



THE WINDSOR FOREST COLLEGES GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

Held at Slough & Langley College on Wednesday, 18 March 2026

PRESENT:	Kirsten Ashman	NEW Governor
	Paul Britton (<i>online</i>)	Governor
	Riley Campisi-Dignan	Student Governor FE
	Jacob Clay	Academic Staff Governor Sixth Form
	Jo Croft	Corporation Chair
	Jeo Dozono-Kim	NEW Governor
	Louise Fellows (<i>online</i>)	Governor
	Sam Foley (<i>online</i>)	Governor
	Rachel Fowler (<i>online</i>)	NEW Governor
	Nathan Garat	Governor
	Anthony Haines	Governor
	Alasdair Lenman	NEW Governor
	Sam Marshall-Davies	Governor
	Gillian May	Group Principal & CEO
	Antonia Spinks	Governor
	Signe Sutherland	Corporation Vice-Chair
	Ian Thomson	Governor
	Sarah Waller	Academic Staff Governor FE
	Alison Wheatley	Support Staff Governor
APOLOGIES:	Jane Fawkes	Governor
	James Fernley	Governor
	Nathan Garat	Governor
	Rob Lewis	Senior Independent Governor (SIG)
	Ketija Oyeniran	Student Governor Sixth Form
IN ATTENDANCE:	Kerry Blandin	Ex-Governor
	Gary Dixon	Principal FE
	Lucy Gill	Group Finance Director
	Karen Griffiths	Acting Deputy Group Principal
	Sinead O'Donoghue	Principal Sixth Form
	Tracy Reeve	Group Director of Governance

PART I

<u>MINUTE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	The meeting started at 5.00pm	
1.	<u>Health & Safety Housekeeping</u> The Chair (JC) welcomed everyone to Slough and Langley College. JC welcomed the four new governors to the meeting and all attendees briefly introduced themselves.	
2.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies had been received as detailed above.	
3.	<u>AOB</u> There was no urgent other business notified.	
4.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> There were no declarations of interest.	

5. **Minutes of the Previous Meetings held on 10 December 2025 and 28 January 2026**

The Minutes of the previous meetings held on 10 December 2025 and 28 January 2026, having been previously circulated to members, were agreed as a true record and would be taken as signed by the Chair.

All Members were agreed.

- **Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

The Group Director of Governance (TR) presented a report which updated the meeting on the current status of 'matters arising'; all matters were included on the agenda or completed. The meeting noted an update from the two Principals on the Employee Representative Board (ERB).

The update was NOTED

➤ **Establishment of an Employee Representative Body at WFCG:** SO'D and GD gave the meeting an update on progress; nominations had now been received and initial meetings were planned after Easter. The ERB would work alongside the Mirror Board to support staff voice.

It was noted that there were no other matters arising.

6. **STAFF GOVERNORS' REPORT**

Each of the Staff Governors gave the meeting a short verbal update.

Sixth Form Academic Staff Governor: JC gave the meeting an update on what was happening at Windsor College. There was a lot of work taking place on performing arts shows; this included Midsummer Night's Dream and an upcoming performance of Chicago at the Arts Centre in Windsor (28th March). Level 4 students and hair and make-up learners were collaborating on a cabaret night project. There was also a lot going on at Strode's with a performing arts showcase. This included Romeo and Juliet and a project with Sadlers Wells and other visiting theatre company workshops. A science symposium was planned for the end of April and individual posters to be judged. There had also been a series of Future Pathway Fairs with involvement from a number of employers; this had been part of 'Getting Ready for Work Week'.

FE Academic Staff Governor: SW told the meeting that students at BCA had recently planted over 100 trees and there was a renewed focus on land-based activities with the recent celebrity launch of Top Farm. Students had undertaken a number of trips and visits. There had been a strong showing in local sports competitions and the netball team had done particularly well. Taster Sessions at BCA were fully booked for the last week in March. The recent mock GCSE exams in maths and English were really well attended; Slough and Langley 89% for both and BCA English attendance had been 97%. SW commended the massive team effort to get such a strong result. There had also been the two days of strike action on 17 and 18 March with UCU members being in dispute. This had not had any adverse effect on the mock exams.

