

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD 1 DECEMBER 2025 at 12noon

Present: Mr Farouk Durrani (Chair)
Ms Christine Downton
Mr Chris Whelan (CEO)
Nick Clark (Principal)

In Attendance: Ms Claire Tait – Governance Professional
Ms Kim Saw – Director of Finance

		Action																		
1.	WELCOME The Chair opened the meeting welcoming those present.																			
2.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE SB had hoped to attend virtually, but was unable to make it. The Governance Professional confirmed the meeting was quorate.																			
3.	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS There were no declarations of interest																			
4.	MINUTES The minutes of the meeting held 10 June 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting (Papers 1 and 1a).																			
5.	<p>SUMMARY ACTION LIST & MATTERS ARISING</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>MIN REF</th> <th>ACTION POINT</th> <th>Summary</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Chief Executive to request Health and Safety policy update</td> <td>See item 9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>NC to add Mental Health first aid to be added to future H&S reports.</td> <td>This will be a separate report to the Trust Board later in the year.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>CT to add the annual H&S review to the Autumn term on the Business Schedule</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>CT to update the terms of reference</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>KS to include a line in the budget to clarify why EBITDA is always in excess of the forecast of the year.</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Cintra update: The committee was informed that Cintra have assured the college that all outstanding actions will be completed by January. This will be confirmed at the next meeting.</p>	MIN REF	ACTION POINT	Summary	5	Chief Executive to request Health and Safety policy update	See item 9	6	NC to add Mental Health first aid to be added to future H&S reports.	This will be a separate report to the Trust Board later in the year.	6	CT to add the annual H&S review to the Autumn term on the Business Schedule	Complete	7	CT to update the terms of reference	Complete	9	KS to include a line in the budget to clarify why EBITDA is always in excess of the forecast of the year.	Complete	
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6.	MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS & 2025/26 The Management Accounts for one month of the financial year up to 30 September 2025 were subject to review (Papers 2a & 2b). As the Management Accounts covered only one month of the financial year, the Committee agreed to note the Management Accounts as it was too early in the financial year to make any firm assessments on the financial figures contained within the Management																			

	<p>Accounts, and all the indications were that nothing unusual had happened in the month.</p> <p>The Committee noted that there was over £6m in the bank and that this is above the DfE recommended reserves.</p>	
7.	<p>REPORT AND ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025</p> <p><i>Terms of Reference for the Finance Committee confirms the Committee reviews the financial information and commentary in the year-end accounts, and once reviewed, to inform the Audit Committee of the outcomes of their review.</i></p> <p>The Committee received the following papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The draft Financial Statements and Annual Report for 2024/25– Paper 3 (ii) The Management Accounts for the 12 months to 31 August 2025 – Papers 3a & 3b (iii) Reconciliation of the Statement of Financial Activities per the Financial Statements to the Unaudited Management Accounts for the 12 months to 31st August 2025 - Paper 4 (iv) To receive Financial Statement Auditor’s ‘<i>Post Audit Report</i>’ previously reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee - Paper 5 <p>It was confirmed the Financial Statements have been prepared in line with the prescribed requirements stipulated in the Academies Accounts Direction 2024/25 issued by the Education & Skills Funding Agency. Amendments had been added by the Audit and Risk Committee and the Chair of the Finance Committee. FD noted that the references customers could be removed, and other small comments where the accounts imply the college is a business. It was confirmed that the DfE sets the format.</p> <p>The Committee examined the reconciliation between management accounts (Paper 3) as of August 31, 2025, and statutory accounts, finding no significant differences between the Management Accounts for the year ended August 31, 2025, and the Reconciliation Statement.</p> <p>Initially, capital expenditure is posted to the ENID account and then moved to the budget sheet at year-end. This transfer results in lower figures in the year-end management accounts, but the adjustment ensures the numbers are correctly balanced.</p> <p>With respect to payroll, the £200k contingency fund was not spent. This sum had been set aside based on a worst-case scenario where the highest-paid teachers would be recruited. If more staff were hired within a subject area, the contingency could support up to three top-tier salary positions or four at a lower rate, accounting for maternity leave and long-term sick pay. The Committee considered whether it was necessary to maintain the £200k contingency, and the Executive affirmed its value, particularly if additional teaching staff become needed. It was also mentioned that recruiting new teachers instead would reduce costs accordingly. The Committee agreed to retain the contingency for these scenarios.</p> <p>The Chair asked about any unpaid amounts from Croydon LA, and it was confirmed that all debts have now been cleared after sending a formal notice to the Local Authority.</p> <p>When reviewing the Financial Statements (Paper 4), the Chair confirmed he held a pre-meeting with the Director of Finance to go through the document to confirm some details and correct typos.</p> <p>Made available to the Committee was the ‘Post Audit Report’ issued by Buzzacott, the College’s Financial & Regulatory Auditor (Paper 5). It was noted that this is usually reviewed by this committee before the Audit and Risk Committee, this meeting</p>	

