Agreed by the Board, 21/9/26

HART LEARNING GROUP

Minutes of a meeting of the Hart Learning Group Board, held on Monday 6 July 2026, starting at 16.00, in Room B103 on the Hitchin campus.

PRESENT

Philip Moore (Chair)
Kate Barclay (Vice-chair)
Graham Bateman
Toni Beck
Claire Cahoon
Richard Cooksey
Kit Davies (CEO/Principal)
Stylianos Kampakis
Geoff Lambert
Claire McCafferty
Grace Wade
Richard Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE

Brett Clarke (incoming staff governor)
Paul Harte (Group Finance Director)
Lore Hayward (incoming Student Governor)
Lizzie Jones (Corporate Services Director)
Lorna McCallum (Executive Director-Apprenticeships and Partnerships)
Keith Turner (Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Inclusion)
Richard Ward (Director of Governance)
Robert Dale (Company Secretary)

WELCOME

- The Chair welcomed several new or incoming Board members:
  - **Claire Cahoon**. Claire was an experienced NHS professional who has worked in a range of clinical and non-clinical roles. She held a Masters in Leadership and Management in Health and was a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. Claire had agreed to join our Quality & Curriculum Committee.
  - **Graham Bateman**. Graham was a highly experienced governance and compliance professional with three decades of senior leadership experience within the financial services sector. Graham had agreed to join our Audit Committee.
  - **Brett Clarke.** Brett was Head of Creative Arts and succeeds Liz Chatman as Staff governor with effect from 1 August 2026. Brett would take over from Liz on the Quality & Curriculum Committee.
  - **Lore Hayward**. Lore had been elected as Student governor for 2026/27 to succeed Grace Wade with effect from 1 August 2026. Lore would take over from Grace on the Quality & Curriculum Committee.
  - The Chair also welcomed **Richard Ward**, the new Director of Governance who would take over from Robert Dale from 1 August 2026

ITEM 1A: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- Jacquie Bamber who was in the process of moving house, and Liz Chatman (Staff Governor) who was on maternity leave.

ITEM 1B: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Kit Davies declared that as well as being a Member and Trustee of the Hart Schools Trust, he was a member of the Board of WENTA, of the Stevenage Redevelopment Board and of the Hertfordshire Virtual School.

ITEM 1C: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- Minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2026 were approved as an accurate record of proceedings and would be signed accordingly.

ITEM 1D: MATTERS ARISING/ACTIONS

- Actions had been addressed as follows:
  - Add Leadership Development programme schedule and outline training content to next Q&C Committee agenda. **Action complete**. The Q&C Committee would consider this in the autumn term.
  - Update the diagram of responsibilities and publish the revised policy. **Action complete**. The revised policy had been published.
  - Issue diary appointments for 2026/27 meetings. **Action complete.** All meeting appointments had been issued.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS

ITEM 2: FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC VISION

- The CEO gave an update on the Strategic Vision approved by the Board in 2025. This was an evolution of earlier plans built around five strategic themes. The aim was to explore how NHC could move beyond the safe and traditional to become more innovative and sector-leading. Foundations were good; there was no debt and a strong cash position. Quality was strong, with NHC currently 38th of c220 English colleges for outcomes. Internally, teams were working towards being more collaborative, communicating better and understanding each other's needs/priorities.
- At the same time, there were many external pressures, from education policy changes, to funding challenges and a disrupted global economy. Practice had to evolve.
- The presentation shared high level statements about the strategic vision and outlined six key projects in 2026/27 contributing to this. These had been developed with input from the wider management team and were supported by detailed plans and targets. Key training covered leadership development with curriculum staff enthusiastically undertaking action research projects and then reflecting on and testing solutions that emerged. 'Back to the floor' training was intended to ensure tutors kept up to date with employer expectations and practices in their specialist areas.
- There were technical developments including preparation for new T-level programmes and engagement with employers within curriculum time. The appointment of a Head of Organisational Development would ensure training and development continued to be driven forward.