Support Staff Governor: AW confirmed that mock GCSE had gone well at Slough and Langley College and the strike action had added a layer of complication to managing these. There had been a Wellbeing Clinic held earlier in the year with a focus on a stop vaping campaign. Other celebrations had taken place around Orange Heart Day (support for refugees), Chinese New Year and World Book Day. The College had also hosted a Health and Beauty day for local foster carers. AW informed the meeting that the anatomage table – sourced for HE science learners – was now operational and staff would receive training after Easter. Governors were reminded that this was an advanced 3D anatomy visualization and virtual dissection system that allows users to interact with photorealistic human cadavers on a life-sized touchscreen. The meeting was also informed of the very successful Apprenticeship Week which was held recently.

The Chair (JC) thanked the staff governors for their input and asserted the value of Staff Voice for the Corporation.

The Staff Governor Feedback was NOTED

7.

LINK GOVERNOR FEEDBACK

There was no link governor feedback as no visits had taken place during the last ten weeks.

NOTED

8.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

FE Student Governor (RCD) presented an update for the meeting. The recent student representatives meetings had been well attended and had gone well. Other activities included the football team reaching local quarterfinals and there would be a Protective Services drill competition in May with competitors assessed by RAF and Army personnel. The nice weather meant that students at BCA were enjoying the grounds; ALFIE students had been playing football with other students which created a very inclusive environment. Students had been involved in the CEO interviews on Monday 16 March; campus tours had been a good way for students to interact with candidates.

The Student Governor Feedback was NOTED

9.

CEO AND GROUP PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

The CEO (GM) presented an update on the Group's position with respect to financial performance, funding, workforce matters and compliance. GM highlighted areas of positive progress, alongside matters requiring continued oversight. The report also outlined the actions being taken to ensure stability and maintain progress against the Group's strategic priorities.

Apprenticeships: The meeting discussed the recent input from the specialist FE Commissioner (FEC) Adviser on apprenticeships; GM reminded the meeting that WFCG had sought this specialist support via DfE when under performance had become an issue for 2024-25. The specialist FEC adviser had visited apprenticeship teams at BCA and Slough and Langley College and spent two days looking at the provision. The visit had generated a clear action plan for quality improvement and confirmed that the College was moving in the right direction to secure better outcomes.

Financial performance: GM highlighted the Group's financial recovery and the fact that this had been sustained into a second operational year. WFCG was currently on track to generate a very small surplus/ operational break-even. The generation of a positive EBITDA for a second year would be key to ensuring the financial stability of the Group. The focus now was to ensure that cash reserves were built back to the pre-merger levels of £9m.

Union dispute: GM highlighted the ongoing dispute with UCU balloted members in relation to the national pay claim for 2025-26 of 10% which the group was unable to meet. UCU had balloted their members on the £500 addition to all spine points and only 48% of the membership had been in favour of accepting this. So there had been two days of strike action on 17 and 18 March. Governors sought, and were given, confirmation that the £500 addition would be paid in April salary to all members of staff including UCU members. GM assured the meeting that preparations within curriculum and operations teams had mitigated any impact on students and the mock GCSE exams. Governors were assured that the College continued to engage constructively with the trade unions but it was imperative that the planned small surplus was maintained and so there was no more money available for pay during 2025-26. As previously discussed by governors, management would hold their position and focus on looking for options for a pay increase for 2026-27. In discussion with union representatives they had acknowledged that early discussions in relation to 2026-27 would be helpful.

Estates projects: Progress continued across a number of estates and capital projects. At BCA construction of the Top Farm Drive building for Production Arts was nearing completion and would provide enhanced specialist facilities for students. This new building would be in use from late May. In addition, the first floor refurbishment works at Slough & Langley College were now underway supporting the wider programme of improving learning environments across the four campuses.

Safeguarding incident at Slough & Langley College (11 March 2026): GM gave the meeting assurances around the safeguarding incident at S&L College on 11 March 2026. The meeting noted the response from the DfE (dated 12 March) following an incident report being submitted

to the Head of Area as soon as the event happened. The DfE had confirmed that they were content that all appropriate measures had been taken in response to the immediate risk and the ongoing policy investigation. GM confirmed that there had been two individuals in the college car park with large knives (one of whom was a WFCG student) and the college had gone into lockdown for 90 minutes. The meeting was assured that the lockdown procedures had operated according to plan and a review of the incident had led to an action plan moving forward including the possible use of stab vests and body cameras for security staff when they were manning a knife arch. The meeting discussed the limitations of employing knife arches when entering college but management were looking at the use of mobile knife arches to check students leaving classrooms. GM confirmed that lockdown drills (shelter in place) were held regularly across all four campuses. The meeting sought, and was given, confirmation that communications to staff and students had provided reassurance after the event. The meeting asked whether students had been given access to counselling after the incident. Deputy Group Principal (KG) confirmed that a message had been sent to all students offering them support but there had been little take up; the meeting saw this as reassuring. Governors asked whether this type of incident was adequately covered on the College Risk Register. **GM confirmed that it was but she would review where it was included and the mitigations included.**

GM

The CEO & Group Principal's update was NOTED and RECEIVED.

