



## **STRATEGY, GOVERNANCE AND SEARCH (SG&S) COMMITTEE**

### Minutes of a Part I Meeting

Held on Zoom on Wednesday 29 April 2026 at 5pm

<b>Present:</b>	Jo Croft	Chair of Governors & Interim Committee Chair
	Paul Britton	Governor
	Sam Foley	Interim CEO & Group Principal elect
	Tony Haines	Chair of Audit Committee
	Rob Lewis	Senior Independent Governor (SIG)
	Gillian May	CEO and Group Principal
	Signe Sutherland	Chair of Quality & Curriculum Committee
<b>In attendance:</b>	Gary Dixon	Principal FE
	Karen Griffiths	Acting Deputy Group Principal
	Sinead O'Donoghue	Principal Sixth Form
	Tracy Reeve	Group Director of Governance

### **MINUTE**

#### **No**

#### 1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received as shown above. The meeting welcomed Sam Foley to the meeting for her new pending role as Interim CEO and Group Principal (from 1 June 2026).

#### 2. **Notification of Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no other business notified.

#### 3. **Declarations of Interest**

No Member declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.

#### 4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 3 March 2026**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 March 2026, having been previously circulated to members, were **AGREED** as an accurate record and the Chair's approval would be recorded.

**All Members were agreed.**

#### 5. **Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting held on 3 March 2026**

*The meeting NOTED a report from the Director of Governance which confirmed that all matters arising had been actioned or were on track for timely completion when due.*

### **ITEMS FOR APPROVAL**

#### 6. **Annual Accountability Statement 2026**

The CEO and Group Principal (GM) presented the WFCG Annual Accountability Statement for consideration before it was taken to the Board for approval in May 2026. The meeting noted that the document had already been proof-read by Senior Independent Governor (RL) and GM thanked him for his time reviewing the document before it was brought to the committee.

### **ACTION**

## MINUTE

### No

## ACTION

GM reminded the meeting of the Board responsibility in relation to the Annual Accountability Statement:

- to confirm that it had reviewed and approved the 2026–27 Annual Accountability Statement and was satisfied that it was consistent with the Group’s Strategic Plan, informed by robust evidence and stakeholder engagement and aligned to Local Skills Improvement Plans and national skills priorities.
- to exercise appropriate challenge and scrutiny in order to gain assurance that the targets were clear, measurable and deliverable within available resources.
- to monitor progress against the statement throughout the year to ensure effective delivery, positive learner outcomes and value for money.

The meeting considered the Annual Accountability Statement for 2026-27 which set out how the WFCG would::

- Respond to national, regional and local skills priorities
- Align provision to Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)
- Deliver against the WFCG Strategic Plan (2024–2029)
- Meet the Department for Education (DfE) accountability requirements for colleges this was noted as being within the funding conditions for colleges.

GM confirmed that the statement had been updated based on data from the DfE dashboard to evidence key student outcomes. She also confirmed that there had been no changes to the LSIP priorities since last considered in 2025. GM highlighted changes in the format and information presented for 2026

- Introduction of clear, measurable SMART targets
- Stronger alignment to LSIPs and employer demand
- Increased focus on priority sectors (green, digital, health, creative)
- Enhanced use of data and evidence (DfE dashboard, LSIP input)
- Stronger emphasis on progression outcomes

There was also a new section which outlined the scale of SEND provision across WFCG including EHCP learners; this met the new Ofsted focus on inclusion.

GM went through the eight key objectives outlined within the Accountability Statement with input from SLT as appropriate. Governors were given assurance on how the Group would contribute to national skills priorities via full-time 16-19 provision (including T Levels), the delivery of apprenticeships. Free Courses for Jobs, Skills Bootcamps and Higher Technical Qualifications. The meeting noted that the objectives were focussed on the national priority sectors (with reference to the Modern Industrial Strategy) of construction, clean energy industries, digital and technologies, health, creative industries, life sciences, and professional and business services. The meeting was reminded of the Groups position as a regional leader in the delivery of Bootcamps. GM highlighted the inclusion of a clear intention with respect to adult delivery even though the move to greater devolution meant that the college’s direct DfE allocation for adult funding was reducing. The Deputy Group Principal (KG) outlined the ongoing challenges in relation to adult funding but asserted the importance of keeping the provision as central within the Accountability Statement. KG confirmed that the hardest hit provision would be in relation to tailored learning – e.g. ESOL and ALFIE – which would impact the most-needy learners. However, WFCG was aiming to stay balanced in its approach and there was an ongoing need to be mindful of LSIP priorities e.g for construction. There would also be an ongoing need to maintain that provision for WFCG progressing learners who were 19+.

The meeting discussed the use of the DfE data dashboard to drive improvement in overall outcomes. KG highlighted the need to focus on 19+ learners in mainstream provision who were achieving less well. The meeting was assured that management were currently analysing why this under-achievement was occurring and what extra support they would need. The meeting discussed this in more detail and governors sought clarity on why 19+ learners were being accepted for mainstream 16-18 courses. KG confirmed that as adult

**MINUTE**

**No**

**ACTION**

funding tightened there would be more careful scrutiny of accepting 19+ learners onto Level 3 programmes unless they were progressing students recommended as suitable for these courses.

Governors talked about the relationship between the Accountability Statement and the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP). Governor (PB), who was CEO of the local Chamber of Commerce confirmed that the updated Thames Valley (TV) LSIP – covering Berkshire and Oxfordshire - would be finalised and submitted on May 15. However, KG informed the meeting that she had worked with colleagues at the TV Chamber who were drafting the update so she was aware of the content; the LSIP update had been considered when updating the WFCG Accountability Statement. PB sought, and was given, assurance that management had also seen a draft of the updated Surrey LSIP before finalising WFCG's draft submission.

