

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD: on Thursday 4 December 2025 at 17:00 in 4F07- DHB Boardroom

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

L/J Denotes the time a Governor left/joined the meeting

Item		Action
<i>This session was a joint meeting with members of the Audit Committee and was chaired by the Audit Chair</i>		
1.	<u>Annual Report and Financial Statements/Audit Management Letters/Letters of Representation</u>	
1.1	<p>Richard Lewis of RSM talked members of F&GP Committee and Audit Committee through the Annual Report and Financial Statements Financial Statements.</p> <p>Key items highlighted by RSM were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governors report - relating to public benefit and how this had been delivered. • Governance and internal control – information relating to the work of the Audit Committee and the assurance they offer the Corporation. • Budget and Cash flow forecasts had been examined by the Corporation and its conclusion was that the College is a going concern. RSM agreed with this conclusion. • The audit opinion - RSM's opinion was that the financial statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ gave a true and fair view of the state of the College's affairs as at 31 July 2025 and of the College's surplus of income over expenditure for the year then ended; ○ had been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and ○ had been prepared in accordance with the Accounts Direction issued by the Department for Education. • Based on the advice of the Audit Committee and the Accounting Officer, the Corporation is of the opinion that the College has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk 	

	<p>management and control, and has fulfilled its statutory responsibility for <i>“the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the body and the accountability for how it spends public funds”</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pension Fund assumptions had been benchmarked across the sector and showed no evidence of bias by the management. • The next scheme valuation for the Local Government Pension Scheme had been scheduled for 31 March 2025, with the new employer contribution rates applicable from 1 April 2026. • Capital investment - the College invested £17.6m in fixed asset additions during the year 2024-25. £1.7m of the fixed asset additions were self-funded. • Reserves – the College reserves amounted to £95.8m and it held £16.7m in cash and bank balances at the year end. £8.0m of cash and bank balances at the year-end have been received from DfE in advance of spend on capital projects. • The College referenced the Managing Public Money document (MPM), though the main document to refer to is the College Financial Handbook 2024. • The College calculated and reported covenants to the bank and the bank continues to be supportive of the College. The College met all its projected cashflow covenants during the financial year and is forecasting to meet these covenants for planning period to July 2028. • As at 31 July 2025, the cumulative unspent 16-19 discretionary and vulnerable bursary funds and FEFM funding is £0.5m, of which £nil relates to funds that are in scope to be returned to DfE in March 2026. • The audit opinion was expected to be unqualified. • The regularity opinion was expected to be unmodified. <p>Mr Lewis suggested the following additions to the Annual Accounts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.4- To reflect the measures that had been put in place to resolve the priority one recommendations of the ICT – Data Governance Audit that had received Limited Assurance. • To include data on the External Funding Audit Report conducted for the DfE. 	
1.2	The Audit Chair gave thanks to Mr Lewis and the team at RSM for all their hard work on preparing the accounts and also commended the DCEO F&CS and team for their collaboration in ensuring the information was provided to the auditors in good time.	
1.3	<i>A separate confidential minute was recorded – see annex.</i>	