ITEMS FOR DECISION/ APPROVAL

10.

POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

The Group Director of Governance (TR) presented a revised Code of Conduct for Corporation members and Terms of Reference for the sub-committees of the WFCG Corporation for biennial review. These had been considered at the recent Strategy Governance & Search Committee and were being recommended for approval.

- **Code of Conduct for Corporation Members:** TR informed the meeting that these had been updated to reflect the latest version of the Eversheds LLP template (19th edition 2025). Changes made include deletion of references to the ESFA and insertion of the DfE and the Secretary of State Education and there were also some titular changes to accurately reflect the current WFCG structure.
- **Committee terms of reference:** TR confirmed that the Terms of Reference had been reviewed against best practice guidelines (Audit Committee) and some changes made to reflect changes to job titles at WFCG. **Governors (AL) suggested that each of the terms of reference should be amended to include an annual review of the committee's effectiveness (self-assessed).**

TR

TR confirmed that these key documents would be brought back for biennial review in March 2028 or earlier if legislative or good practice changes occurred.

- **Fees Policy:** The Group Finance Director (LG) presented the draft WFCG Fees and Charges Policy 2026-27; both a clean and tracked changes version was presented for clarity. This had been considered in detail at the recent Resources Committee meeting and was being recommended for approval. The Group Finance Director reminded the meeting that most students at WFCG were non fee paying.

LG highlighted the changes in relation to instalment plans and outstanding fees for withdrawing students. The Fees Policy had also been amended to give the College some protection when students withdrew from course where fees were chargeable. The revised policy made it clear that fees were still chargeable if a student withdrew; this would provide additional protection and allow the College to recoup costs incurred. LG confirmed that there would still be the option for each case to be considered and a decision to be taken but it provided a fallback position.

The meeting agreed that the new format Fees Policy was easier to read and more user-friendly.

All of the above policies were APPROVED as presented – subject to the inclusion of an annual review of effectiveness in the terms of reference.

(All Members were agreed.)

11.

EVOLVING GOVERNANCE ROLE UNDER FE AND SKILLS WHITE PAPER AND NEW COLLEGE OVERSIGHT REGIME.

The meeting considered a paper which supported a strategic discussion on how the Board's role should continue to evolve in light of the direction set out in the Further Education and Skills White Paper and the updated College Oversight, Improvement and Intervention framework from the Department for Education.

The paper invited governors to consider:

- Whether current governance arrangements at WFCG provided sufficient early warning and assurance
- How the Board evidenced alignment to local skills priorities
- Whether governance processes were sufficiently robust and agile in a more intervention sensitive environment.

GM reminded the meeting that this paper had been drafted at the request of SG&S Committee (November 2025) when Governor Tony Haines had highlighted the changing focus of DfE intervention. The meeting noted that the direction set out in the Further Education and Skills White Paper and the updated Department for Education College Oversight, Improvement and Intervention framework would shift governance expectations in three ways:

- Stronger integration of quality, finance, and local skills contribution
- More explicit regional oversight via Regional Improvement Teams (RITs); these would be co-ordinated by the office of the FE Commissioner (FEC).
- Clearer and earlier intervention triggers, including a Notice to Improve

Governance would now be judged not just on compliance but on early grip, system alignment and resilience. The Board's role would need to move beyond reviewing historic performance towards governing for resilience and early intervention. Strong governance would now expect that risks were identified by the Board and addressed before they became formal triggers for regulatory action. The meeting agreed that the strong risk management process and the clear Risk Register at WFCG which was regularly reviewed and linked to the strategic priorities of the Group provided strong assurance for governors.

GM highlighted that FE colleges would now be judged in the context of their contribution to local skills needs and the wider system. Governance would therefore require greater awareness of place-based responsibilities and strategic partnerships. There would be a need to stay ahead of local risks for example the impact on Adult Skills Funding if there was a change of leaders at the next local government elections. Anecdotal evidence from other areas of the country demonstrated new Reform councils removing ESOL provision.

