



transparency requirements. This arrangement was accepted by the Board as appropriate and compliant with governance standards. No further concerns or discussions were raised regarding declarations of interest.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the last Board meeting held on 16 October 2025 were agreed as a true record.

#### 3.2 Actions

Most actions had been closed off or were integrated into the agenda.

**Completed:** Items 3.2, 6.4, 6.6 and 10.

**Ongoing:** Items 5.6, 5.7, 6.8, 6.12 were due to be completed in the first term of 2026.

### 4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

4.1 The Board had received the Principal's report and members noted the content on the key activities in relation to a raft of policy changes, updates, new strategies and reforms.

The following points were highlighted:

- Curriculum Reform: The introduction of V Levels and the defunding of certain qualifications were discussed, with concerns raised about their suitability for all students, the potential impact on 16-18 enrolments and curriculum planning. The College was already looking at how to adapt to these changes.
- Ofsted: The new framework was described as complex, with a high bar set for the "Expected Standard." The cultural shift required for the new system would impact staff, governors, and parents.
- Recruitment: Positive results were reported for 16-18 enrolments and apprenticeships, there was concern about HE recruitment. The devolution of Lancashire was flagged as a potential risk.
- Achievements: The College's accomplishments, including wins at the Skill Build National Finals and shortlisting for FE Marketing Awards, were acknowledged by the Board.
- The finale of the 200 Year celebration took place on 5 December; it had been well attended and very successful.

4.2 The Board asked about the specific challenges posed by the curriculum reforms and how the College planned to address them, to which the Principal provided detailed responses, explaining the strategies for adapting to the new qualifications.

4.3 A Governor asked about the measures in place to improve HE recruitment and the impact of the devolution of Lancashire on the College's operations. The College assured the Board that proactive steps were being taken to mitigate these risks and enhance recruitment efforts.  
The Board **noted** the paper.

### 5. STRATEGIC MATTERS

#### 5.1 Item 5.1: Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

The Board received the Self-Assessment Report and thanked the team for the work undertaken to date. The Board was asked to consider and agree the overall judgements, in order to enable the SAR to be finalised, and uploaded to the Ofsted portal in January. The report had undergone a thorough review process, including an external validation on 24 November and discussions at the Quality and Curriculum Committee on the 4 December. Governors were thanked for their attendance at the validation meeting and feedback submitted. All the information received would be consolidated into the SAR before submission to Ofsted in January 2026.

5.2 The Board acknowledged the challenges posed by the new framework, particularly the requirement for all sub-grades to meet all the specific criteria for the overall grade to be elevated. After further discussion around how to show the improvements made

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across College in the last few years, it was explained that while some elements were strong, other areas were assessed as “secure” rather than “strong”. As a result, the recommended overall judgement was Expected Standard.

- 5.3 The Board discussed the importance of clearly evidencing judgements. It was confirmed that Governors will be provided with a colour-coded evidence paper, drawing on multiple sources, to support scrutiny and ongoing review. This position paper would be updated regularly to show progress and emerging strengths.

**ACTION:** Update the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) regularly to reflect progress and changes, and provide governors with a colour-coded, evidence-based position paper.  
**RESOLVED:** The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2025-26 was **approved** by the Board.

WM

- 5.4 Item 5.2: Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2025-26

The paper provided a summary of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) actions for 2025-26 for information. It was stated that the QIP was reviewed monthly and reported on at every Quality and Curriculum Committee.

The plan outlined nine key areas for improvement and included measurable targets aligned with strategic objectives, which would be tracked and reported to Q&C and the Board throughout the year.

- 5.5 Governors raised questions about the alignment of the QIP with the College's strategic objectives. They emphasised the need for a cohesive approach, referred to as the 'golden thread,' to connect strategic aims with operational plans and classroom-level improvements. The Principal assured the Board that the QIP was part of a broader framework, which included strategic operating plans and departmental objectives, ensuring a unified approach to improvement across the College.

The Board **noted** the paper.

- 5.6 Item 5.3: Strategic Operating Plan 2025 – 26

The paper was discussed. Governors emphasised the importance of identifying and tracking the most critical KPIs to ensure progress towards strategic objectives. The Principal outlined plans to streamline the KPI dashboard. This approach involved delegating medium-level KPIs to Committees for detailed monitoring, while retaining high-level KPIs for Board oversight.

**ACTION:** Streamline the KPI dashboard by delegating medium-level KPIs to committees and retaining high-level KPIs for board oversight. Present to PSG.  
The Board **noted** the paper.