2.	<u>Introductions, Apologies for Absence and Disclosures of Interest</u>	
2.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.2	Apologies were noted for Bulbul Barrett.	
2.3	There were no declarations of interest.	
3.	<u>Chair's action</u>	
3.1	There had been no use of Chair's actions since the last meeting.	
4.	<u>Minutes of the meeting of 9 October 2025</u>	
4.1	RESOLVED: The minutes of 9 October 2025, were approved to be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.	
5.	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
5.1	<p>The Matters Arising Report was reviewed:</p> <p>6.6 - <i>The DCEO F&CS to add narrative to the Room Utilisation and Room Usage metrics on the Dashboard</i> – This was now included on the dashboard.</p> <p>17.7 - <i>The VPF&CS to provide an update on Inprint & Design at the next F&GP meeting</i> – The DCEO F&CS confirmed that everything had been settled and Inprint & Design had been fully liquidated. The Chair requested the DCEO F&CS confirmed the settlement date.</p> <p>4.4 - <i>The VPF&CS to report on the developments in meeting additional space requirements for oversubscribed areas of the College offer</i> – The College were looking to retain Bowling Back Lane to support growth in Construction and, in addition, were reviewing the Little Germany site for potential future use.</p> <p>10.2 - <i>The VPF&CS to explore the interest rates being offered by other banks</i> – Awaiting feedback from market analysis, though this had not progressed since the previous. The DCEO F&CS would provide an update in January.</p>	
6.	<u>DCEO F&CS Report</u>	
6.1	<p>The DCEO F&CS provided an overview of the report, highlighting key things to note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 8 - Stakeholder engagement update which was a new agenda item. • Item 9 - Management Accounts for October, income position lower but being mitigated through savings and lower non-pay. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Item 10 - Student recruitment update – noting the HE and Apprenticeship income position. Item 11.1 - UCU pay claim position. Item 15 - Annual Environmental Sustainability Report – specifically progress made during the 2024/25 Academic year. 	
Strategic Plan Implementation		
7.	<u>F&GP Data Dashboard</u>	
7.1	The DCEO F&CS presented the F&GP Data Dashboard which reflected the draft Q1 position:	
7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The forecast Financial Health remained 'Good' and the College was still above the FEC benchmark for EBITDA. Average time to hire per job vacancy within 64 days – 89% (target 90%) - This slippage was driven by the restructuring that took place during the summer. Posts were held from being advertised during the restructuring process to allow for affected staff to apply for these roles. It was noted that not only was this in line with the College's statutory obligations but was also of benefit to staff as quite a number of individuals were re-employed. Staff turnover – 5.4% (target <15%) - This was also linked to the restructuring process. It followed a similar trend to 2024-25, albeit slightly higher. 	
7.3	<p>Q. What is the impact of lower than anticipated SEND numbers?</p> <p>A. The budget was based on the current numbers available at the time. The funding provided is based on the actual number of students and is used to support these students in place. Lower than expected numbers therefore have no effect on the live performance.</p>	
8.	<u>Stakeholder Engagement Update</u>	
8.1	<p>The VPR&C advised that SO6 had been split into two strands – recruitment and reputation. These strands were understood to be interlinked; if reputation was positive, recruitment would grow. Building relationships with stakeholders was recognised as a key component in this process. A Stakeholder Engagement Plan had therefore been put in place for 2025-26 which designated responsibilities and provided a targeted approach to engaging with key agencies.</p> <p>The VPR&C presented the Stakeholder Engagement Report advising that this was a new agenda item for the F&GP Committee to monitor.</p> <p>The report outlined stakeholder engagement activity completed during Q1. This was not extensive, but included the top line strategic</p>	

	<p>engagements. There were also wider employer engagement activities ongoing which all had a positive impact on the College's reputation.</p> <p>The report included a current overview on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and regional partnerships • Local, regional and national policy • Local, regional funding and projects • Reputation, media coverage and awards <p>More metrics linked to reputation, media coverage and awards had been added to the 2025-26 data dashboard to increase visibility of this area.</p> <p>The VPR&C advised that WYCA had received approximately £900k in additional funding from the DfE to help address skills shortages in the construction trades. All training providers in West Yorkshire were invited to propose ideas for how the funding could be used most effectively and £425k was subsequently allocated to the College's proposal. The College was actively recruiting, and already held a waiting list, for its new Adult Skills Construction Academy, which was currently being delivered in the Buttershaw area, with further community locations due to come on stream in the new year. The VPR&C highlighted the value of the lobbying and partnership work that had secured this additional funding from WYCA.</p> <p>The CEO advised that the Stakeholder Engagement Report complimented the Accountability Statement and provided oversight of how the curriculum was being positioned in relation to skills and stakeholder influence. It provided evidence of how local employers' needs, the Council's Growth and Skills plan, the LSIP, and wider industrial strategy were being addressed, as well as how the College was meeting Ofsted's Skills Judgement.</p> <p>Members were impressed by the impactful work on local and regional policy. The College's media coverage and recent awards were commended as highly positive. The Committee agreed that the Stakeholder Engagement Report was valuable in keeping members apprised of ongoing developments.</p>	
Finance 2024-25		
9.	<u>Management Accounts (October 2025)</u>	
9.1	The DCEO F&CS provided an overview of the Management Accounts to October 2025.	