The meeting agreed that governance challenge would need to be forward looking rather than reactive. Effective governance would now depend on predictive oversight: identifying emerging pressures, testing assumptions and maintaining early grip on quality, financial sustainability and control. A big element of this new oversight regime would also look at governor training and support. The meeting agreed the importance of colleges being self-aware and having a timely conversation with DfE when issues were identified. This acknowledgement of risk and failure was key to good governance. GM flagged the strong risk register and board assurance framework in place at WFCG which identified key risks in relation to the key triggers for intervention.

The meeting discussed the new oversight regime which would be driven through Regional Improvement Teams (RIT); these would be led by FEC staff but also involve DfE staff and representatives from other relevant public sector bodies. These oversight teams would be more diagnostic and more visible moving forward working alongside college management. The RITs would be light touch when colleges were performing well with more day-to-day involvement being triggered in relation to areas of poor performance. GM reminded the

meeting that her new role as one of the Deputy FECs would involve heading up a RIT. GM emphasised the importance of contacting the FEC Team and DfE contacts as soon as any areas of poor performance were identified. A recent example of this at WFCG was when the college self-reported the issue with apprenticeship performance date 2024-25 before it was known externally. This had resulted in a really useful support health check visit on apprenticeships from the lead FEC specialist who was on site for two days. GM commended this very valuable consultancy which had provided a strong catalyst for change; the college now had a clear action plan for improvement. The meeting noted that the detailed report and an overview of the improvement actions had been taken to the Quality & Curriculum Committee on 5 March.

The meeting discussed the need to demonstrate how provision contributed to local skills and the challenge on securing current labour market data. GM confirmed that anecdotal evidence suggested that all colleges were struggling to get the necessary level of forward looking granular data. GM informed the meeting that the Thames Valley Principals had commissioned RCU to do some work on economic impact at a cost of £1,500 per college. This data had been used to inform the updated College Annual Accountability Agreement 2026.

The meeting talked about the evolving need to focus on the Group structure as WFCG was still operating in silos to some degree. There was an urgent need to look at consistency across the whole Group which was currently being actioned by the SLT.

The meeting commended the useful paper and agreed that there would be a lot to think about in terms of the demands of the FE Skills White Paper and the impending curriculum reform.

The Board:

- i) NOTED the evolving expectations of governance within the college oversight regime.**
- ii) SUPPORTED the proposed shift in governance emphasis towards early intervention, regulatory readiness and system alignment.**

➤ Letter from new FE Commissioner (FEC): February 2026

The committee also noted a recent letter from the new FE Commissioner, Ellen Thinnesen (10 February 2026) which outlined the Technical and Vocational Qualification Reforms and the Post-16 Education and Skills agenda. This was supported by a paper which highlighted the potential strategic, financial and regulatory implications for the College and provided assurance that reform alignment was being considered within curriculum planning and strategic decision making. The meeting noted the current uncertainty around how the wholesale changes to the technical and vocational qualifications would impact FE Colleges. The introduction of new V Levels was due to be confirmed soon but the meeting noted that these smaller qualifications were likely to be popular for delivery within school sixth forms as part of a mix and match offer alongside A Levels. The larger T Levels had not settled yet or recruited well so it was currently a slightly confusing landscape.

The meeting went on to consider what this curriculum reform would mean from the perspective of governance and oversight and what changes might be required in governance practice. Important factors moving forward were agreed as:

- The need to ensure that national skills priorities were embedded into the Group's strategic planning. This would include the need to focus resources against key skills priorities so that resources were not spread too thinly. Curriculum planning must clearly align provision to skills priorities.
- This would place ongoing importance on employer involvement in curriculum design and delivery. Any example of curriculum not being tailored to employer requirements could have a negative impact very quickly.
- Course design would need to enable clear progression routes.
- Important to focus on the Group's Annual Accountability Agreement and ensure that it accurately reflected and responded to the economic impact and shared data. There would be a need for better regional collaboration in order to inform curriculum planning.

- The ongoing pressure on funding would necessitate oversight on ensuring that curriculum efficiency and margins were good enough. Governors agreed that attendance at Quality Review Boards by governors was a really useful tool to inform these discussions.
- The defence of creative industries as the strategy to down-skill creative industries developed, this would enable people access jobs with lower qualifications.
- There would be an enhanced role for FE colleges as a focal point in local communities. Their role in promoting general social mobility and the wider work done e.g. in relation to ESOL would be key. The meeting discussed the inherent tension between this increasing role and the downward pressure on adult funding which was forecast to get worse over the next few years.
- There would be a need for governing bodies to stay very up to date on the changing environment and to adopt a forward-looking mode of operation. Board time needed to be spent spotting problems coming over the hill and using best practice tools to resolve these where needed. This would have to be a new focus for college corporations as in the past FE governance had focussed on looking back to review performance and monitor historical data. However, the compliance aspects of the FE sector would not allow Boards to let go of this under the current regime.

