Meeting of Kendal College Corporation
22nd April 2026 5.00 pm Conference Room 2
MINUTES

Present:
Kath Atherton (Staff Governor)
Kevin Boles (Chair)
Jane Barker (Staff Governor)
Aaron Blakeman (Governor)
Molly Downes Student Governor)
Elaine Davies (Governor)
Niamh Holliday (Student Governor)
Kai Karahan (Student Governor)
Andrew Lord (Governor)
Mary Osmaston (Governor)
John Mansergh (Governor) ONLINE
Jason Turton (Principal/CEO)
Daniel Waterhouse (Governor)

In attendance:
Tamara Breeze (Director of Governance and Compliance) DGC
Michelle Croukamp (HR Manager) HRM
Richard Evans (Deputy Principal, Education and Standards) DPES
Sinéad Kay (Chief Operating Officer) COO

Observing:
Lewis Ormston and Olivia Bussey - Governors Trafford and Stockport College Group ONLINE
Alison Robinson, External Board Reviewer

2481	**Apologies for Absence** Neil Boggin (Governor), Tracy Houlden (Governor), Richard Quinn (Governor) 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
2482	**Declaration of Interests** There were no declarations of interest not already noted in the register.
2483	**Appointments** Aaron Blakeman (FRC Chair Designate) (proposed by Daniel Waterhouse, seconded by Elaine Davies) was appointed to the board. The board confirmed the appointment of staff governor - Kath Atherton - who had been elected by the staff of the College in an election in February. The board unanimously agreed the appointment of Kevin Boles as Chair and Neil Boggin as Vice Chair, noting that the DGC would actively pursue recruitment into these roles and that Neil Boggin would retire in July this year.
2484	**To approve the Minutes of the last meeting** The minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2026 were approved as an accurate record. The Chair recorded the two written resolutions since the last meeting. These were the Appointment of Sinead Kay as COO, and the agreement to enter a contract with an Energy Supplier. Whilst recognising the urgency of those decisions, the Chair was clear that written resolutions were only to be requested in exceptional circumstances and were not a practice that the board wanted to encourage.

	The Chair stated their preference for AOB items to be submitted in advance or stated at the start of meetings.
2485	**Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Plan** The Chair asked for any corrections or notes to the last meeting minutes, there were none and Jane Barker seconded the motion to approve. The action plan was considered, and all items were either to be discussed in the meeting or in the next meeting of the Corporation.
2486	**Chair's Report** Nothing additional was noted.
2487	**1. Principal's Update** The Board received the Principal's Update for April 2026, which provided a concise overview of progress during the second academic term. The key highlight this term was the March 2026 Ofsted inspection, where the College was judged to be operating at Expected Standard across all areas, with Safeguarding fully met. Inspectors had recognised improvements in curriculum quality, inclusion, leadership, governance and alignment to local skills needs. They also identified clear next step priorities: improving English and maths outcomes for high needs learners, increasing A-level high grades, strengthening consistency in apprenticeship reviews and continuing to address staff workload. The Chair of FRC asked that the ongoing discussions into the reduction of teaching hours be discussed in detail at the next FRC meeting. The governors asked whether any mention of the college finances had been made during the FE Commissioner's team visit. The COO was able to assure the governors that the representative had stated that Kendal College was no longer a risk financially or educationally, this was warmly welcomed by the board. Operationally, all staff briefings showed strong cross-college activity, including the launch of the teaching and learning framework, enhanced inclusion support, improved exam access arrangements, employer-led projects, successful Ofsted preparation and positive governor engagement. The risk position remained broadly stable. Financial health was secure, procurement controls had strengthened, and the Strategic Plan was now ready for approval. Technical Excellence College bid with Lakes College was not successful. Key ongoing pressures remained, workforce recruitment in specialist areas and digital transformation, both of which continued to be managed at Red. The Principal mentioned that at the July board he would report the strategies that sit under the wider plan and outline the budget information. There was a brief discussion about any changes to the curriculum offer and governors sought assurance that students would be kept informed as decisions are made. **2. Whole College KPIs** KPI performance was presented to the board, and the Principal reminded members that it had been a pilot way of reporting this year and gained agreement from the board on its efficacy. The performance against the KPIs were generally sound. The 26-27 KPIs that were included in the strategic plan were illustrated and the Principal asked for an endorsement of those. Governors questioned the methodology behind the modelling for the Finance KPIs and felt that the FRC had not yet assessed these. The Principal agreed that all the detailed KPIs that sit under the general strategic plan would be assessed by each committee. Governors commended the Principal on the KPI dashboard. Staff retention was strong, vacancy levels had reduced, income streams were close to plan and outcomes remained positive. The Principal outlined the areas that needed continued focus as: 16–18 recruitment, attendance, staff satisfaction and staffing cost control. The governors questioned the context of the drop in 16-18 recruitment, and whether there was a demographic dip or whether there was a drop in a particular area of the college.

