

**Meeting of Kendal College Corporation
22nd October 2025 5.00pm
Conference Room 2
MINUTES**



Present: Reserved Business

Rob Trimble (Chair)
Kevin Boles (Vice Chair)
Neil Boggin (Governor)
Jane Barker (Staff Governor)
Elaine Davies (Governor)
Andrew Lord (Governor)
John Mansergh (Governor)
Jason Turton (Principal/CEO)
Rachel Tyson (Governor)
Richard Quinn (Governor)
Michael Watts (Staff Governor)

Training and main board meeting:

Sue Keenan (Governor)
Mary Osmaston (Governor)
Daniel Waterhouse (Governor)
Tracy Houlden (Governor)
Molly Downes (Student Governor)
Niamh Holliday (Student Governor)
(Attendance: 94%)

In attendance:

Tamara Breeze (Director of Governance and Compliance) DGC
Richard Evans (Deputy Principal Education and Standards) DPES
Craig Owen (Vice Principal, Data, Finance & Funding) VPDFF and (Chief Finance Officer) CFO

2432	Reserved Business- Independent Governors Only
Training from Karen Rae, Armstrong Watson Fraud prevention and Managing Public Money Actions from the session were recorded on the rolling action plan	
2433	Apologies for Absence Ben Matthews (Governor)
2434	Declaration of Interests There were no declarations of interest not already noted.
2435	Minutes of the last meeting The minutes of the meeting held on the 9 th July 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.
2436	Matters arising and action plan The action plan had been refreshed for the start of the academic year. With three actions refined from last year's plan, to reflect operational changes.

	<p>The action that related to contribution analysis was updated to the provision of timely and accurate financial information to the board. The Environmental Sustainability action was recognised as important and given a reset target date of December 2025. The staff satisfaction report was to be discussed later in the meeting in the HR section. The Sandgate proposal was ongoing and the SLT were waiting for the Local Authority to confirm that they would be prepared to underwrite the project before bringing a proposal to the board.</p> <p>The Task and Finish group had reported to the ARC committee in September and their suggestions and the management response was included in the HR report.</p>
2437	<p>Written resolutions approved over the Summer period were reported as:</p> <p>23.07.25 CFFR and commentary to the DfE 7/12 11.08.25 Senior Post Holder Employment policy 9/12</p> <p>Chair's Update</p> <p>The Chair thanked Richard Evans for his work as Interim Principal during the summer months, and welcomed the new Principal, Jason Turton. New governors were welcomed to the Corporation board.</p> <p>The insurance quote had been approved in July by the Chair of Corporation and the Chair of Finance and Resources, as agreed by the board at the July meeting. It was noted that the new work on the procurement pipeline would ensure that approvals were not rushed or last minute.</p> <p>The Chair expressed the hope that the Corporation could now move into a more proactive position with a broader strategic oversight this year. He noted that it was an important year for Kendal College with a likely Ofsted visit and that preparation for Ofsted training had already been attended by several governors. The Chair also recognised that this year was significant in that the board would be making decisions on funding and design issues for the Westmorland campus, that required a robust approach to finance in order to meet budget expectations.</p> <p>The Chair reported that he had taken part in learning walks in the curriculum area of Engineering and had seen some excellent links to industry. He encouraged all governors to engage with college activity as much as possible to help them develop a deeper understanding of the organisation.</p>
2438	<p>1. Principal's Update</p> <p>This was the first Principal's report from Jason Turton, since taking office in August 2025. The report provided governors with an overview of key developments across communication, wellbeing, health and safety, sustainability, technological transformation (including Power BI and data alignment), partnership engagement, and curriculum and staff development. The work he had carried out so far was to ensure that 'the right people were in the right seats' to drive improvements.</p> <p>He referenced the staff survey feedback (June–July 2025) and the early actions undertaken to respond to recurring themes in morale, communication, and leadership visibility. Furthermore, the report reflected how current curriculum and staff development initiatives aligned with Kendal College's strategic aims and the priorities outlined in Ofsted's new Education Inspection Framework (EIF).</p> <p>To address staff dissatisfaction with communication, significant improvement initiatives had been launched to strengthen transparency and leadership visibility, supported by consistent staff updates and re-established cross-college meetings. The staff governor reported that changes in communication had been received positively by the staff in general. Governors recognised that external communication from the College had improved in quality and quantity since the new Principal started.</p>

