

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD: on Thursday 9 October 2025 at 16:00 in 4F07-DHB Boardroom

Present	In Attendance
Bulbul Barrett (Chair) (MS Teams)	Chris Malish (DCEO Finance & Corporate Services)
Chris Webb (CEO/Accounting Officer)	Sarah Towan (Vice Principal of Recruitment & Communications)
Lendy Ho	Liz Leek (DCEO Quality & Curriculum)
David Merrett	Allison Booth (Governance Director)
	Rachel Henry (Deputy Governance Director)
Apologies	
John Williams	

L/J Denotes the time any individual left/ re-joined the meeting.

Item	Action
1. <u>Introductions, Apologies for Absence and Disclosures of Interest</u>	
1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
1.2 Apologies were noted for John Williams.	
1.3 There were no disclosures of interest.	
2. <u>Chair's Action</u>	
2.1 There had been no use of Chair's actions since the last meeting	
3. <u>Minutes of the meeting on 3 July 2025 (including confidential annex)</u>	
3.1 RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2025, including the confidential annex, were approved as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chair.	
4. <u>Matters Arising</u>	
4.1 The Matters Arising Report was reviewed: 17.7 – <i>The VPF&CS to provide an update on Inprint & Design at the next F&GP meeting</i> – The DCEO F&CS would provide an update at the next meeting. 10.2 – <i>The VPF&CS to explore the interest rates being offered by other banks</i> – The DCEO F&CS advised that this was currently being explored and that an update would be provided at the next meeting.	

	<p><i>4.4 – The VPF&CS to report on the developments in meeting additional space requirements for oversubscribed areas of the College offer</i> – The College was currently in discussions with the DfE, the Local Authority and WYCA to obtain the sufficient funding required to address the need for the extra capacity required, due to the increase in student numbers.</p> <p>The motor engineering provision would relocate to Junction Mills once the building project was completed, thereby making the Bowling Back Lane site available for construction provision. Extension of the BBL lease was being explored.</p> <p>The DCEO F&CS advised that a visit had recently been conducted to view excess space within the University of Bradford and one location had been identified as having potential to house delivery of construction courses for adults. The College was also engaging with LocatED, which assisted providers in locating spaces to deliver provision.</p> <p>With the Council estimating that an additional 400-1000 16-17-year-old students may require NEET or PLW provision, the College was exploring the feasibility of renovating its Little Germany site to expand capacity.</p>	
4.2	<p>Members noted the need for prompt and proactive action, along with further investment, to expand capacity – particularly in the oversubscribed areas of Construction, Engineering, and PLW provision – and acknowledged the College's efforts in engaging with the DfE and Council on this matter.</p>	
5.	<p><u>DCEO F&CS Report</u></p> <p>The DCEO F&CS introduced his report, drawing members attention to the following specific items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F&GP data dashboard, noting the Q4 forecast outcome position of 'Good' Financial health; the EBITDA fell slightly short of the budget, though there were no bank covenant breaches. • Student recruitment position, especially the HE position. • Q4 forecast position, specifically the changes since the first issuing of the full year management accounts. • People Strategy Update, regarding the organisational changes and potential changes coming as part of the employment rights bill. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estates plan, mainly the offer received for the Appleton Building. • AOB, noting the position on the pay claim from UCU. 	
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Strategic Plan Implementation

6.	<u>F&GP Data Dashboard</u>	
6.1	<p>The DCEO F&CS presented the F&GP Data Dashboard which provided the final position on Q4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EBITDA % of Income (excluding capital income) - 6.6% - Reduction due to fee error, though still above FEC benchmark of 6%. • Capital Programme (Internally Funded) - 4,198 - Mainly driven by the match for Garden Mills being paid this academic year. • Capital Programme (Externally Funded) - 10,615 - Driven by the delays in the FTC development. • New business within 16-18 student recruitment was lower than target, which had been anticipated from Q2. This had impacted the total 16-18 student recruitment figures which were also below target. • Higher Professional & Technical student recruitment numbers were lower than projected. • Apprenticeships – the targeted number of new starts was not reached, however there was a higher proportion of higher value starts, which ensured the budget in this area was met. • Advertising Value Equivalent for positive PR - £5.9m - At the start of the 2025 financial year, the media monitoring service changed its method for measuring and valuing AVE, which had contributed to the shortfall against the £50m target. 	
6.2	<p>Income delivery was below plan in the following areas, resulting in overall income for the 2024–25 financial year being slightly below target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Fee Income • Advanced Learner Loans • 14-16 Learner Fees (Schools) • Other Income 	
6.3	<p>Q. What does 'Other Income' cover?</p> <p>A. Project income, trade income from the College Canteen and some of the courses which are at HE level but not validated by HE.</p>	
6.4	<p>Q. What is the reason for the drop in the staff participation rate?</p> <p>A. The timing of the 'Great Place to Work' survey alongside the Staff Survey is believed to have contributed to survey fatigue. The</p>	

