strategic Focus - COO** Premises and Protective Security Policy – changed. Explicitly sets out responsibilities. Separated the risk assessment and made that a working document. Criticisms within the report – needs Governance focus. Need to take action as a Governing body to ensure things improve quickly. Next year’s budget needs to allow for these security measures. FRC will allow this. **ACTION Tracked action plan that is provided to FRC each meeting.** **Policy approved.**
2508	**Governance – Neil Boggin, Tamara Breeze** Elaine Davies has offered to join SGC – approved. Board Assurance Framework to be updated. Governor reviews to be arranged.
2509	**Reports and Policies – Richard Evans, Andy Lord** 1. Equality Policy 2. Attendance and Monitoring Policy QSC **Both policies approved.**
2510	**AOB** Next meeting 1st July 2026