The meeting commended this useful paper which came at a time of wholesale curriculum reform. The Deputy Group Principal (KG) confirmed that there was likely to be some change for 2027-28 delivery with a wholesale implementation in September 2028. The meeting agreed that it was crucial for there to be some clarity on what would need to be delivered from September 2027. The details of any defunded qualifications would also become clearer. The meeting talked about how this curriculum reform would impact all aspects of college operations. The impact on financial forecasting would be seen to some extent in the CFFR 2026-27 with a massive impact on the following year. There would also need to be a clear focus on marketing and meeting learner demands as well as providing information and guidance in schools. On a technical level the college would also need to ensure that it had access to the new qualification specifications on a timely basis; SLT would need to drive this forward. FE College Boards would need to work with SLT and think clearly about change management.

The letter from the FE Commissioner and the paper on governance practice was NOTED and RECEIVED.

➤ WFCG Strategic Plan 2024-29 update

The Group Principal and CEO (GM) presented a RAG rated version of the Strategy Map 2024-29 which reflected progress made at the mid-year point of the 2025-26 academic year. Governors noted that the College continued to make strong progress across its strategic priorities, with growth evident in 16–19, apprenticeships and full-cost provision. GM highlighted that the correct number of additional retained learners for 2025-26 at the end of the six-week census period was 115 (not 62 as shown in the report). This would generate lagged funding for 2026-27 and take income to circa £55m; this had risen from £42m at merger (August 2022) so this was agreed as strong growth. GM confirmed that the annual financial forecast (CFFR) for 2026-27 would be completed on a prudent basis and would not assume any further growth above this confirmed lagged funding. The meeting was reminded that the Group had been unable to secure the additional commissioned places and funding via Slough Borough Council to take up the opportunity to introduce the 14–16 school full-time provision from September 2026 and would therefore defer this until the funding could be agreed and secured. Governors agreed that this was a disappointing position to be in given the significant local need which had been identified. Another key challenge remained in relation to adult funding, which was expected to be subject to a 10% cap on growth.

GM also highlighted the Apprenticeship achievement rate which remained an ongoing challenge. The meeting was reminded that the lead on apprenticeships with the FE Commissioner's Team was providing advice to the Apprenticeship Team at WFCG as discussed earlier in the meeting.

Significant progress had been made against priority five; financial health had improved significantly with the Group now generating a small operational surplus and much improved EBITDA. GM reminded the meeting that the financial health grading of "Good" for 2024-25

had been confirmed by the DfE and the forecast was on track to be at the top-end of this grade for 2025/26 with a DfE point score of 240 (the previous forecast for 'Outstanding' financial health had now been amended). GM highlighted that in the January 2026 management accounts all areas of revenue were ahead of budget.

GM highlighted the ongoing focus on the quality aspect which would need a very close focus as the College had not yet gone through an Ofsted inspection under the new regime. There was a lot of ongoing continuous personal development (CPD) being undertaken at all levels of management including both of the Principals undertaking Ofsted nominee training. SLT had identified an ongoing need to iron out any inconsistency across the group which would be a key factor that Ofsted would now look at. GM confirmed that the Deputy Group Principal and two Principals were working hard to ensure more consistency between the FE and Sixth Form monitoring.

GM highlighted other areas of progress which included the Digital Strategy and ongoing improvements in Information and Guidance and Safeguarding. Additional resource was now being provided to support neuro-diversity and mental health across all of the colleges. Other key areas for focus would continue to be maintaining close links with employers to ensure that the WFCG curriculum offer was relevant. The wider stakeholder management agenda would become ever more important.

The meeting was pleased to note that there were no priorities rated as 'red' all were 'green' (achieved) or 'amber' (on track for completion). GM suggested that a new CEO might have a new format for the College Strategic Plan and it would need to be revised for 2026-27 in light of any new CEO's strategic vision for WFCG.

Progress against the WFCG Strategy Map 2024-29 was NOTED.

➤ DfE guide to effective practice in strategic planning

The meeting noted this guidance which had been issued by DfE in late November 2025. GM highlighted that WFCG had contributed to the good practice suggestions in this document. WFCG's risk management process had been used as an example with evidence of mapping strategic priorities against risks. The importance of governing bodies and the SLT in framing strategic planning for colleges with the need for clear planning, presenting, implementing and monitoring. GM cited the positive example of clear timebound actions being used in the performance management process across WFCG. The ongoing governance challenge at WFCG facilitated regular review of progress against the Group's strategic objectives.