<p>The College had renewed its commitment to staff wellbeing through the AoC Wellbeing Framework, workload reviews were being undertaken, and new events held that focused on community and personal health.</p> <p>A college-wide review of Health and Safety was underway, that integrated a new reporting software and external health and safety expertise, alongside strengthened safeguarding and campus security measures informed by a counterterrorism review.</p> <p>The Sustainability Working Group had been re-launched, setting clear priorities around carbon reduction, curriculum integration, and sustainable travel.</p> <p>In the area of digital transformation, Power BI dashboards were live across key datasets, with external FE data specialists supporting future system development and staff digital capability.</p> <p>A new framework for CPD and staff development had been introduced and was shaping leadership and teaching development, promoting inclusive pedagogy, digital skills, and wellbeing awareness.</p> <p>Workforce Planning was a priority, with identified capacity gaps where managers were assuming additional responsibilities; a structural review was in progress to achieve workload balance and a clarity of roles.</p> <p>Governors noted the report, endorsed the areas of focus and asked to be kept informed on progress.</p> <p>1. KPI Approval</p> <p>Governors were asked to approve a whole college dashboard that was aligned with strategic aims and financial sustainability, and a curriculum and standards dashboard focused on quality metrics such as attendance, retention, and achievement. Together, these tools were to provide real-time visibility of progress, identify early intervention points, and ensure accountability at all levels without duplicating background context. The whole College KPI dashboard used five key themes; People, Portfolio, Pedagogy, Performance, and Finance. Beneath those headings were the College KPIs, drawn from other key management and committee meetings, giving a comprehensive cross-college overview of performance. The Principal stated that the proposed KPIs ensured consistent monitoring and alignment of key performance indicators across all areas of college activity. The targets below the five key themes would be further discussed at committee level and could be refined and updated once the Strategic Plan was finalised. Governors would have a further opportunity to shape these alongside the strategy in January 2026. The work on the strategic plan had started with the consultation of the whole college staff team on the development day in early October.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the framework structure of the whole college dashboard and agreed to scrutinise targets further at Committee level. Principal to advise on timeframe.</p> <p>The Curriculum and Standards KPI dashboard included the Green Standard and Gold Standard KPIs for curriculum and quality performance monitoring. It was noted that monitoring of the KPI dashboard would form a standing agenda item at every Quality and Standards Committee (QSC) meeting, to provide governors with termly information on key metrics at curriculum level.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the new KPIs.</p>