Question: *What would the new approach towards collaborative working do to help create an 'anchor institution'?* This was expected to drive quality, which influenced reputation, which ensured stakeholders recognised what the college could offer. This was evident in the

strong relationship with Stevenage Borough Council, which had backed the college by investing £4.5m in the Town Centre Campus, JobCentre Plus, which had chosen NHC to be its provider for the Hemel Hempstead Youth Hub, and key clients such as the NHS.

Question: *What was NHC's USP?* The great student experience and the quality of delivery encapsulated in the 'Stay Close, Go Far' marketing concept. New roles in marketing and business development would help push the college's key messaging and celebrate the overall narrative, not just individual successes, vital though that was. It would also be important to reflect on how regional leadership could be developed.

Question: *How sure could the Board be that the six priority curriculum areas were sufficient to meet local needs?* The priority areas are those emphasised by external stakeholders such as the Employer Responsible Body (ERB) but they would not be the only curriculum areas delivered. Delivery for the 'everyday economy' (Hair & Beauty, Catering, Business Studies, Public Service etc) remained important for Hertfordshire and all would continue to receive investment. The priority areas would be targets for growth and expansion.

Question: *What kind of metrics would be needed to demonstrate relevance?* Ultimately, the national direction was on destinations and the kind of measures would be around reducing the number of NEETs, increasing the number of Level 4+ qualification achievements and increasing employment. Many of these were not within the college's control, but a narrative showing how it contributed to these results would be important.

Question: *When would announcements about local government reorganisation be made and what opportunities might they create?* The announcement was expected in the middle of July. A split into two authorities looked more likely than four and four more likely than three. There might be a chance to benefit from Stevenage Borough Council wishing to spend its remaining Towns Fund allocation before the change. In several possible outcomes, NHC might have to work more closely with Oaklands as their areas intersected.

Question: *What was the reason for caution over a future Ofsted outcome?* The self-assessment review report presented a good picture and overall made a Strong outcome possible, but there were still some areas of inconsistency.

Question: *Would that be true in the longer term?* Guidance from the Chief Inspector had been that colleges should expect to be 'Expected Standard". Because of the change from a 'best fit' judgement, in order to achieve a standard, every criterion linked to that standard had to be met. The team was aiming for consistently Expected and Strong judgements, with perhaps some Exceptionals – though these were very difficult to achieve.

Question: *What did the Digital Transformation Strategy look like?* An appointment to a Director of Digital Technologies post was under way, with five candidates to be interviewed. It was about more than having good IT systems and support, but how these were embedded and integrated into operational delivery.

- The Board welcomed the opportunity to review and discuss the Vision and Strategy. The CEO would reflect on the questions and challenges, such as concerning how to define and promote an 'anchor institution'. Measures and KPIs would be considered and brought forward in the next academic year, and the Board would certainly be properly briefed on a future Ofsted inspection.

- **The Board endorsed** the five year Strategy and Vision for 2025-2030.

Action: Bring forward broad financial projections to support the five-year vision with other deliverables.

ITEM 3: 2026/27 ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

- The Board discussed how the College was responding to national, regional and local skills priorities and meeting its statutory Local Needs duty, founded on five themes:
    - A high-quality, responsive, careers-focused curriculum.
    - Consistently exceptional teaching and learning across all areas of the curriculum.
    - Culture and people development which builds ambitious, high performing individuals and teams.
    - Strengthened financial sustainability powering reinvestment.
    - Strong local, regional and national engagement that celebrates our brand/reputation and expands our portfolio.
- Key areas for the latest version addressed the Engineering, Defence and Advanced Manufacturing offers, the new Town Centre Campus (TCC), the college's outstanding provision for learners with additional needs and its inclusive culture including activity to support people not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs), together with employer partnerships and the Creative Arts provision.
- Governors recognised that the limited size of the statement meant that not all its provision could be addressed – such as that aimed at the 'everyday economy' but that it provided a clear narrative about how the college was meeting local, regional and national skills needs and priorities.
- **The Board approved** the publication of the 2026 Accountability Statement.