	Governors were assured that overall, the College was in a stable and improving position, with Ofsted providing a strong platform for the next phase of strategic delivery. **3. Strategic Plan 26-29** The Principal presented the plan and emphasised the collaborative process that had led to the plan, involving staff, students and stakeholders. The College purpose, mission and values had been rewritten and were clear and reflected the views of the college community and aligned with the Ofsted framework. Governors checked that any alignment of curriculum would be done in the spirit of the plan. The four strategic priorities were outlined and for each one, aims, targets and measurable outcomes were defined. **People, Culture and Belonging** **Exceptional Learning, Progress and Outcomes** **Outcomes, Progression and Impact** **Financial Sustainability and Organisational Resilience** The Chair asked that the Corporation approve the Strategic Plan, with the caveat that the specific KPIs within each section were taken to governance committees before they are finalised. **The Corporation Approved the plan.**
2488	**Safeguarding and Prevent** The DSL had provided the board with a written report, that was included in the papers for the meeting. The Safeguarding Governor then provided a verbal report based on his work with the DSL and SG team. He had taken part in a walk-through with the DSL, that had provided assurance that safeguarding arrangements were active and effective while identifying opportunities to strengthen governor scrutiny. Specific requests were made for improved future reporting (trend data and clearer breakdown of open cases), and he raised one governance assurance question for SLT regarding how staff safeguarding concerns are recorded and reported. **Action: Governors are invited to note the assurance provided, endorse the proposed reporting enhancements, and request a formal written response from SLT ahead of or at the next meeting.**
2489	**Human Resources** The Corporation received and noted the HR Report for April 2026, presented by the HR Manager, Michelle Croukamp. Governors noted that staff turnover had reduced significantly to 2.9% for the period January to March 2026, representing the lowest level recorded in recent years and much lower than the sector average at 15%. It was acknowledged that this reflects improved workforce stability, although an increase in turnover is anticipated later in the academic year due to planned retirements. Governors asked whether exit interviews are carried out with all staff. The HR manager stated that only approximately 10% of leavers have an interview, while slightly more complete a questionnaire. The board questioned whether vital information is not recorded as to why people are leaving because they may only talk to their line managers. The Chair suggested that the college should find out why people stay. The Corporation noted that recruitment activity remained stable, with ten vacancies reported at the end of March, including several hard-to-recruit posts within Construction and Engineering. It was noted that market supplement options were being explored to support recruitment in specialist areas and that, with the exception of these posts, most vacancies continued to be filled within expected timescales. Members noted rising sickness absence, which has increased to 4.98%, and noted the actions being taken to strengthen absence management.