	As of the current reporting period, operating income was £0.58m adverse to budget but was partially offset by savings on staff and non-pay costs.	
9.2	<p>Q. Can you provide further explanation on the HE fees for students that have not yet been raised?</p> <p>A. This relates to fees that have not yet been billed to students due to an administrative error in the fee set up; this in the process of being fixed.</p>	
9.3	<p>Q. Can you expand on the variance to budget in the apprenticeship income line?</p> <p>A. As well as the identified gaps in new starts which resulted in a £104k deficit and in achievements which caused a £165k deficit, pharmacy achievements being reported later than expected led to an additional shortfall.</p>	
9.4	<p>Q. Is the deficit relating to achievements related to a timing issue or students not achieving the expected level?</p> <p>A. It is related to a timing issue where achievements have not been uploaded in adequate time to receive a payment. This is fully expected to be received.</p>	
9.5	Members requested that information on timing be added to income and expenditure lines of the management accounts, following the same model that was already in place for reporting on cash flow, to aid informed analysis. The DCEO F&CS advised that work was currently underway to enhance budgeting and forecasting processes to improve financial profiling.	
9.2	ACTION: The DCEO F&CS to add timing information to the income and expenditure lines of the management accounts.	DCEO F&CS
9.3	<p>Q. Is the borrowing to income ratio included in one of our Bank Covenants?</p> <p>A. No, this is just our target. It is a measure within the calculation of financial health.</p>	
10.	<u>Student Recruitment</u>	
10.1	The VPR&C presented an update on Student Recruitment.	
10.2	16-18 Study Programmes: Strong enrolment was followed by a settling in period prior to the main census date at day 42. The current was position now at 4,367, with T-levels being slightly under budget at 177. With additional in year enrolments, including re-engaging NEETS, the growth target of 4,400 was expected to be exceeded.	

10.3	<p>Adults: Enrolment for long programmes was now complete and recruitment to vocational, ESOL, English and Maths programmes appeared strong.</p> <p>Access to HE remained challenging; the College was 54% adverse to Adult Loans target numbers. A business plan ambition of £493k had been set, however, Access to HE continued to be challenged as the College competed with Higher Education Institution's offers of Foundation Years of degrees with reduced entry requirements.</p> <p>With Access to HE under recruiting, a negative impact on this income line was anticipated and departments would need to make savings accordingly at Q1. More adult learners continued to be eligible for full funding through WYCA and therefore would not require a loan, which limited the College's ability to grow income beyond its WYCA grant.</p>	
10.4	<p>Higher Education: There has been planned progression into second and third years, and, as forecasted, new starts were below target. Department budgets would be reviewed at Q1 meetings in an attempt to mitigate any income shortfall forecasted to the end of the year.</p>	
10.5	<p>Apprenticeships & Employer Responsive: Apprenticeship starts had been lower in the first three months at 321 against a target of 442, whilst carry in figures were in line with the budget. Action was being undertaken to identify steps that can be taken to recover this position and assess the full year impact. The College's employer responsive Ophthalmics and Pharmacy offer hadn't met initial ambitious growth targets. The HoD was looking at reforecasting to address any shortfall against the target and work was being done to reprofile by Q2.</p>	
10.6	<p>Q. Is there a clear cause for Apprenticeships not meeting initial growth targets?</p> <p>A. There are a number of contributing factors however, not meeting the ambitious growth targets in Ophthalmics and Pharmacy appears to be the major one. This is a national market for us, with courses delivered through blended learning. Some starts have been delayed because apprentices are yet to be recruited. Additionally, with anticipated changes to levy funding, employers seem to be waiting for the outcomes before committing. However, we will reprofile accordingly and implement measures to ensure success.</p>	
10.7	<p>The CEO requested the correlation and standardisation of the presentation of data across the Management Accounts and Student Recruitment reporting, to assist readability and ensure consistency.</p>	