Action: Ensure the publication of the Accountability Statement before the DfE deadline of 31 July 2026.

ITEM 4: 2026/27 BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET

- Governors considered the proposed business plan and budget for 2026/27 in the context of what was expected to be the best financial outcome for the college for more than a decade. The forecast Financial Health Rating for 2025/26 was forecast to be Outstanding, creating a good foundation for the following year.
- The 2026/27 budget proposal projected a year-end surplus of £1.3m including a contingency of c£0.5m and provision for a pay award from 1 February 2027. The budget forecast revenue up by 5.4% overall, primarily because of increased 16-18 study programme numbers and higher funding rates. Other revenue lines were forecast to be flat or to fall. Adult Skills Fund (ASF) revenue, for example would be £1.3m lower, with a net impact of £0.5m, and the Apprenticeship budget assumed a hit of c£250k from the restrictions on eligibility for support from the Skills and Growth Fund – although the team was aiming to recover that in their operational plans. HE income would decline as a result of the winding down of the CECOS partnership.
- Pay costs were forecast to rise by £2.9m (13.8%), making the pay sots ratio c68% compared with the FE Commissioner's target ratio of 65%. The budget incorporated the 2025/26 pay award and the increase in employer NI contributions, and an assumption about a pay award in 2026/27. It also assumed that all posts would be filled throughout the year, including new recruitment. Several options to mitigate the

increased pay cost ratio existed and it was likely that it would actually be closer to 66%. The plans included some new posts to address strategic needs – such as digital leadership - and to meet higher student numbers, particularly those with additional needs. No final decision had yet been made about the level of the 2026/27 pay award. Governors noted that non-pay costs were forecast to fall compared with 2025/26, mainly reflecting the exit from Units 1 to 5 at Fulton Close.

- The expected 2025/26 EBITDA result was forecast to be £3.1m and the proposed budget for 2026/27 forecast £3m. Th 2024/25 EBITDA had been £1.2m but this was after making provisions for dilapidations of c£1.4m, so a consistent positive position was being maintained. Governors also noted with pleasure the information showing that, excluding investment in the new Hitchin Sports Centre, the college had been able to invest c£19m in its estate and infrastructure over the previous ten years, and in 2025.26 had added £6.4m to this. Further capital investment was outlined in the proposed budget.

- The Finance Committee had reviewed the proposed budget. They had advised that the Board be made aware of the potential cost and revenue risks to the budget and the planned mitigations, but also recommended the budget to the Board.

- The top 3 strategic risks were considered to be:

  - The 'Funding vs inflation' gap.

  - Workforce/pay pressure.

  - Income mix volatility (ASF + apprenticeships, SEND/HNF and 16-18 growth).

- The key mitigations in this proposal were a **£1.36m surplus and strong EBITDA (8.3%)** within a budget that included extra cost baked into the pay line (not yet fully committed) and a further £500k contingency in the non-pay line. These mitigations would be further reviewed once the draft actuals to 31 July 2026 were available in August (for example, government announcements on the 2026/27 school-teacher pay award and college funding would need to be factored in but were probably cost neutral or slightly better in respect of this budget).

Question: *How long might the better financial picture continue?* There were headwinds appearing, such as the SEND funding review, the impact of ongoing local government reform, and a drop in the number of 16-18 year old learners – the peak being in 2029/30 with a fall thereafter. Stevenage was currently in the top national quartile for population growth but would decline along with the rest of the country over the next five years.

Question: *How secure was the forecast for 16-18 recruitment in 2026/27?* Growth in 2025/26 would secure the forecast funding level for next year, but if the higher targets were not met, there would be an impact in 2027/28. A proportion of current growth derived from improving progression rates (ie students moving from a level 2 to a level 3 qualification, and managing costs through keeping a check on group sizes and staff utilisation. There were areas where very strong recruitment was anticipated and other areas where close monitoring and support would be needed.