	The Corporation resolved that the HR Report for April 2026 be noted and that the ongoing focus on workforce stability, wellbeing and effective absence management be supported. **Gender Pay Gap Reporting** The HR Manager reported that the College had submitted its Gender Pay Gap Report in line with statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010. The workforce remained predominantly female (66%), particularly in administrative, support, part-time and term-time roles. The mean gender pay gap is 7.06% and the median gap is 5.7%, both in favour of men. The Corporation were assured that these gaps reflected workforce composition rather than unequal pay. Further actions to address the gap included fair recruitment and promotion processes, flexible working options for staff, diverse shortlisting and support for progression into senior roles, with gender pay monitored annually. Women were over-represented in the lower pay quartiles, while gender representation was more balanced in senior and higher-paid roles, demonstrating continued progress at senior levels. Bonus payments had been included and showed a reverse gap, with women marginally more likely to receive bonuses and a small negative mean and median bonus gap in favour of women. This was due to the higher number of females in the facilitator role. It was reported that the College continued to demonstrate full compliance with equal pay, Governors questioned the job evaluation processes at the College and were informed that these were out of date and would be redesigned during the next academic year in order to fully implement a fair and robust process. The board noted that the system relied on staff to self-declare their EDI information and that many had not done that, yet reminders were planned to ensure that we comply with the regulations. The Corporation asked to be kept updated on progress against this area. The DGC would add to the December agenda.
2490	**Quality of Education** The DPQS summarised the recent Ofsted inspection, ahead of the publication of the report. The draft report had been received but was embargoed until publication in approximately two weeks' time. Governors were delighted that the College was judged to have met the Expected Standard in all inspected categories, representing a significant improvement since the previous inspection under the former framework. It was reported that the inspection was intensive and thorough but conducted fairly and professionally, with inspectors gathering strong evidence across all judgement areas. The Corporation noted that the judgements remained provisional, pending Ofsted's quality assurance process and publication of the final report. The key areas for further development were identified as: 1. Improving progress and achievement in English and maths for high-needs learners 2. Increasing the proportion of high grades at A level 3. Ensuring apprenticeship reviews and targets are timely and consistently high quality 4. Continuing to reduce staff workload pressures The DPES assured the board that these areas were known to leaders and were already in the QIP and subject to active intervention. Governors congratulated the whole College team on this positive result, recognising the contributions of the Principal and the Nominee. The Chair thanked the Governors for their contributions and expressed that they had demonstrated a high level of understanding of, and support for, the College. Governors asked whether the lessons learnt from the inspection had been captured and the Principal explained that the experiences of leaders and managers had been evaluated but agreed that it was important to capture all staff experiences, to that end, a survey would be sent to all staff during May. **Action: HR and Principal**
2491	**Student Voice** **1. Feedback to students** The DPES responded to the issues that the students had raised at the last meeting, specifically that some student behaviour in English and maths lessons was not dealt with effectively. The governors were assured that the following steps had been taken to address the issue. Lesson walkthroughs had taken place to highlight or flag 'readiness to learn' with support offered and

	targets set for any teachers whose classroom management was deemed as less effective. Lesson Observations had also been carried out by managers and by the FE Commissioner team. Focus groups had been held by the HoF for English and Maths and students had said that the issue was most pronounced with supply/agency staff. Cover staff were more frequently used in English, due to staff absence. As evidence to support improvements as a result of these actions, there were only 2 negative comments reflecting poor behaviour on latest learner survey. **2. Students experience of preparation for their next steps** There was an agreement that the support received had been strong; this had included, visits by teachers on other programmes, meetings with the Inclusion team, and support to complete applications. The Careers Fair had provided opportunities to think about the future and to make connections. Student governors asked whether the Careers Fair could also include more information on progression options at Kendal College. Taster sessions had been very useful, and many staff had provided extensive progression opportunities. Tutorials on progression options had been useful. In Niamh's experience, the support for university applications had been excellent, however, there had been a lack of follow up for those who had accepted places, such as, help with student finance understanding and awareness of possible financial support such as bursaries and grants.
2492	**Finance Funding and Resources** **1. Report from FRC** The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, John Mansergh provide feedback from the last FRC meeting on the 5th of March. He clarified that an error in the CFFR had been reported to the committee relating to unrestricted cash, that they felt may raise a question with the DfE regarding the College financial health score, however it was noted that this had not been material. It was also noted that there was consistency in the forecast numbers. **2. Monthly MI February and March** The COO recognised that the Monthly Information had fallen out of sync with the Corporation schedule and assured the board that this would be rectified in the next couple of months. The board acknowledged the short period of time that the COO had been in post due to the Ofsted inspection, where she had acted as the college Nominee. There was little movement in the financial position since the February accounts had been reported. The COO committed to work towards the expected surplus position at year end. A Finance Governor noted that the unrestricted cash position had reduced and asked for more information from the COO, a meeting was arranged between the concerned parties. **3. Westmorland Update** The Grant Funding Agreement between the Council and the College had been signed on the 31st of March, and thanks were expressed to Neil Boggin for coming to the College at short notice to sign this on behalf of the board. The College has done everything expected to release the fund. The council had been asked when the cash payments of the Levelling Up Fund would be forthcoming, and they were not able to provide that information yet. The Chair asked the Audit and Risk and Finance and Resources Committees to monitor that. The COO reported that since the last meeting the College had received a new allocation from the Further Education College Condition Allocation fund (FECCA) of £824k.That was a small increase on the amount received in the previous year. The executive team committed to developing an estates strategy that would ensure that the fund was used in the best possible way, that would be presented at the July meeting after presentation at the relevant committees. **4. Security Update** The COO was asked to provide a brief verbal update on the College responses to the security report carried out earlier in the year. The full paper would be presented at the next board meeting in May. The Corporation noted that the College was working with a consultant to ensure compliance with security regulations. The consultant had highlighted recommendations