10.8	ACTION: The VPR&C and DCEO F&CS to correlate and standardise the presentation of data across the Management Accounts and Student Recruitment reporting.	VPR&C/ DCEO F&CS
Resources		
11.	<u>People Strategy Update</u>	
11.1	<p>The DCEO F&CS provided a summary of some of the key people services metrics and activity for Q1 of the academic year 2025-26:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff turnover for the quarter was 5.4%, which was higher than at the same point last year (4.7%). This would be closely monitored through the year. • Staff absence was at 4% for Q1, which was in line with the College target, though higher than at the same point last year (3%). • Work-related stress absences for the quarter made up 13% of the staff absences, which was well below the target of <20%. • Employee relations cases had increased compared to last year's position, though it was believed this had been driven by investing in managers through CPD for line managers. • The progress of the employment laws changes continued to be monitored to assess the impact upon the College and any changes that might be required. 	
11.2	<p><u>11.1 UCU Pay Claim Update</u></p> <p><i>A separate confidential minute was recorded – see annex.</i></p>	
12.	<u>Capital Projects Update</u>	
12.1	The DCEO F&CS presented an update on the Capital Projects in train:	
12.2	FTC (Future Technology Centre) – Revised Budget £19,322k (Inc. £3,432k match), £12,413k spent to date. Works were progressing well on site and currently ahead of programme. Site tours for students had recommenced, with a fortnightly visit planned with curriculum until project completion.	
12.3	Garden Mills – The end of the defects period had been reached and a defects review had been completed. However, securing the contractor's return to site to complete all the works had proved challenging. RLB were reviewing the options available to the College, though the defects identified were relatively minor.	
12.4	Salix (Heat District Network) – Budget £2,657k and £364k Match, £2,348k spent to date.	

12.5	School of Art Relocation – Budget £700k, £402k spent to date. The final works were completed during half term, and all known snags addressed. The final account would be underbudget. The post project review had been conducted with the College management team and the external professional team, where the project was deemed a success, with few lessons to be learnt.	
12.6	Capital projects were being overseen by the Special Interest Group, which had met once since the last F&GP committee. The School of Art Relocation Post Project Review was presented and the minutes from the September meeting were attached.	
13.	<u>Estate's Plan Update</u>	
13.1	<p>The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the Estates plan and College-wide activity taking place.</p> <p>Fire remedial works had been completed to DHB building, including fire doors and fire compartmentation. Future works were being planned for ATC and Trinity Green rectifications, with funding to be requested as part of business planning.</p> <p>The sale of Appleton building was progressing and feedback from the buyer's solicitors was currently being awaited to set a completion date.</p> <p>The utilisation of the former CTS building in Little Germany was currently under review. Initial surveys had taken place to obtain plans and costs for refurbishment, with the expectation this could provide capacity for the growth in PLW provision.</p> <p>The lease of the Bowling Back Lane Site was likely to be extended for a further three years to accommodate the growth in the College's construction provision. The site was currently being reviewed on how best to accommodate this and scope out the changes that would need to be made over the summer period. This would be a medium-term position whilst work with Locate Ed was completed to identify alternative potential sites.</p> <p>Work on the Hard Facilities Management (FM) retender of supply continued with the benchmarking activity being completed along with the ITT and options appraisal. The tender was to be completed by April 26, with the expectation that the new FM contract would start in August 2026.</p> <p>The Doris Birdsall site lease with Unipol would come to an end in July, and its future use was currently being considered. Unfortunately, the</p>	