Question: *Had the forecast for next year been sufficiently prudent over expected apprenticeship numbers?* Half of the forecast was made up of progressing learners; the balance would need to come from new recruitment. While the budget assumed a reduction against this year's performance, operationally, there were new products to offset those that were no longer eligible for support from the Skills and Growth Levy and the team would work to exceed the budget.

Question: *What was the Innovation Funding referred to on page 49 of the pack?* This was for the development of new curriculum and had been used to support the creation of sustainable construction elements within the provision.

Question: *Where did the college's own Skills and Growth levy contributions get spent?* HR held the budget and information about this and at present, not all of it was used. The question was a useful reminder to have another look at this.

- **The Board approved** the 2026/27 business plan and budget.

ITEM 5: STAKEHOLDER MAP/PLAN FOR SENIOR LEVEL RELATIONSHIPS

- Governors considered a presentation on the development of the stakeholder map and associated partnership strategy. The first phase had aimed to establish: (a) baseline data – how many employers and stakeholders were already being engaged with; (b) to identify which of this group could be considered 'high value'; and (c) to develop a customer relationship management system (CRM).

- The work so far showed that there were some excellent relationships, but that it was hard to identify and measure impact. In many cases, the employers themselves were not aware of all the ways in which they already interacted with the college. The database now held nearly 1,200 employers and stakeholders, almost 900 of which were active. 221 had been considered 'high value' by heads of department, but some of these were only 'high value' for that department, whereas others had multiple engagements. In all, 168 were considered to have high levels of influence and interactions with the college. The resulting 'heat map' showed no surprises, and of the 27 most active contacts, most were larger employers. Ideally, some more SMEs would be good to bring into this cohort.

- The college had adopted Grofar as a CRM. This was partly because the functionality available in ProEngage was not good enough for our purposes. We had joined with Hertford Regional College (HRC) to conduct a procurement, and the application was also used by Oakland, so it would help to have a common tool that could support regional benchmarking. GroFar was being rolled-out over the summer as an off-the-shelf product, meaning only user training was needed and the work already done on stakeholder mapping could be updated directly. This would generate measurable outputs and help the team deliver better partnerships and stronger learner outcomes. SMT Leads had been identified for the key 'high value' stakeholders.

- Governors were pleased to see the progress made believing that the information and insights generated would also help show Ofsted how NHC was working with employers.

Question: *Was there a relationship between the size of an employer and the quality and depth of interactions?* Reporting from Grofar in future would help provide an answer; it was a good question to ask.

Question: *Did the existing stakeholder map match the current and future stakeholder priorities?* Broadly speaking, yes, but again future reporting would help answer that more securely. There were different need and approaches in different areas. For example, Creative Arts had connections with smaller employers at a strategic level, while Hair & Beauty's links were much more transactional.

Question: *Could intelligence about questions put to governors during inspections under the new framework be shared with the Board?* Yes, there would be a briefing in the new academic year to ensure that the Board was fully equipped with information from Grofar.

Question: *How could Grofar reflect the kind of cross-curricular activity being undertaken by the Creative and Hospitality teams?* Appropriate tags would be applied within the system; reporting could be undertaken against a range of categories not just the curriculum area.

Question: *How could we demonstrate the intersection between stakeholder engagements and the college's values?* This would be a question for the next phase of work.

Question: *Was there a plan for increasing the number of 'high value' employers?* Not yet; the stakeholder mapping exercise was leading into the next phase to look at engagement. Increasing the quality and quantity of employer engagements would be part of that.

- Governors congratulated the team on the excellent progress made and looked forward to future reports.

- **The Board accepted** the report.

Action: Bring to the board a full stakeholder engagement plan including material stakeholders with roles for governors.

OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 6: STUDENT GOVERNOR REPORT

- The Board welcomed the incoming student governor (Lore Hayward) who was a second-year student on a T-level Childcare programme.

- Student concerns about the content of the Personal and Academic Development curriculum had been taken on board and a significant redesign and restructure was being carried out to minimise the risk that students would repeat the same content two years running. There would be a bigger focus on using second year learners to contribute to mentoring sessions, and more content on careers and skills.