	with different levels of urgency attached. The fencing around the Allen building had been procured and was about to be installed, governors noted that this had been a strong recommendation, and the college team believed it would address previous anti-social behaviour at that site. An alert software system had been purchased and had been integrated into the IT systems. Access controls on entrances were almost all in place, with additional security on the main entrance of MRC expected soon.
2493	**Governance** **1. Report from ARC, 2nd March 2026** In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, the Vice Chair provided feedback from the Committee meeting. The first two reports form the internal auditors had been reported to the committee. The first on the implementation of iTrent, and although the audit report only provided a weak assurance, the management responses had assured the committee that the system would be a robust and effective tool after some initially difficulties. To a large extent that involved asking the supplier to work with the college more extensively to deliver the expected standard. The second report was a resounding endorsement of the quality of student experience at the College, with strong assurance provided. The ARC had reviewed the situation with regard to HR policies, and there was still further work to do, but the documentation had improved in relation to the monitoring of compliance. The Chair described an issue that had been raised during FRC and escalated to ARC that involved the questioning of several payments through payroll to ex-employees. He explained that there had been an internal investigation into this and it was not a matter of irregularity, however, there were some lessons to be learnt that he asked the Principal to pick up and report back to ARC. The governors thanked the staff for their open and honest approach to the investigation. **2. Audit Actions Report** Governors received the audit action report and discussed the outstanding audit actions. The implementation of the Evolve software that was recommended in 23-24 remained incomplete. The DPES explained that the recommendation had been made after the auditors identified poor quality and incomplete risk assessments for student visits. The DPES assured the board that the risk assessment process has been strengthened, but that the implementation of the software had become stuck, however, this was now on track for a September 2026 launch. The report had been brought to the Corporation, to provide oversight of the work that ARC does on audits and it will routinely be reported to the whole board at subsequent meetings. One governor felt that it would be beneficial for the whole corporation to see audit reports as they were published rather than waiting for the next meeting. The Chair provided reassurance that if there was an urgent matter, all members would be made aware in a timely manner, however if not urgent, the reports would follow due process. **3. Compliance Report** The compliance report was a live document that could be accessed at any time by the Corporation and was to be replaced by the Board Assurance Framework, that would bring together the various documents that report compliance to the board and be presented at the next meeting. Alison Robinson (EBR) confirmed that she would review the BAF and include it in her final report. **4. Approve Dates for meetings 26-27** The dates for meetings were approved, however there was a suggestion that the College may close on a Wednesday in 2026-27. The Chair asked the Principal, COO and DGC to resolve this outside the meeting, to be approved by Chair's action.
2494	**Reports and Policies** 1. Annual Health and Safety Report - **Approved**

	2. Prevent Risk Assessment - **Approved** 3. Business Continuity Policy (ARC) - **Approved** 4. Freedom of Information Policy (ARC) - **Approved** 5. Records Management Policy (ARC) - **Approved**
2495	**AOB** There was no AOB
2496	**Next Meeting** Wednesday the 20th May 5pm