	<p>2. Full Time Application/ enrolment</p> <p>The Vice Principal (VPDFF) presented a summary of the College's position in relation to funding and numbers in the 2025/26 academic year. The Corporation noted that there had been a reduction in 16-19 numbers for the first time in 23 years. Governors asked whether 16-19 numbers had reduced due to competition from other FE Colleges and the executive team suggested that the competition from other 6th form provision was a greater threat to KC. Conversion of applicants had been significantly lower than anticipated as applications were up by 170 and yet actual numbers were down by 36. Governors requested information on why the conversion rate had been low.</p> <p>T Level numbers had remained stable but had not reached predicted levels therefore clawback was expected, governors gained assurance that the clawback had been budgeted for. Apprentice numbers were reported as lower than last year, with a slight reduction in those starting programmes. Due to efficiency in getting apprentices through their end-point assessment (EPA) during last year, the roll-over funding position was approx. £80k down on last year. The drop-off had been forecast, and the 25/26 management accounts were set with a £100k reduction in funding to reflect this.</p> <p>ASF funding was noted as a concern as at this point, (R02), the College had generated £383,091 against an increased full year target of £922,200. The College was exploring how to generate the additional ASF to ensure no reduction against future year's allocations for the funding stream. Governors questioned why the College was struggling to meet ASF targets and discussed the importance of an evidence based strategic discussion on this area of provision, with information on the national and regional ASF situation.</p>
2439	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>1. Operational Update</p> <p>The operational update was provided by Richard Evans (current DSL). The board were informed that a Safeguarding officer had been appointed to support the Safeguarding Manager, and an interim Director of Inclusion had been appointed to cover maternity leave and sickness. This Director was to take over as DSL in two weeks' time, as a member of SLT this appointment fulfils the requirement of the DfE. Compliance with regard to mandatory Prevent and Safeguarding training was reported, with 37 uncompliant members of staff, 20 of those were off sick, others had been spoken to by SLT.</p> <p>The Corporation requested the statistics for Safeguarding cases and an analysis of themes for the next meeting.</p> <p>2. Safeguarding Governance Assurance</p> <p>This was provided by the interim Safeguarding Governor Richard Quinn, who was thanked for his robust approach to the role and his work on the presented report. His report provided assurance to the Corporation members that Kendal College maintained a robust safeguarding culture, underpinned by compliant policies, effective systems, and proactive leadership. Following a review and meetings with the College's Designated Safeguarding Leads and the HR Director, RQ confirmed that the College's safeguarding arrangements aligned with the latest statutory guidance in <i>Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)</i>, September 2025.</p> <p>The College had demonstrated a strong commitment to wellbeing and safety through:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded safeguarding systems (e.g. CPOMS) and 100% compliance in mandatory training for staff and governors. • A highly trained safeguarding team operating across all campuses, ensuring timely support and intervention. • Clear reporting pathways for learners and staff, fostering a culture of trust and openness. • Robust multi-agency partnerships with Barnardo's, CAMHS, the police, and local authorities, enabling coordinated safeguarding responses. • Effective safer recruitment practices and consistent management of safeguarding allegations. • Proactive monitoring using FastVue software, enabling real-time risk identification and continuous improvement. <p>The Single Central Record (SCR) was reviewed on 9 October and found to be broadly compliant, though a small number of staff and governors had yet to submit evidence of completed training. This had been escalated and is being addressed by the executive team. Safeguarding was taught to learners through tutorials, and governors had received regular training to support strategic oversight. The College's risk register included appropriate mitigations to prevent safeguarding failures, including internal audits, governor visits, and external reviews.</p> <p>3. Safeguarding Policy 25-26</p> <p>The DSL explained that the policy had been changed slightly to reflect changes in KCSiE and changes in personnel. The Chair asked that all future presentations of policies must have all changes highlighted, so governors can assess changes more readily.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the Policy.</p>
2440	<p>Student Voice</p> <p>The new student governors introduced themselves and provided the other governors with their perspectives of enrolment and induction. The positives of the College experience were cited as an adult environment, strong support from teachers, and practical learning opportunities. However, one governor pointed out that spitting groups after induction had a negative impact on friendships formed in the first two weeks. They raised the issues that mattered to them and their fellow students, such as, the lack of social spaces for students, the cost of meals, shortage of space on buses, and slow laptop speed. The issue of students entitled to taxi's from home to college, paid for by the council, were not able to access education for up to a month while the logistics were sorted out. The DPES was asked to look into this situation, as it had been reported to board in previous years. The A Level student governor made the governors aware of the difficulties for learners who live a long way from college and who rely on the private bus, they have no flexibility and can only arrive at 8.30am and leave after 4pm, no matter what their timetable contains. It was noted that those students may miss work opportunities due to these travel restrictions. The board were keen to hear how the WmC felt as a learning environment and acknowledged that the campus is unfinished and there is significant work yet to be done to make it feel like a college campus.</p> <p>The senior team were asked to provide responses to the student governors at the next meeting.</p>
2441	<p>Quality of Education</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. QSC Report from meeting 2nd of October <p>The Chair of QSC reported to the board that the SAR had been scrutinised at the last meeting and suggestions had been made by the committee members. Changes had not yet been made due to additional advice from the FEC and amendments needed. The Chair asked that the finished version be presented to QSC on the 20th of November for approval, but ideally earlier than this if practical to do so.</p>