The DfE Guidance was NOTED

12.

RISK REGISTER

The Group Principal (GM) presented the Risk Register for 2025/26 which continued to be reviewed and updated by the Senior Leadership Team. The meeting discussed the highest scoring risks and the updated narrative explaining current mitigation and assurance levels. GM highlighted the newly focussed risk in relation to digital, IT and cyber security which had now been moved to risk 1 with the highest score on the WFCG Risk Register.

- Risk 1 IT Failure with loss of data for staff or students. Risk of cyber-attacks across FE sector (risk score increased from 16 to 20 but still 'amber'): GM confirmed that the sector continued to experience a significant increase in cyber threats; the risk remained chronic and high impact. Governors noted that although controls and mitigations had strengthened, the inherent risk remained substantial. GM informed the meeting that the Group Director Digital and IT had attended the recent Resources Committee meeting to provide assurance in relation to this key risk. Recent updates to provide additional mitigation included:
 - Implementation of mandatory multi-factor authentication for all users
 - Enhanced Microsoft A5 security licensing
 - Ongoing phishing simulation programme demonstrating significant improvement in staff awareness
 - Deployment of JISC Critical Protection Services for key infrastructure
 - Progress in the device replacement programme to address ageing equipment
 - Continued move towards cloud first infrastructure and managed services

The CEO affirmed that the Executive team considered that while mitigation was improving the likelihood score, the impact of a major cyber incident remained severe, meaning the risk score remained high and requires continued monitoring. Group Finance Director (LG) highlighted a new risk factor in relation to the increasing costs of the replacement programme for old equipment. The volatile market and recent shortages and price increases for RAM and chips could threaten the proposed completion date for the replacement programme.

The meeting discussed other current IT projects which were currently being undertaken; this included the replacement finance software package with a programme to move to 'iplicit' from 1 August 2026. Software to manage academic performance had also been changed from ProAchieve to Strata in order to reduce the costs of the associated infrastructure.

- Risk 2 Failure to meet budget forecast or targets to reduce the operating deficit (risk score remains at 16 'amber'): Acute risk linked to financial health; the upwards pressure on pay was still a very real concern. GM reminded the meeting that lagged funding, increased funding rates, additional adult and apprenticeship income and tight control of costs had returned the College to a positive EBITDA and financial health in 2024/25. The college was now building on this 'hockey-stick' recovery to recover cash reserves and generate an additional small surplus for 2025-26. Cash days were now meeting the FE Commissioner benchmark of 40 days for the first time in two years. However, the ongoing pressure of staff costs and the pay dispute with UCU remained a significant risk; pay costs as a percentage of income were still at the very top of acceptable parameters. LG also highlighted that the college was investigating leasing options for IT equipment in order to maintain cash reserves. The meeting was assured that the FY26 mid-year position was on track to meet the budgeted break-even/ small operating surplus at year-end.
- Risk 3 Uncertainty and risks associated with emerging national curriculum reforms (risk score remains at 9 'green'): This key 'acute' risk was being well managed and senior staff continued to be engaged in advisory groups linked to reform. Senior Staff were working to evaluate future strategies in light of the recently published Skills White Paper and government guidance and sector updates were being closely monitored as discussed earlier in the meeting. Curriculum planning for recently announced reforms including new V Level qualifications from September 2027 would be taken forward. The Deputy Group Principal confirmed that WFCG was well ahead in planning for these wholesale reforms, (this would be discussed later in the meeting).
- Risk 4 Loss of vehicular access to Slough & Langley (S&L) campus (risk score remains at 12 'amber'): The meeting was reminded of this risk which had recently emerged but noted that mitigations were now in place (details would be discussed later in the agenda under the Estates item).

Members NOTED and RECEIVED the updated College Risk Register.

13.

STUDENT TRANSPORT TENDER

To Group Director of Finance (LG) presented a paper which informed the Board of Governors of the student transport tender currently underway and outlined the key approval dates. LG confirmed that the three-year contract period with the existing coach companies would end in summer 2026 and as such the College Group was undertaking a Competitive Flexible Procedure (CFP) to award a 3 year contract for 14 College bus routes; WFCG was using the assistance of Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC) for this tender. LG highlighted that as the Group was seeking a 3-year contract with local coach provider(s) who could service these 14 existing routes the total value of the contracts would exceed £3m and approval would be required from the Corporation.