	<p>need to improve participation rates was raised with HoDs during PR3 meetings. Although the participation rate dropped to 61.3%, overall staff engagement remains high.</p> <p>6.5 The DCEO F&CS advised that work was ongoing to triangulate data on space utilisation and to review room usage, with the aim of ensuring that available space was used as efficiently as possible throughout the day and identifying where additional space was required for specific provision.</p> <p>It was noted that room usage was largely influenced by the type of provision being delivered and the location of this provision. For example, vocational technical spaces in certain buildings could only be used by specific cohorts and therefore room utilisation figures for these areas were expected to be lower. The Chair requested that this be considered in the dashboard commentary.</p> <p>6.6 ACTION: The DCEO F&CS to add narrative to the Room Utilisation and Room Usage metrics on the Dashboard.</p>	
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Finance		
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p>	<p><u>Student Recruitment</u></p> <p>The VPR&C provided an overview on student recruitment:</p> <p>16-18 Study Programmes: Strong enrolment period so far; Construction trades and Engineering courses were now on waiting lists. Enrolment would continue. There had been considerable intake into PLW E3/L1 provision again.</p> <p>The CEO highlighted the ongoing tension between the College's commitment to remaining open and accessible to 16–18-year-olds and the lack of guaranteed additional funding to support any further increase in student numbers. While there was a strong desire to meet the needs of disadvantaged and deprived students within the borough, the challenge remained in balancing this commitment with the need for long-term financial sustainability. It was noted that there was a limit as to how much the College could afford to provide without additional funding support.</p> <p>Adults: Enrolment for vocational programmes was looking strong and ESOL, English & Maths had received large volumes of applications.</p> <p>400k additional funding had been secured to meet the Youth Guarantee, to support 18-21-year-old disadvantaged learners in Construction.</p>	<p>DCEO F&CS</p>

	<p>Apprenticeships: The pipeline was strong, but it remained too early to report on recruitment versus target, as onboarding continued throughout October.</p> <p>Higher Education: Several courses had been closed due to low applications. The College had supported learners to transfer to other courses as appropriate. The anticipated impact on income would be managed with department budgets at Q1. The final enrolment picture would not be clear until mid-October.</p> <p>Members had an in-depth discussion on the changing shape of HE provision and were advised this would be picked up within 'Project Change' – the College's HE revision project. It was noted that the market was becoming increasingly competitive around HE and the College's approach and place in the market required further consideration.</p> <p>The CEO advised that the gap between available income from Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) intakes was narrowing. While competition in the HE sector remained intense, the College currently faced no competition within the FE remit. FE provision continued to offer greater financial stability, largely due to the lagged funding methodology. Whilst the FE income stream was the College's largest and most secure, its HE income stream was limited, with provision having decreased in recent years. The College was focusing its efforts on areas of clear demand within Bradford, such as teacher training and social work, while noting a decline in enrolment in arts-related courses.</p>	
<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p><u>Draft Management Accounts (2024-25)</u></p> <p>The DCEO F&CS advised that the management accounts had been revised since they were circulated in August, this was following the identification of an error in the HE fees accounting, which had caused a reduction in some of the original figures. The Corporation and F&GP Chairs had been notified and prevention measures had been put in place with the relevant areas to ensure this was not repeated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The College's position of 'Good' Financial Health had not changed, however, the EBITDA percentage of income had reduced to 6.62%, compared to the annual budgeted figure of 7.17%. Though the position of EBITDA excluding restructuring costs was 7.4%, versus a budget of 7.3%. Some of the reduction from the previous report of EBITDA of £4.78m was due to higher than anticipated restructuring costs – the final 	