	<p>The DPES outlined the new Ofsted score card approach and how the gradings were reached. The difference between the previous 'best fit' model and the new 'secure fit' model was noted as a challenge to all colleges and that consistency of provision was the key to success. It was noted that if one area is graded as 'needs attention' then the College would receive a monitoring visit on that area within 12 months, if the 'expected standard' was then met the College would return to the four-year inspection cycle. The governors discussed the new definition of 'disadvantage' and were informed that 56% of KC students were now included in that definition. The board welcomed the SAR alignment to the new EIF. The governors challenged the lack of visibility of QIP actions to reflect the SAR gradings and asked for workload for teachers to be added to the areas to improve.</p> <p>The Corporation approved the gradings and SAR content with the final version to be presented to QSC for final approval on the 20th of November.</p>
2442	<p>Finance & Funding</p> <p>1. FRC Report</p> <p>The Chair of Finance and Resources reported that the Committee had oversight of the improvement to procurement and contract management controls following Armstrong Watson's Compliance Report that was accepted by Corporation. Good progress had been made, with additional support to be procured. Tender documentation for the latter phases of the Westmorland Campus has gone live.</p> <p>The Committee had reviewed the July Management Accounts ahead of the year-end and external audit and the forecast position was a £371k deficit (pay award, agency and casual staffing causing the most pressures) including exceptional impairment in relation to Croga liquidation (£200k loss). The Committee had discussed the latest staff survey and an engagement timetable but noted that there was further work to do to better understand workload pressures ahead of designing tangible solutions.</p> <p>The Principal reported that an Interim Director of Finance had been appointed with the on a temporary basis starting immediately to address gaps in the management structure.</p> <p>2. Year End Position 24-25</p> <p>The CFO noted the deficit position and expressed frustration that an increase in £2m of income had not resulted in a positive outturn. The importance of improved cost controls and budget compliance were emphasised.</p> <p>3. Pay Award 25-26</p> <p>The Principal informed the board that both unions had accepted the pay award of 4% for all staff as budgeted. To be backdated from August and paid in November to maximise the positive impact on the staff team.</p> <p>4. Oversight of Procurement</p> <p>The DGC provided the board with a timeline of actions to illustrate the actions taken by corporation to address issues raised by internal and external audit in November 2024. The Corporation noted that, the external audit for the financial year 1st August 2023 to the 31st July 2024 had identified a number of purchases and contract awards during the period that had been made without full adherence to the College's approved Financial Regulations; a small quantity of items with a value exceeding £5,000 were purchased without evidence that three written quotations had been obtained and one contract was entered into without a formal tender process being completed. That irregularity was reported to the ESFA in December 2024 after approval of the regularity self-assessment at the Corporation meeting of the 11th of December. The Corporation then commissioned an external report into the lack of compliance with financial regulations, carried out by Armstrong Watson during February and March 2025 and reported in June 2025. The recommendations from the report were shared with the board and accepted by SLT in July 2025. The executive team had then produced a procurement action plan that was now monitored by the exec team in the first instance and then by the Corporation.</p>