The meeting noted the detailed background to the provision of the coaches at BCA with limited suppliers across the numerous routes. LG confirmed that in order to ensure that suppliers had certainty of the contract award prior to the start of autumn term, the College would need to approve the award of contract internally on Monday 27 April 2026 and issue the award decision notice on Tuesday 28 April 2026. LG was suggesting that to enable the timetable to be met, approval would be sought by written resolution. Her proposed timeline was for the

written resolution to be shared by email on Friday 24 April 2026, with a request for a response by Monday 27 April 2026. The Chair (JC) **suggested that this turnaround for governors approval was too tight and if possible, governors should be given more time to consider the written resolution.** The meeting sought clarification on whether the coach provision was subsidised and LG confirmed that the college recovered circa 85% of total costs when staff costs and leasing for the college minibus fleet was included.

The Corporation:

- **NOTED the operational need for the provision of student transport to and from the BCA campus**
- **NOTED that a CFP that was being undertaken to secure a 3-year contract,**
- **AGREED that approval could be sought by written resolution but that governors should be given longer than one weekend to consider the proposal in advance of Monday 27 April 2026.**

LG/ TR

(All members were agreed.)

14.
14.1

ACADEMIC REPORT

Update on in-year performance 2025/26

The meeting noted an update report, presented by the Acting Deputy Group Principal (KG), which gave the meeting assurance on performance year-to-date against the College KPIs. KG highlighted the following summary data:

- **Group attendance is 88.7% (+0.2pp)** and remains below the 90% KPI. Attendance continued to be the main performance risk.
- **Group retention is 94.1% (+0.7pp)** and is now close to the 95% KPI, showing positive improvement.
- **BCA** – Strong retention but slight declines in both measures; attendance now just below target.
- **Langley** – Retention improving and close to KPI; attendance improving but remains below target.
- **Strode's** – Attendance at KPI and improving; retention improving but remains below target.
- **Windsor** – Attendance improving but remains below KPI; retention has declined and remains a concern.
- **Sector context:** While national attendance across general further education colleges is reported at approximately **85%**, and sector retention typically sits in the **low to mid 90s**, the Group benchmarks performance against higher internal standards (90% attendance / 95% retention). Although our current attendance (88.7%) compares favourably to sector averages, it remains below our agreed KPI and is therefore subject to continued intervention. Retention (94.1%) is broadly in line with national expectations but remains just below our internal target, with site-level variance requiring focused action.

The meeting considered the current strategic curriculum risks and the mitigations and controls in place.

Current Strategic Risks

- i) Apprenticeship achievement rates below benchmark in specific standards
- ii) Attendance below KPI in certain curriculum areas
- iii) Financial viability of some adult provision under review
- iv) Inconsistent implementation of new processes across sites

Controls and improvement actions:

- i) Enhanced oversight and monitoring by the newly appointed curriculum leadership team
- ii) Targeted performance intervention at standard level
- iii) Curriculum rationalisation and strengthening of key quality assurance processes

iv) Cross group moderation and quality assurance to ensure consistency

Apprenticeship Update 2024/25: The meeting noted a detailed update on improvement work taking place in this area of provision. The meeting was reminded that the College had reached out to the DfE and the FE Commissioner (FEC) for support after apprenticeship performance dipped below the minimum level of performance for 2024-25.

KG reminded the meeting that a specialist adviser (LW) from the FEC team had been allocated to work with the Group. LW had spent two days across the FE colleges in February 2026 and had made some very useful observations and recommendations. Governors were pleased to note that the draft FEC Health Check report from February 2026 highlighted that the apprenticeships provision across WFCG was showing signs of recovery and stabilisation. The report noted significant improvements in retention, although there remained a notable variability in performance across different campuses and apprenticeship standards. This would require more consistent frameworks for curriculum planning, progress monitoring and employer engagement. KG assured the meeting that all areas noted in the report were already areas of intervention. The meeting noted the detail of the report which highlighted data updates, strengths and good practice (including robust governance arrangements offering strong strategic oversight and constructive challenge) and ongoing key risks and operational challenges. KG confirmed that the detailed action plan would be submitted to the DfE by the end of March 2026 detailing the nine key actions outlined in the report. The meeting confirmed that the action plan appeared to be very comprehensive and the link governor for apprenticeships (SS) asserted the value of the recent FEC input in this area.