	<p>was postponed until after the A&R meeting. The figures were accepted by the Committee with no amendments. Subject to the satisfactory receipt of some minor outstanding items, the auditors confirmed they intend to issue the following opinions:</p> <p>Financial statements opinion: We expect to express that in our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025 issued by the DfE, and Companies Act requirements.</p> <p>Regularity assurance conclusion: We intend to state that in the course of our work nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material aspects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the year ended 31 August 2025 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.</p> <p>The report confirmed two audit recommendations; one being classified as low and one advisory. The recommendations were noted as follows:</p> <p><u>Declarations of Interest</u> That the declaration of interest forms are reviewed to ensure these include reference to disclosing close family members (and their interests) to ensure a complete list of interests. In addition, completed declarations should be cross-referred to Companies House to ensure all interests have been included.</p> <p><u>AI Policy</u> That the Trust seek to implement a policy on the use of AI by staff members and that key elements of this form part of staff training on data protection.</p> <p>It was confirmed management accepted all the audit recommendations made.</p>	
8.	<p>REVIEW OF CONTRACTS</p> <p>As part of the Board Assurance Framework and to provide assurances, it was agreed for the Finance & Resources Committee to review a list of contracts each term, concentrating on forthcoming renewals in the following 3 months (or time until next meeting). The paper presented reported on those renewal contracts with an expiry date between October-December 2025.</p> <p>The Committee looked at the larger contracts and were assured that the college has the correct level of contracts. The opportunity was given to ask questions about individual contracts to understand why they are needed and to ensure the right contracts are in place.</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the review and the Committee noted the report and proposed actions to be taken on renewals</p>	
9.	<p>HEALTH AND SAFETY</p> <p>(i) The committee received for review the Health and Safety Report (Paper 7). The committee are now able to see year on year information to note improvements. The committee noted that there were no major incidents of concern. Mental Health and wellbeing report will come to the Trust Board later in the year and is not recorded in the H&S report as it is not a first aid incident or issue.</p> <p>A question was asked as to why there were three visually impaired students last year, but none this year. It was confirmed that each student was in their second year, these students came from a unit that no longer exists. The</p>	

	<p>college is prepared if any further visually impaired students apply as the adaptations have already been made and will remain in place. It was noted that the individual support for these students was very high due to the adaptations needed, such as braille and technological needs.</p> <p>(ii) The committee received for annual review the Health and Safety Policy (Paper 8) This included some amends suggested by the Chair of Finance committee. The changes were highlighted to the committee. The H&S officer came in last week, and there will be further updates in due course. The committee agreed the policy is now much clearer.</p>	
10.	<p>ESTATES See PART 2 Minutes</p>	
11.	<p>New Energy Supplier The committee reviewed information regarding the new energy supplier (Paper 10). The college has been with its current supplier for ten years but remains unsatisfied, making this an opportune time to consider alternatives. If the college wishes to conduct its own energy tendering process, it would need to engage a consultant. However, the Department for Education (DfE) recommends utilising existing frameworks where companies have already completed the tender processes and meet all public sector obligations.</p> <p>One option recommended is TEC, which currently provides water to the college with impressive results. The college noted modest savings on water costs, easier contract management, accurate billing, and a dedicated point of contact. As a non-profit organisation, TEC provides equal governance rights to its members and returns benefits directly to them.</p> <p>In terms of requirements, last year the college spent £281,000 on energy, of which only a portion was fuel costs. For gas, 65% of the bill relates to fuel, with the remainder covering network charges. For electricity, of the £220,000 spent, approximately half comprised fuel costs and half network charges. The choice of supplier will impact only the fuel cost component.</p> <p>As the college is currently a relatively small customer, it is typically a lower priority for suppliers and often receives poor service levels under commercial contracts. KS recommends TEC as the solution is tried and tested with the college. Another S7 college using this provider also reported lower per-unit costs. Wave (TEC's chosen utility company) manages the energy procurement through a competitive tender process.</p> <p>The recommendation is to proceed with TEC, taking advantage of their maximum forward buying period of 36 months, by entering into a three-year contract. Prices are not fixed; at sign-up, the college would join the prevailing rates, while TEC would continue to secure the most competitive energy prices through varying lengths of forward contracts. The committee also discussed considerations such as potential impacts of war, which will be reflected in contractual arrangements.</p> <p>The committee approved the proposal and recommends that the Trust Board grant final approval.</p>	
	<p>The LGPS Actuarial Valuation report was received and noted.</p> <p>KS left the meeting at 12.25pm</p>	
12.	<p>IT INFRASTRUCTURE The Chief Executive confirmed that all new equipment, and Windows 11 was all installed successfully in the summer. The IT lockers are particularly successful and used regularly by the students, more may be purchased.</p>	

13. BOARD ASSURANCE

To conduct termly board assurance assessments for those areas of the BAF that fall under the committee's responsibility - **Paper 11**

Under the Board Assurance Framework (BAF), each Committee is asked to conduct, at the end of their meeting, an assessment on the level of assurance agreed against each report received (including briefings and verbal updates), and for the assessment to be reported to the Audit Committee and Trust Board

The following assessments were agreed on reports considered at this meeting:

Paper number	Subject	Board Assurance (yes/no)	RAG rating	Any recommendation(s) or action(s) arising from discussions on the agenda item; Any comment(s) on the quality of the paper(s)/presentation(s) made available for the agenda item.
2a and 2b	Management accounts	Yes	Green	
3	Financial Statements and Annual Report for 2024/25	Yes	Green	
3a and 3b	Management Accounts for the 12 months to 31 August 2025	Yes	Green	
4	Reconciliation of the Statement of Financial Activities	Yes	Green	
5	Financial Statement Auditor's 'Post Audit Report'	Yes	Green	
6	Review of contracts	Yes	Green	
7	Health and Safety Report	Yes	Green	
8	Health and Safety Policy	Yes	Green	
9	Estates	Yes	Green	
11	Energy Supplier	Yes	Green	

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 3 March 2026 at 5.30pm

CD gave her apologies for the next meeting.

Action: CT to check availability and consider moving the meeting to 12noon again.

CT

The meeting was closed at 1.30pm