	<p>cost was £428k, compared to the circa £200k cost originally forecast. This was particularly impacted by pension strain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff costs were £0.47m adverse to budget for the year. As a percentage of income, staff costs were 66.60%, compared to an annual budgeted figure of 65.76%. This was a result of the pay rise being 0.5% higher than budgeted and the one-off payment made in July; all of which was mainly covered by additional 16-18 funding. • Non-pay costs were £0.87m favourable to budget for the year across a number of areas; driven by several factors, including a one-off VAT refund of £0.62m and £0.21m of costs covered by Capital Grant funding. • At the end of July, the cash position was £6.06m ahead of budget. This was despite starting the year with an opening cash balance £3.54m below budget; primarily driven by £10.21m lower net capital expenditure year to date. • Capitalisation of the major projects completed during the year had now been finalised. As this spend would affect covenant calculations, these figures had not yet been provided. However, it remained expected that all covenants would be met. Depreciation for the Capital projects was still to be finalised and once this had been confirmed, the relevant information would be shared. • The forecast Financial Health at year end was 'Good'. 	
Resources		
9.	<p><u>People Strategy Update</u></p> <p>The DCEO F&CS provided an overview on the People Strategy:</p> <p><u>9.1 People Services Report</u></p> <p>The report included a summary of the key people services metrics for the academic year 2024/25.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been no major issues with staff attendance throughout the year. • The College now employed in excess of 1000 staff members. • Q4 had an increase in leavers due to the reorganisation and VR leavers; the final turnover was 15.2% against the target of 15%. • The absence rate for Q4 reflected an increase in days lost compared to the same period last year, with an overall absence rate of 4%. Staff absence remained within tolerance and the HR Team continued to support Line Managers on the absence management processes. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of casual/zero-hour contracts had reduced, with a robust process in place to deal with these. • Recruitment continued to be a challenge, particularly around construction and engineering, with Leeds College of Building offering marginally higher pay rates for assessors and lecturers. <p><u>9.2</u> <u>9.2 Organisational Changes</u></p> <p>Following Business Planning process for 2024-25, proposed organisational changes were completed through formal collective consultation and all changes were completed by 31 July 2025. This minimised any impact to the student experience for the start of the new curriculum year.</p> <p>The mitigation of redundancies was made through matrix scoring for redundancy pools, staff securing other jobs in the College and Voluntary Redundancies. It was noted that Trade Union engagement had been positive throughout the process.</p> <p><u>9.3</u> <u>9.3 Employment Rights Bill</u></p> <p>The UK Government was undergoing an extensive period of change in the field of employment. The changes fell under the plan to 'Make Work Pay' which was part of Labour's election manifesto. From this plan, the Employment Rights Bill was the primary Bill to deliver these proposals. There were also additional bills, amendments to codes of practice and consultations.</p> <p>The UK Government's plan to 'Make Work Pay' changes multiple aspects of employment law. A commitment to deliver most of these proposals was laid out in the Employment Rights Bill. On 1 July 2025, a roadmap for the delivery of multiple aspects of the Employment Rights Bill was published. This roadmap was a list of dates that employers could expect these rights to be consulted on, change and/or come into force.</p> <p>The DCEO F&CS summarised the key changes, which would necessitate the reviewing and updating of existing HR policies and procedures as the law changed. An Employment Rights Bill implementation timeline was provided and members were advised that further details would be shared when available.</p>	
10. 10.1	<p><u>Estates Plan Update</u></p> <p>The DCEO F&CS provided the following Estates update:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire remedial work had started to improve fire compartmentation within DHB. This work was being carried out overnight to ensure no disruption to learning. Future works were being planned for ATC and Trinity Green rectifications too. • The CTS building in Little Germany remained vacant with the sale no longer progressing. Therefore, given the expected continued growth in student numbers, this was being reviewed, to explore its suitability to provide capacity for student number growth. • The College had now completed the procurement of cleaning services. The new contract with CBRE replacing SBFM came into effect in September on a 3+1+1-year basis. • Work on the Hard FM re tender of supply continued, with the benchmarking activity being completed with the ITT and an options appraisal due in October. The tender was to be completed by January 2026, with the expectation for the date for the new FM contract starting to be in July 2026; the slippage from April had been caused by the full estates' asset register taking longer to be updated than originally expected. • Heat Network update - internal works to DHB and ATC had progressed over summer with no disruption to students. External roadworks had now been completed with limited issues around traffic management. The second phase (plant rooms) was in design phase RIBA 3. 	
10.2	<p><u>Summer works and 2025/26 capital</u></p> <p>The summer works plan had been delivered on time, within budget and with no safety incidents. Highlights included asbestos maintenance works, a CCTV upgrade, emergency lighting remedial works, LED installation, ablution facility installation in the ATC and AC installations, as well as multiple room moves and department relocations. The stain glass dome in Lister had also been removed for renovation and was due to be reinstalled in October half term.</p>	
10.3	<p><u>Appleton Building</u></p> <p>The DCEO F&CS advised that an updated valuation of Appleton had been received of £0.3m. The offer received was in line with a recent revised valuation and, given the risks and increasing cost of maintaining the now derelict building, it was proposed that the offer was accepted. It was currently estimated that costs of maintenance were exceeding £35k per annum, and the ability to obtain insurance for the building was becoming increasingly difficult.</p>	