- Grace said that she would continue to work with the college until September, including supporting Freshers' Fair events, giving advice on practical matters and promoting the role of the student governor and student ambassadors. Six ambassadors would support Lore Hayward and had specific projects allocated to them.

- Governors thanked Grace Wade for her outstanding contribution to the Board during the past year and wished her every success at University. She had been instrumental in building a far more effective structure to ensure that student voices could be heard clearly by the Board; a significant legacy.

- **The Board accepted** the report.

ITEM 7: STAFF VOICE

- Staff Voice champions were being identified with the plan to roll this structure out across all departments. Detailed feedback arising from the staff survey would be collated and reported in the autumn term.

- The staff CPD day had been successful and allowed teams to share action research outcomes, and to link these to the 2026/27 priorities and wider strategy. This process had supported the sharing of best practice and raised awareness and understanding of the current strategy.

- **The Board accepted** the report.

ITEM 8: CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OVERVIEW

- The Board welcomed a positive report, confirming a strong financial and quality position. Last year's results placed the college in the top quartile in England, with Maths and English results better still, and its financial health rating for 2025/26 was expected to be Outstanding.

- Students and staff continue to receive outside recognition including Grace Wade, shortlisted for the UNLOC Student Governor of the Year award. The BBC also spent time on campus and brought the college to the attention of a TV audience in the Natalie Cassidy Documentary – Caring together.

- Overall, 2025/26 had been a successful year with some significant projects being concluded including the launch of a new Engineering offer and the exit from five of the six Fulton Close units – expected to be on time and within budget. The summer results season was awaited with interest and confidence.

- Stevenage Borough Council continued to be interest in developing a new Engineering facility and an approach from Weston College (one of the Advanced Manufacturing TECs) to ask NHC to become a delivery partner opened access to some capital funding and – more importantly – expertise that would help develop the Engineering apprenticeship offer. Proximity to Airbus's site in Stevenage was a key factor, as was the existing relationship between Airbus and Hart L&D.

- **The Board accepted** the report.

ITEM 9: PROPOSED SUB-CONTRACTOR ALLOCATIONS 2026/27

- The Board discussed how to allocate the subcontractor allocation for 2026/27, consisting of a non-devolved Adult Skills Fund budget of £250,000 (which could rise to £770k in year) and a Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) allocation from the Greater London Authority (GLA) of £79,797.

- It was proposed to allocate both funding streams (amounting to c£330k overall, well within the 23% maximum) to Aspire as its model met local needs and priorities, aligned with Get Hertfordshire Working objectives and matched the Group's vision of Employability provision. Other proposals had not reached the same level of alignment with NHC's strategic goals.

- In addition to Aspire, NHC intended to continue working with the Emil Dale Academy and the King's Trust. The former was part of the strategic initiative to broaden the college's creative arts offering while the latter delivered Certificate in Employment, teamwork and community skills to students who were not in education and, in some cases were hard to reach. Both complemented existing delivery, helped to meet local and regional skills needs and contributed to national priorities around NEETs.

- **The Board approved** the proposed allocation of £330k to Aspire and the continuation of working arrangements with the Emil Dale Academy and the King's Trust.

ITEM 10: GOVERNOR IN COLLEGE REPORTS

- The Board received two excellent reports from the recent Governor in College event which had taken place at the Hitchin campus and included visits to Creative Arts, Catering and Sport and Public Services. The feedback and insights were particularly welcomed by the curriculum leaders. The tasting menu had been greatly appreciated!

Question: *How would recommendations arising from such reports be followed up and monitored?* Feedback from governor visits would be included in curriculum action planning. A section would be added to the report template to enable a Management Response' to be recorded which could be added – for example – to the Board's Matters Arising list.

Action: Amend Governor in College report templates to include a management response section.

Action: Develop a mechanism for recording and monitoring the progress of actions and recommendations arising from governor reports.