AL/AB/SF

- 5.7 Item 5.4: Marketing Strategy

The Marketing Strategy was presented for approval having been discussed by the FRI (Finance and Resources, Investment) Committee.

Questions were raised about reputational assessment, the detail and targets within the strategy, particularly in relation to HE growth and employer satisfaction.

Governors suggested clarifying the College's unique selling points (USPs) and the need for clear targets and measures to ensure the strategy's effectiveness and alignment with the College's overall goals. The Principal assured the Board that the strategy would be refined accordingly.

- 5.8 The Board agreed to approve the Marketing Strategy, with the understanding that further refinements would be made to address concerns raised during the discussion, including specific targets for higher education growth and broader reputational measures.

**ACTION** Review and refine the marketing strategy to include more detailed planning, specific targets, and actions for HE growth.

GD

**RESOLVED:** That subject to the suggestions made, the Board **approved** the Marketing Strategy as recommended by the Finance and Resources, Investment committee.

## 6. REPORTS AND UPDATES

### 6.1 Item 6.1: Curriculum and Teaching Excellence report

The Assistant Principal presented the report. Key highlights included:

- A significant improvement in the student survey response rate, which increased from 76% to 92%.
- High satisfaction levels among students, with 96% expressing positive feedback.
- Observations and formal walkthroughs identified areas for improvement, with targeted interventions being implemented for a small number of staff.

6.2 Governors were informed that attendance, teaching, learning, and student voice were discussed at the Quality and Finance Reviews (QFRs).

The report format was praised for its clarity.

The Board **noted** the paper.

### 6.3 Item 6.2: Safeguarding report (including Prevent)

The report highlighted an increase in referrals compared to the previous year, indicating a growing need for mental health support, including self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Part-time counsellors had been employed to assist with these issues.

6.4 Governors were informed that all HE (Higher Education) staff and students had completed training on sexual harassment, violence and abuse as per the Office for Students (OfS) regulation. This training would be completed by the end of the term for College staff and students on all sites.

6.5 The Board acknowledged the ongoing efforts to support student wellbeing. The Board **noted** the paper.

### 6.6 Item 6.3 Inclusion Report /SEND

The report provided a breakdown of student categories by department, including those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), looked-after children (CLA/LAC), care leavers, and students on free school meals (FSM).

The Board acknowledged the improvement in the information provided in the report, to which the College explained further enhancements were planned.

The Board **noted** the paper.

### 6.7 Item 6.4: Finance and Estates Update

The Board were briefed on the College's financial performance up to the end of October. The accounts indicated good financial health, though cash flow remained a challenge.

There was a discussion on the impact of capital spending on the College's financial health, with suggestions to provide more detailed reports on capital projects.

Questions were raised about the management of capital and revenue costs, with assurances given that all necessary steps were being taken to maintain and improve cash balances.

**ACTION:** Prepare a capital report to provide visibility on capital spending and its impact on cash balances.

6.8 Governors acknowledged the recent improvements to the College estate, noting their positive impact on the student experience.

### 6.9 Item 6.5: Health and Safety Annual Report 2024 – 2025

**GD**

The Board noted the Health and Safety Annual Report 2024-25, which had been considered by the Finance, Resources and Investment Committee in November 2025. The report provided assurance that health and safety compliance was being maintained, with ongoing efforts to improve systems and record-keeping  
**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Health and Safety Annual Report 2024-25 as recommended by the Finance, Resources and Investment Committee.

6.10 Item 6.6: Annual Environmental Report

The report provided an overview of sustainability activities under three key focus areas: curriculum, campus, and community. This would be an area of focus at the Strategic Away Day on 22 January 2026.

The Board **noted** the annual report.

7. **FINANCE MATTERS**

7.1 Item 7.1 Funding update

The funding update focused on the College's performance in apprenticeships and Adult Skills Funding. Apprenticeships were performing well, with year-on-year growth. The Board discussed the update and College reassured Governors that robust plans were in place to meet funding targets.

7.2 Item 7.2: Management Letter

The Deputy Principal explained the process involved in the production of the management letters and the financial statements. The papers had been discussed in detail at a joint meeting of Audit Committee and Finance, Resources and Investment (FRI) Committee on 27 November 2025. The papers being presented to the Board for approval had been updated as necessary following these discussions and with the agreement of the external auditors.

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Management Letter (the Final Management and Governors' Report) for the period ended 31 July 2025.

7.3 Item 7.3: Management Representation Letter – Audit

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Management Representation Letter – Audit as recommended by Audit/FRI Committee which would require a signature from the Chair.