13.2	<p>current usage and build did not support a change of purpose to offices or delivery of provision. Therefore, it was likely to come down to a decision of demolition or sale.</p> <p>Q. Can the change of purpose rejection not be challenged? A. No, this is due to structural reasons.</p>	
Policies and Statements		
14.	<u>Modern Slavery Act Statement</u>	
14.1	<p>The College is required to publish a Modern Slavery Act Statement on an annual basis. The DCEO F&CS presented the statement for 2024-25, noting the activity that the College had undertaken to assure itself that modern slavery and human trafficking was not evident in its supply chains or in any part of its business.</p> <p>Members queried the line included in the Statement which read ‘without this confirmation or adequate explanation, they do not progress through the tender process (see Appendix 1)’ and asked what would be deemed an ‘adequate’ explanation. The DCEO F&CS advised that he would look into the wording and would provide verbal feedback at Corporation on accepted best practice and any related statutory requirements.</p>	DCEO F&CS
14.2	ACTION: The DCEO F&CS to check the line included within the Modern Slavery Statement which refers to ‘adequate explanation’ and provide feedback at Corporation.	
14.3	RECOMMENDATION: That subject to the requested clarification and possible resulting amendment, the Modern Slavery Act Statement 2024- 25 be recommended to the Corporation for approval and then publication on the College website.	
15.	<u>Draft Annual Environmental Sustainability Report</u>	
15.1	<p>The DCEO F&CS presented the draft Annual Environmental Sustainability Report, which demonstrated the College’s Sustainability Journey and the progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two curriculum projects were recognised at national Green Gown Awards in November 2025, including one winner and one highly commended. • The College was a finalist for the Social Impact in Sustainability Award in the Yorkshire Sustainability Excellence Awards in April 2025. • PLW learners received the Sustainability Champions Award at the local Skills House CTE Awards in July 2025. 	

15.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve the visibility of sustainability within courses, the Sustainability Lead was working with teaching staff and learners to map the Sustainable Development Goals and Education for Sustainable Development pedagogies across programmes. • Gas consumption had reduced. • Electricity consumption had increased slightly. • The Chillers came into action in 2024-25. • The LED lighting upgrades, Bradford District Heating Network, Garden Mills refurbishment, and Future Technologies Centre demonstrated the College's commitment to low carbon buildings, energy efficiency, and carbon-conscious construction. • Sustainability within the new Ofsted Framework had begun to be explored. • No further carbon reduction funding was available to FE institutions. Future connections within the College's estate would therefore be difficult to pursue. <p>The Chair commended the extent of work done by the College in relation to sustainability and congratulated all involved.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Annual Environmental Sustainability Report be approved for publishing on the College website.</p>	
Governance and Risk		
16.	<u>Strategic Risk Monitoring</u>	
16.1	The Committee reviewed the strategic risks for which it has oversight.	
Any Other Business		
17.	<u>Items for report to the Corporation</u>	
17.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report and Financial Statements (presented by RSM) • Minutes of meeting - 4 December 2025 • Student Recruitment • Modern Slavery Act Statement • UCU Pay Claim 	
18.	<u>Any other business</u>	
18.1	There was no other business.	
18.2	The Chair closed the meeting at 19:22.	
19.	<u>Meeting Evaluation</u>	
19.1	ACTION: To be circulated by the Deputy Governance Director.	Deputy Governance Director

Approved by the Committee:

B. Barrett

22.01.25

Signed by the Chair

Date

Agreed actions

No	Minute	Action	Who?
1	9.2	The DCEO F&CS to add timing information to the income and expenditure lines of the management accounts.	DCEO F&CS
2	10.8	The VPR&C and DCEO F&CS to correlate and standardise the presentation of data across the Management Accounts and Student Recruitment reporting.	VPR&C / DCEO F&CS
3	14.2	The DCEO F&CS to check the line included within the Modern Slavery Statement which refers to 'adequate explanation' and provide feedback at Corporation.	DCEO F&CS
4	19.1	Meeting evaluation to be circulated.	DGD