- Governors noted that the students they had met had been articulate and passionate about their learning, and the event had been a first class showcase for the college. There were clear opportunities to link with the stakeholder management strategy and cross-curriculum work already under way.

Question: How could cross-curriculum working be developed successfully across several campuses? That was a good question and one the Curriculum teams would explore further as their practice developed.

- Governors noted that as this was the third event taking place at Hitchin, the next session should take the opportunity to visit another campus.

- **The Board accepted** the excellent written reports and thanked governors for producing them.

ITEM 11: AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT AND CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

- The Audit Committee was not meeting until 14 July, when it would discuss the Risk Register, and review two internal audit reports and the Internal Audit Progress Report. It would also consider and if appropriate approve the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan for 2026/27 and the external audit plan for 2025/26. It would receive an update on the Whistleblowing case and standing reports on Fraud and Whistleblowing and Gifts and Hospitality. It would approve its 2026/27 Calendar of meetings.

- The Board noted that two new risks had been added to the register, the first concerning eligibility to support from the Skills and Growth Levy and the second concerning academic fraud. One risk (about capital funding) had been closed as the funds had been expended before the clawback date.

- **The Board accepted** the report.

ITEM 12: FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT AND P10 (MAY 2026) MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS REPORT

- The Committee had met on 25 June to review the proposed 2026/27 business plan and budget (Item 3) and which it had recommended to the Board. Governors noted that the Committee had also discussed the latest Management Accounts report (P9 (May 2026)) and the progress of Major Projects.

- **The Board accepted** the report.

ITEM 13: QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE REPORT

- The Committee had met on 21 May 2026 and would meet again on 16 July. The meeting had considered how the introduction of Quality Focus Areas was expected to

further drive quality improvement and noted that the first QFA report had looked at whether the college's provision delivered Value Added, using analysis of ALPS data to assess this. This report had concluded that "the majority of curriculum areas are either in the black or the red [*red in this context being good!*]. However, further work is needed to ensure students in different inclusion categories such as gender, prior attainment, and LLDD are supported to achieve in line with their peers."

- Standing reports from Hart L&D and from the college showed a good position at this point in the year, with forecast achievements continuing to trend upwards, with progression and retention all on target. Attendance remained a challenge and was below the college's aspirational target but remained good compared with sector data.

- Most actions identified in the 2025/26 Quality Development Plan had been completed or were on target. Since the last review, one Quality and Curriculum risk had been added, concerning changes in eligibility to support from the Skills and Growth Levy.

- The Committee received a confidential briefing on the Whistleblowing disclosures and progress with the accompanying investigations.

- **The Board accepted** the report.

ITEM 14: REMUNERATION COMMITTEE REPORT

- The Committee had met on 13 May 2026 when it received a report confirming that contractual provisions held by a small number of staff in respect of performance bonus arrangements had now been removed, following a consultation and buy-out offer approved by DfE.

- The Committee had reviewed data from the Association of Colleges' (AoC) annual Senior Pay Survey showing that senior pay was broadly consistent with the median for comparable colleges. It also considered the Gender Pay Gap report for 2024/25, showing a reduction in the median and mean pay gaps compared with 2023/24.

- The first Ethnicity Pay Gap (2024/25) showed an overall pay gap in favour of employees from non-white backgrounds, although some roles had a different result (eg senior staff). The ethnic composition of the staff population broadly reflected the composition of the local community (based on 2021 census data) though the student population was somewhat more diverse.

- The Committee had considered a range of factors affecting the budget provision for a pay award in 2026/27, noting that a final decision would be made later in the year.

- Since the meeting, government had announced a pay award for school-teachers, and provided part of the funding required to meet it. Also, and for the first time, it had done something similar for FE colleges, using an approach which will help colleges like NHC which have large adult and apprenticeship provision. It was not yet clear exactly how much extra funding would be provided for NHC and no decision on a 2026/27 pay award will be made until this is known.

- The Committee had reviewed its terms of reference and recommended some minor changes to the Board.

- **The Board accepted** the report **and approved** the adjustments to the Terms of Reference recommended to it by the Remuneration Committee.