10.4	<p>Members agreed to recommend the acceptance of the offer of £0.3m and to approve the sale of Appleton Building to Corporation.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the acceptance of the offer of £0.3m and to approve the sale of Appleton Building be recommended to the Corporation for approval</p>	
11.	<p><u>Capital Projects Update</u></p> <p>The DCEO F&CS provided the following Capital Projects update:</p> <p>11.1 Junction Mills – Revised Budget £19,322k (Inc. £3,432k match), £8,216k spent to date. Works were progressing well on site and were currently on programme. Governors had attended a tour of the building site on the 11 September. Full expenditure of the original DfE FECTF grant fund was anticipated by September 2025, well in advance of the DfE deadline of December 2025.</p> <p>11.2 Garden Mills – Now approaching the end of the 12 months defects period, the Projects Team, along with the Estates Team had compiled a list of mostly minor defects to hand over to the contractor before releasing the final retention.</p> <p>11.3 Salix (Heat District Network) – Budget £2,657k and £364k Match, £1,834k spent to date. This project had continued to progress at pace with works both internally and externally. The energy centre and heat network were both being delivered in line with programme. All the external network pipework was complete and substation connection works were awaited.</p> <p>11.4 School of Art Relocation – Budget £700k. The objective of the project was to provide a high impact step change in improved learning environments for FE School of Art students, by relocating the provision to the David Hockney Building. Following Corporation approval on 10 July, a full site team was mobilised by 31 July. The project involved the refurbishment of over 1000m² of space. Prime DHB spaces had been mobilised, which were a stark contrast to the facilities that had been hidden away in Lister. The project had been delivered on schedule and was identified as having significant potential to be transformative for this area of the curriculum.</p> <p>11.5 Capital projects were overseen by the Capital Special Interest Group and the minutes from the meeting on 23 June 2025 had been provided for information.</p>	

11.6	The CEO praised the work of the CSIG and advised members that the College's continued management and oversight of Capital Projects was being cited as an exemplar by the FE Commissioner's Office.	
12.	<u>Draft – Annual Environmental Sustainability Report</u>	
12.1	This item was deferred until the next F&GP meeting in December.	
13.	<u>Procurement Report</u>	
13.1	<p>Following the reclassification of the FE sector and the financial regulations, it had previously been agreed that Governors should be provided with greater visibility of some aspects of procurement which would support assurance around the College's management of public money.</p> <p>Therefore, two appendices had been provided: one on single source justifications approved during this academic year, and another which contains POs (purchase orders) raised that were greater than £200k.</p> <p>The DCEO F&CS advised that for the financial year 2024-25, there had been 110 SSJs, totalling £5.26m.</p>	
13.2	<p>Q. What is expected to happen to the number of SSJs next year?</p> <p>A. The number of SSJs is expected to decrease, as efforts to raise awareness on best practice continue.</p>	
13.3	Members requested that justification commentary be added to the SSJ reporting.	
13.4	<p>ACTION: The DCEO F&CS to add justification commentary to the SSJs reports.</p>	DCEO F&CS
13.5	Members requested that the SSJ reporting also included transparency notices for all directly awarded contracts.	
13.6	<p>ACTION: The DCEO F&CS to ensure that the SSJ reporting also included transparency notices for all directly awarded contracts.</p>	DCEO F&CS
13.7	The DCEO F&CS advised that the SSJs would be reviewed as part of the Internal Audit on Procurement which was to be conducted in the 25-26 Audit Plan and that SSJs were also reported within the Annual Financial Accounts. Members agreed that the SSJ reporting should be biannual going forward.	