UPDATE: Signed and submitted.

7.4 Item 7.4: Management Representation Letter – Regularity

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Management Representation Letter – Regularity as recommended by Audit/FRI Committee which would require a signature from the Accounting Officer.

UPDATE: Signed and submitted.

7.5 Item 7.5: Going Concern

This item was reviewed by Governors who confirmed that the College remained a Going Concern.

The paper was **noted** by the Board.

7.6 Item 7.6 Annual Report and Financial Statements

The Board had received the Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31 July 2025 which had been considered at the joint meeting of Audit and Finance, Resources and Investment Committees on 27 November 2025.

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Annual Report and Financial Statements to 31 July 2025 as recommended by Audit Committee which would require a signature from the Chair and the Accounting Officer.

UPDATE: Signed and submitted.

7.7 Item 7.7 Reconciliation of July 2024/25 Management Accounts to Statutory Accounts

This provided a summary the movements between July 2025 management reports and the final accounts.

The information was **noted** by the Board.

## 8. GOVERNANCE

The paper provided assurance on governance matters, ensuring governance remained effective and compliant.

### 8.1 Item 8. 1: Membership Matters

The Board were asked to ratify the following:

- Marnie Marshall as voted for by the Student Executive, be appointed as Student Governor for a term of office of one year or when they ceased to be a student at College.
- Mark Pettit –Mark to become a member of Audit and People, Search and Governance Committees.

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved both appointments.

### 8.2 Item 8.2: Audit and FRI Terms of Reference and Cycle of Business

**RESOLVED** The Committee Audit and FRI Terms of Reference and Cycle of Business were approved.

### 8.3 Item 8.3: Scheme of Delegation

An explanation behind the updated Scheme of Delegation was provided - to streamline processes.

**RESOLVED** The Board approved the updated Scheme of Delegation.

### 8.4 Item 8.4: Governance Self-Assessment Feedback

Headline details from the recently completed Board self-assessment questionnaire was shared. It was noted that further analysis of the results would be compiled for the People, Search and Governance Committee in January.

PSG

## 9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Board noted the minutes and the paper which outlined the main items of business discussed at the: Audit, Quality and Curriculum, Finance, Resources and Investment (FRI) Committees.

### 9.1 **Audit Committee 4 November 2025**

- Internal Audit reports
- Audit Tracker/Update on Audit Recommendations
- WYCA Audit update
- Annual compliance report (Freedom of Information Request/Fraud/ Whistleblowing/GDPR /cyber security breaches/subject access requests)
- Annual Gift Register for 2024/2025 - *suggestions made and incorporated.*

#### Policies approved

- Critical Incident Management plan
- IT Disaster Recovery Plan and Business Continuity Plan
- ICT acceptable use – staff and students to note
- Annual Risk Management report

#### Recommended for Board

- Annual Audit Committee report
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

### 9.2 **Finance, Resources and Investment Committee 10 November 2025**

- Funding update - Adult Skills Fund/ Apprentices/Applications
- Projects and Commercial Update
- Management Accounts for September
- Review of College insurance

#### Recommended for Board

- Marketing Strategy 2025 – 2028
- Health and Safety Policy

#### 9.3 **Joint Audit and FRI 27 November 2025**

- Items 7.3 – 6 all recommended for approval
- Control Budget 2025-26 inc. Pay Award (to be done item 14)

#### 9.4 **Quality and Curriculum Committee held on 4 December 2025**

- Teaching Excellence report
- Curriculum KPIs
- HE Report
- Strategic Operating Plan
- Student Engagement report
- Student Survey (induction)
- Compliments and complaints report (termly)
- Safeguarding report (termly)
- Inclusion/SEND report (termly)
- **Approved** - Student Attendance Policy

#### Recommended for Board

- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Self-Assessment report
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy
- Local Offer
- SEND Policy

### 10. **RISK REVIEW**

10.1 The report provided the Board with an update on the College's strategic risks and the actions being taken. Since the strategic risk register was last presented to the Board, the Senior Leadership Team had reviewed the wording of risks within the risk register, the changes made were shared.

10.2 The Board noted that one risk had increased, relating to governor recruitment, and one risk had reduced, reflecting assurance on funding compliance following positive external reviews. Governors discussed financial, curriculum and recruitment risks, risk presentation and horizon scanning, noting that these would be kept under review. The Board reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining a concise set of strategic risks while ensuring coverage of all risk areas. The Board **noted** the paper.