ITEM 15: SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

- The Committee received its Terms of Reference and made a non-material amendment specifically confirming that 'planning and overseeing the appointment of new Board members' included consideration of succession planning.

- The Committee noted progress with Board recruitment, including the appointment of two non-executive governors, the election of a student governor for 2026/27 and the nomination of a new staff governor.

- The Committee reviewed the expected composition of the Board and its committees in 2026/27. It agreed that Graham Bateman should be asked to join the Audit Committee and Claire Cahoon to join the Quality & Curriculum Committee. A vacancy would need to be filled on the Remuneration Committee during the early autumn term. Members had agreed that the main focus of the next meeting should be succession planning.

- The Committee reviewed an outline Induction programme and endorsed the content but suggested that it be restructured with a target timeline for completion.

- The Committee accepted an outline proposal for Board training, covering mandatory on-line Safeguarding and Prevent training for all governors, Induction training for newly-appointed governors and the longer-term Education and Training Foundation (ETF) governance development programme.

- The Committee reviewed current skills audit data, and agreed that there was reasonably broad coverage across the Board. Governors also approved the content of a Board self-evaluation survey to be undertaken shortly, noting that a full External Board Review (EBR) would need to take place in late spring or early summer 2027.

- **The Board accepted** the report **and approved** the adjustments to the Terms of Reference proposed by the Search and Governance Committee.

ITEM 16: POLICIES REVIEW

- Six policies had been provided for review. Four related to Fees and Charges and were expected to be refreshed annually before the start of the year to which they related. The main changes were to the dates in the policy relevant to 2026/27 and there are some minor changes in values.

- The other two policies had proposed amendments highlighted using Track Changes. The Anti-fraud policy had been reviewed in the light of the recent Whistleblowing disclosures and was considered to stand up well to this examination. However, awareness of the seriousness and risks of academic malpractice was probably not high enough and further training would be undertaken in the new academic year.

- The Freedom of Speech Policy had been reviewed to incorporate the latest statutory duties and guidance from the Office for Students about how to approach Freedom of Speech questions. Governors were content with the changes proposed

- **The Board approved** the revised Fees and Charges policies, the Anti-fraud and Freedom of Speech policies.

Action: Publish the revised policies.

ITEM 17: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- None.

ITEM 18: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Monday 21 September 2026, starting at 18.30, by videoconference (Microsoft Teams).

THANKS AND VALEDICTORY

- The Chair thanked Governors recent and long-serving for their commitment and support during 2025/26. The college could not do what it does without their professionalism, dedication and regular engagement. In particular, he recorded thanks to Jacquie Bamber, Liz Chatman (staff governor) and Grace Wade (student governor) whose contributions had been substantial and appreciated.

- On behalf of the whole Board, the Chair recorded his appreciation for the hard work and enthusiasm of the college's staff team, who demonstrated great care and concern for helping their students achieve their full potential. It had been a busy year, but the college was in excellent shape to move on to the next stage.

- Finally, the Chair thanked the retiring Governance Professional for his service over the previous ten and a half years. His advice and support had always been of value to the Board and colleagues wished him a long and happy retirement.

- Governors looked forward to a great summer break and a successful new academic year.

ACTION LOG

Meeting	Minute Reference	Summary of Action	Who	When
06/07/26	2.	Bring forward broad financial projections to support the five-year vision with other deliverables.	Kit Davies	14/09/26
06/07/26	3.	Ensure publication of the Accountability Statement before the DfE deadline of 31 July.	Kit Davies	31/07/26
06/07/26	5.	Bring to the board a full stakeholder engagement plan including material stakeholders with roles for governors.	Lorna McCallum	14/09/26
06/07/26	10.	Amend Governor in College report templates to include a management response section.	Richard Ward	30/09/26
06/07/26	10.	Develop a mechanism for recording and monitoring the progress of actions and recommendations arising from governor reports.	Richard Ward	30/09/26
06/07/26	16.	Publish the revised policies.	Richard Ward	31/07/26