14.	<u>Write off of debt</u>	
14.1	<p>The DCEO F&CS provided a summary of student debt write-offs during 2024-25.</p> <p>A provision was made in 2023/24 for the 2020 and 2021 debts to be written off. The actual bad debt charge in the 2024/25 accounts was £37k.</p> <p>All 2024/25 write-offs had been approved by the DCEO F&CS in accordance with the limits set out in the Financial Regulations.</p>	
Policies and Statements		
15.	<u>Health & Safety Policy</u>	
15.1	<p>The Health and Safety Policy had been updated to reflect the change in ownership and title and the addition of the correct review owners.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the Health & Safety Policy be recommended to the Corporation for approval.</p>	
15.2	<p><u>FE Fees Policy 2025-26</u></p> <p>The FE Fees Policy had been updated to reflect the removal of A-level fees from Appendix 2 as A-levels were no longer offered, the reference to the ESFA had been changed to the DfE and a link to old funding information had been removed.</p> <p>It was noted that the FE Fees policy had been agreed by the Q&S Committee before being presented to the F&GP Committee.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the FE Fees Policy 2025/26 be recommended to the Corporation for approval.</p>	
15.3	<u>Business Expenses, Travel and Subsistence Policy</u>	
	<p>The Business Expenses, Travel and Subsistence Policy had been updated to reflect various changes in terminology.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Business Expenses, Travel and Subsistence Policy is approved.</p>	
15.4	<u>Disciplinary Policy</u>	
	<p>The Disciplinary Policy had been updated to reflect various title changes.</p>	

15.5	<p>RECOMMENDATION: That the Disciplinary Policy be recommended to the Corporation for approval.</p> <p><u>Grievance Policy</u></p> <p>The Grievance Policy had been updated to reflect various title changes.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the Grievance Policy be recommended to the Corporation for approval.</p>	
Governance and Risk		
16.	<p><u>Strategic Risk Monitoring</u></p> <p>16.1 The Committee reviewed the strategic risks for which it has oversight. It was noted that there was relatively little change, with the only updates being made to the commentary.</p>	
Any Other Business		
17.	<p><u>Items for report to the Corporation</u></p> <p>17.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of meeting - 9 October 2025 • Student Recruitment • Draft Management Accounts (2024-25) • Health and Safety Policy • FE Fees Policy 2025-26 • Disciplinary Policy • Grievance Policy • UCU Pay Claim 	
18.	<p><u>Any other business</u></p> <p>18.1</p> <p><u>UCU Pay claim</u></p> <p>On 9 September, the College had received a UCU pay claim from the local branch which was formed of two parts, the first being about pay: requesting a 10% or £3,000 increase in pay, whichever was greater. The second was requesting support for a national settlement for Further Education workload and addressing pay gaps.</p> <p>A notice of trade dispute was then received from the UCU Head of Further Education on 19 September, which was seeking the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% or £3,000 increase in pay, whichever is greater. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meaningful Action on Workload. Achieved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Setting a maximum of weekly and annual teaching hours and evening and weekend work. ○ Agreement on the definition of a ‘teaching hour’. ○ The resourcing of more support staff. ○ Nationally agreed class size recommendations. ○ Agreed national policy on the delivery of guided learning hours. ○ A set of agreed boundaries for contacting staff by email or phone. ● A joint position to bring fully funded national bargaining, with binding outcomes to the FE sector. <p>The letter gave Colleges until 10.00am on Friday 3 October 2025 to agree or face a formal declaration of a trade dispute.</p> <p>A response letter had been sent, outlining the College’s position (in line with the template provided by the AoC), which deemed the local disputes process had been engaged with and confirmed that the College would work towards a specific local response to the pay claim that had been previously submitted by the local representatives. However, a discussion would be held regarding amalgamating the two together in the arranged pay negotiation meetings.</p> <p>The first pay negotiation meeting would take place on 16 October and further meetings were scheduled up until December 2025. An update would be provided at the next F&GP meeting in December.</p> <p>Members agreed to present the UCU Pay Claim update at the next Corporation for information.</p> <p>18.2 There was no other business.</p> <p>18.3 The Chair closed the meeting at 17:52.</p>	
19.	<p><u>Meeting Evaluation</u></p> <p>19.1 To be circulated by the Deputy Governance Director</p>	DGD

Approved by the Committee:

.....L.Ho..... 04.12.25.....

Signed by the Chair

Date

Agreed actions

No	Minute	Action	Who?
1	6.6	The DCEO F&CS to add narrative to the Room Utilisation and Room Usage metrics on the Dashboard.	DCEO F&CS
2	13.4	The DCEO F&CS to add justification commentary to the SSJs report.	DCEO F&CS
3	13.6	The DCEO F&CS to ensure that the SSJ reporting also included transparency notices for all directly awarded contracts.	DCEO F&CS
4	19.1	Meeting Evaluation to be circulated by the DGD.	DGD