### 11. **BOARD APPROVAL**

Items 11.3 – 11.12 had been recommended by Committees.

#### 11.1 Whistleblowing Policy

The revised version strengthened compliance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, Bribery Act 2010, and related legislation.

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Whistleblowing Policy.

#### 11.2 Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Following on from Audit Committee suggestions, the policy included more specific details.

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

#### 11.3 Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

#### 11.4 Local Offer

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Local offer.

11.5 SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Policy

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Policy.

11.6 Fitness to Study Policy

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Fitness to Study Policy.

11.7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

11.8 Freedom of Speech Policy

It was suggested that this be aligned with the Lettings Policy to ensure consistency and clarity.

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Freedom of Speech Policy.

11.9 External Speaker Policy

It was suggested that this be aligned with the Lettings Policy to ensure consistency and clarity.

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the External Speaker Policy.

11.10 Health and Safety Policy

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Health and Safety Policy.

11.11 Freedom of Information Policy

**RESOLVED:** The Board **approved** the Freedom Information Policy.

**12. REVIEW OF MEETING**

12.1 Governors reviewed the effectiveness of the meeting.

Board members agreed that they had all the information needed to participate fully in discussion, that the issues discussed were appropriate, that they had had enough time for thorough debate, that all decisions had been made in an appropriate manner and that there were no new risks which the Board felt needed to be addressed nor any other risk changes that had not been discussed.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked SLT and asked that appreciation of the work done by all College staff be shared. This part of the meeting concluded.

*At this point in the meeting, all staff and student Governors and Assistant Principals withdrew to allow the Board to consider item 14 in confidence.*

**13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

13.1 The next meeting was the Governor Away Day, to be held in College on Thursday January 22.

<b>Board Meetings in College</b>	<b>Away Days in College</b>
Thursday 26 March 2025 at 5.30pm	Thursday January 22, 2025 2pm – 7pm.
Thursday 2 July 2025 at 5.30pm	Thursday 25 June 2025 at 2pm – 7pm.

**14. PART TWO: CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**

14.1 **Utilities Contract**

Before moving to confidential business, the Board considered a late item of business which required Board approval.

The Board was provided with an update on the College's energy contracts, which were set to expire at the end of March 2026. A detailed analysis of the current market conditions had been carried out; it was recommended locking in a two-year contract

SF

at the current rates to maximise savings and mitigate potential price increases. As this would be at a cost of over £100k, the Board were asked to delegate this to the Principal as per the terms of the Financial Regulations, section 15.4.7.

**RESOLVED:** The Board agreed to delegate authority to the Principal to sign off on the new energy contracts as per the terms of the Financial Regulations, section 15.4.7, contingent upon College's ongoing monitoring and updates on the matter.

14.2 The minutes from this agenda item were captured in a separate, confidential minute.

**RESOLVED:** The Board approved the Control Budget 2025 -26 including the Pay Award as recommended by the FRI Committee.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and wished them a restful break over Christmas.

The meeting ended at 7.50pm.

#### Action Summary

Item	Action	Owner	Due
3.2	Items 5.6, 5.7, 6.8, 6.12 were due to be completed in the first term of 2026.		
3.2	<i><b>KPIs</b> - Delegate specific medium-level KPIs to committees. Create a streamlined view of the governor KPI dashboard.</i>	<i>SF/AL/Chair</i>	<i>January 2026</i>
3.2	<i>Develop a plan to optimise utilisation and address environmental sustainability.</i>	<i>GD</i>	<i>January 2026</i>
3.2	<i>Report HE recruitment and conversion rates to Q and C and marketing update to FRI.</i>	<i>WM</i>	<i>March 2026</i>
3.2	<i>Review estate utilisation and leases to ensure maximum efficiency and financial viability.</i>	<i>GD</i>	<i>January 2026</i>
5.3	Update the Self-Assessment Report ( <b>SAR</b> ) regularly to reflect progress and changes, and provide governors with a colour-coded, evidence-based position paper.	WM	March 2026
5.6/3.2	<b>KPIs</b> - Delegate specific medium-level KPIs to committees. Create a streamlined view of the governor KPI dashboard.	AL/AB/SF	PSG Agenda January 2026
5.8	Review and refine the <b>marketing strategy</b> to include more detailed planning, specific targets, and actions for HE growth.	GD	January 2026
6.7	Prepare a capital report to provide visibility on capital spending and its impact on cash balances.	GD	January 2026
11.8	Freedom of Speech/External Speakers Policies - align with the Lettings Policy to ensure consistency and clarity.	SF	ASAP