	<p>The Audit and Risk Committee had oversight of the plan and progress against it; with the Finance and Resources Committee providing ongoing monitoring of high value contracts and purchases at each of their meetings. The work of the committees provided assurance to the board of robust scrutiny of the compliance of financial management.</p>
2443	<p>HR & People</p> <p>The report was presented by the Principal and the HR Manager, they stated that the College continued to experience workforce pressures related to recruitment, retention, and staff wellbeing, however, there were proactive initiatives underway to stabilise staffing, improve engagement, and maintain high-quality learner outcomes.</p> <p>The Key Findings of the report were noted as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover remained high (13.75% over the last three months), primarily due to workload issues and pay competitiveness. Governors questioned where the College stood when compared to the national benchmark, that was reported as 12.5%. • Sickness absence continued to impact operational capacity, particularly through long-term stress-related cases. • Recruitment to specialist technical roles remained difficult, prolonging vacancies. • Employee engagement data showed improvement in pride and safeguarding confidence but a decline in leadership visibility and communication. <p>The Corporation asked what the workload issues were and how turnover and sickness absence impacted on learner experience. They expressed their concern over 11 vacant posts and discussed alternative delivery methods to minimise impact on learners, such as specialist teachers only delivering specialist units and not generic units that could be taught by a non-specialist.</p> <p>The HR report accepted the recommendations of the Task and Finish group and demonstrated how leaders had responded to suggestions, although it acknowledged that a deeper examination was needed of the possibility of paying more to those in hard to recruit areas and the impact that could have on the whole workforce. The Principal suggested the topic be considered on the strategy event on the 28th of January. The staff governor asked that a local firm, Oxley from Ulverston be invited to share their strategies for the retention of staff.</p>
2444	<p>Governance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report from Search and Governance Committee, meeting of the 16th of September 2025. The Senior Post Holder objectives had been presented to the committee and formed the basis of appraisal for the four SPH for the period 25-26. The committee confirmed that these were aligned to strategy and provided robust accountability from the senior team. The committee reported that they had selected an External Board Reviewer for the review to be held in Spring 2026 and reported to the board in May 2026. Alison Robinson had been chosen after three quotes were gained for the service, she represented the best value for money. The board approved this selection. 2. Report from Audit and Risk Committee, meeting of the 29th of September 2025, The Committee received the Mock Funding Audit (ESFA) that provided 'reasonable assurance', though compliance gaps were identified that posed a risk of claw-back of monies. The Committee requested accelerated timelines for addressing high-risk recommendations. The Committee noted good progress on Procurement practices following the external investigation, with strengthened monitoring in place. Two additional procedural breaches were

	<p>identified during a full review of 2024–25 purchases, but with no fraud implications. The compliance report had been presented and the Committee acknowledged a significant number of overdue HR policies, attributed to staffing gaps. The absence of Directors in Finance, Estates, HR, and Network had been recognised as a key operational risk. The Internal Audit Plan 2025–26 was presented to the Corporation, and the Committee Chair explained the deferral of the Procurement audit to 2026–27 to make the audit pressure manageable for the Finance team. The Committee had reviewed the updated risk register, and the five key risks were: workforce recruitment, Westmorland Campus funding, cybersecurity, digital transformation, and student progression. With regard to the 'Crogan' liquidation the Committee was informed that no financial recovery was expected. The equipment purchased was deemed unfit for purpose and the space was being repurposed. Legal advice was ongoing and due diligence processes were under review.</p> <p>3. The Annual report for the Audit and Risk Committee was presented to the Corporation and acknowledged as a true and accurate reflection of the work of the committee over the year 24-25, which provided assurance on the effectiveness of the College's governance, risk management and internal control framework. Approved</p> <p>4. Governance SAR was received by Corporation and approved as an accurate reflection of the work of the Corporation and a robust assessment of the efficacy of governance. SAR approved.</p> <p>5. The Quality Improvement Plan identified the areas of development for the Corporation in the year 25-26 as; Increased governor engagement with stakeholders and the wider community, Increased strategic alignment and integration between sub-committees and full Corporation, and development of curriculum links to further understand the learner experience. QIP approved.</p> <p>6. Schedule of Business approved</p>
2446	<p>Policies & Reporting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appointment of Board Members Policy – Approved 2. Governance Policy - Approved 3. Reserves Policy – Approved 4. Treasury Management Policy – Approved 5. Kendal College Regularity Self-assessment- Approved
2447	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>None</p>
2448	<p>Next meeting: 10th December 2025 5pm</p> <p>Christmas Meal 17th December 2025 7pm</p>