The meeting sought further clarification on how the devolved funding for 19+ learners could be accessed via the local authorities. KG confirmed that individual 19+ learners had to apply for this funding from their home local authority but they would be supported in this by the admissions team in the same way that HE learners were supported. KG assured the meeting that staff were working closely with each of the relevant local authorities to stay up to date with guidance and process. As discussed earlier the main challenge would be where 19+ learners wanted to study on a mainstream level 3 course. There would be a tightening of the adult market and governors expressed their disappointment that adult 'second chance' learners might be locked out of future study. GM confirmed that management had raised this concern with the DfE at the annual strategic conversation which was held on 28 April. Governors (SS) asked management to get the data on numbers of 19+ learners that might be affected by this change.

The meeting commended the format and the content of the WFCG Annual Accountability Statement 2026. SG&S Committee Members were satisfied that it was consistent with the Group's Strategic Plan, informed by robust evidence and stakeholder engagement and aligned to Local Skills Improvement Plans and national skills priorities.

***The meeting APPROVED the WFCG Annual Accountability Statement 2025 as presented and would RECOMMEND it to the Board for approval (15 May 2026).***

(All Members were agreed.)

7. **GOVERNANCE SUMMARY REPORT**

7.1 ***Board Membership***

***Determined number of the WFCG Corporation:*** The Director of Governance (TR) presented a paper which detailed the Members of the Corporation with cessation dates and sub-committee membership (Paper A). Governors were reminded that the current Board membership of TWFCG was determined at 22 members; and there was currently one vacancy following the resignation of Sam Foley. However, the recent appointment of six new governors had put the Corporation in a strong position. TR was proposing that the determined number was varied back down to 21 members until autumn 2026 when the new CEO was in post. The meeting agreed that this was a sensible approach and should be reviewed in November 2026.

RL highlighted an error in the document with the initial appointment date of governor NG showing incorrectly as 2028.

***The meeting AGREED to RECOMMEND that the determined number of the WFCG Corporation be revised downwards to 21.***

(All Members were agreed.)

***ACTION:***

- i. Review determined number in November 2026.***
- ii. Correct the initial appointment date of NG on Paper A.***

[JC left the meeting.]

TR/ SG&S  
TR

## MINUTE

### No

## ACTION

Re-appointment of existing member Jo Croft (JC): It was noted that the current Corporation Chair (Jo Croft) was coming to the end of her first four-year term of office with WFCG (31 July 2026). TR reminded the meeting that JC had been appointed to WFCG at the point of merger with BCA. She had taken on the role of Chair in January 2025 so had not yet finished her first two-year term. TR brought a proposal to the SG&S Committee to reappointment Jo Croft as a Governor for a second four-year term and as Corporation Chair for a two-year term of office. The meeting agreed that JC's technical knowledge as a qualified accountant, her legacy knowledge of WFCG and her key role as Chair of the Corporation should be maintained during a period of leadership change at WFCG. This would provide some important stability to the Board and the College through the next two years. TR confirmed that JC was keen to be re-appointed as Governor and Chair of the Corporation.

**The meeting AGREED to RECOMMEND that Jo Croft be re-appointed as:**

**i) a Board Member of TWFCG for a second four-year term of office until 31 July 2030.**

**ii) Chair of the Corporation for a two-year term of office (until 31 July 2028).**

(All Members were agreed.)

### **[JC rejoined the meeting.]**

Committee membership: The meeting noted Paper B which showed the current membership of the committees. The meeting discussed the vacancy for Chair of Resources Committee following the resignation of Sam Foley (31 March 2026) and SG&S Committee Members were assured that the Group Director of Governance was working to recruit to this vacancy from existing governors.

The vacancies for the Chair of Remuneration Committee and SG&S Committee also needed to be filled; TR confirmed that she would approach the membership and bring this decision item to the first committee meetings in 2026-27.

**It was AGREED that the membership of sub-committees should remain the same until further review in November 2026.**

(All Members were agreed.)

### **7.2 Draft meeting schedule 2026-27**

The meeting considered the proposed schedule of Corporation & Committee meetings for 2026/27 which was largely based on the prior year timetable. TR highlighted that the SG&S Committee in summer 2027 had been moved from June to May to allow approval of the Annual Accountability Statement.

The acting chair (JC) reminded TR that it had been resolved that the first Remuneration Committee of each year should be timetabled in late September rather than waiting to November. However, for 2026-27 TR suggested that this should be delayed to October 2026 due to the new CEO starting with WFCG in September 2026 (at the earliest).

JC also asked that the start time of Capital Development Steering Group be moved from 8.00am to 8.30am.

**The meeting AGREED to RECOMMEND the draft meeting timetable for 2026-27 for approval subject to the amendments highlighted above.**

(All Members were agreed.)

### **7.3 Use of the College Seal**

The meeting noted that there had been no use of the WFCG seal since reported to the last Corporation meeting in March 2026.

**The Governance update report was NOTED and RECEIVED.**

### **8. Any Urgent Business**

There had been no other urgent business notified.

**MINUTE**

**No**

**ACTION**

9. **Date of next meeting**

TR informed the meeting that the next Strategy Governance & Search (SG&S) Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 9 June 2026, however she was proposing that this meeting could be taken out of the calendar as there would be no items for information or approval.

An early meeting in 2026-27 would be added to the timetable if required. Otherwise, the next SG&S Committee meeting would be in November 2026.

***The meeting AGREED to remove the timetabled SG&S meeting in June from the 2025-26 meeting schedule.***

The meeting closed at 5.45pm

Chair.....

Date.....