Governors (SMD) suggested that moving forward it would be important to take more comprehensive performance data on apprenticeships to the Quality & Curriculum Committee; this would allow clear oversight of progress against the improvement action plan.

KG

Higher Education (HE) & Access to HE: The meeting noted the positive update on HE provision across the Group. KG highlighted that current enrolments remained small but stable, with a clear strategy to grow provision selectively in areas aligned to local skills demand and financial sustainability. The meeting was assured that HE curriculum planning was being adapted to reflect modular delivery expectations under the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE), ensuring flexibility, credit accumulation and future funding readiness. HE provision continued to strengthen alignment with local labour market priorities, supporting progression into high-demand sectors and responding to Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).

Adult provision: KG informed the meeting that adult provision continued to be reviewed to ensure sustainability and alignment to local skills needs. Current priorities included:

- Ensuring viable group sizes
- Aligning adult curriculum to regional skills priorities
- Improving attendance and completion rates
- Agreeing a future spend strategy on adult funding allocations, in particular a clear strategy on ESOL spending in light of external funding pressures.
- Maintaining close watch on the current allocation spend.

The meeting discussed the ongoing pressure on the adult funding budget and the reduction in direct DfE adult funding that would occur in 2026-27 as a result of devolution. KG reminded the meeting that in devolved local authorities adult funding would come via the local authorities; this would not be allocated automatically and learners would have to apply for their funding. KG assured the meeting that management were keeping a very careful eye on what this would mean for learners and the adult curriculum in 2026-27. Governors were reminded that adult enrolment was currently halted at Slough and Langley as there was no additional money available for 2025-26. Current fears were in relation to the impact on the community provision which was likely to be defunded as non-regulated provision; this would affect ESOL and the Southall provision.

Landex Review of BCA: the meeting noted the findings of the recent Landex review which had reflected positively on:

- i) The strengthening of BCA's identity within the wider Group following merger
- ii) Improved financial health, enabling targeted investment in land-based provision
- iii) Strategic estate development aligned to curriculum delivery
- iv) Clear progress in quality processes and staff development

The review had identified clear next steps and four recommendations which were developmental and aligned closely with existing Group priorities around teaching consistency, challenge and intervention.

The Academic Update report was NOTED

14.2

➤ New Ofsted Toolkit

The meeting took the detailed PowerPoint presentation on the format of the new Ofsted Toolkit as read. KG highlighted that the proposed direction of travel within the new Ofsted framework placed greater emphasis on:

- Learner experience over time
- Curriculum coherence and sequencing
- Attendance, behaviour and attitudes
- Personal development
- Impact of leadership and management

The meeting noted that the WFCG Self-Assessment Report model and curriculum planning process had been revised so that they intentionally aligned to this direction to ensure inspection readiness and stronger internal quality assurance. The new format Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) for 2025-26 were now being used in the termly Quality Review Boards which ensured responsiveness rather than retrospective evaluation. The revised Self-Assessment Review process ensured that judgements were evidence-based and data-led with a focus on impact rather than narrative description. Priorities for improvement were now tightly aligned to measurable outcomes. Governors (SMD) sought confirmation on whether the curriculum Self-Assessment Reports had been rewritten to reflect the new format, KG confirmed that they had not it was only the QIPs.

KG also highlighted the revised process which had been implemented for curriculum planning. A Curriculum Planning Workbook and 15 month timeline had been introduced to strengthen strategic curriculum intent, financial sustainability and workforce planning. This approach would ensure that WFCG's curriculum offer responded to demand trends but allowed early identification of courses at risk of under-recruitment. The Group would benefit from more accurate staffing utilisation planning and improved integration between curriculum, MIS and HR. It would allow WFCG to have clearer oversight of curriculum growth and reform. KG confirmed that this new curriculum planning process would ensure that WFCG was in a good position to develop its Strategic Transition Plan Statement (STPS), outlining how the Group would respond and change its delivery in light of the curriculum reforms from 2027. Governors noted that the STPS was required by the DfE from all FE colleges in summer 2026.

NOTED

14.3

➤ Curriculum reform: DfE announcement (10 March 2026)

The meeting noted a briefing paper which outlined the recently announced curriculum reforms. KG reminded the meeting that the government was reforming the 16–19 qualification landscape to simplify the system and create clearer progression pathways for young people. The meeting was reminded that under the new system there would be:

Level 3 pathways

- **A Levels** – academic pathway
- **V Levels** – new applied vocational qualifications (size of one A level)
- **T Levels** – large technical programmes linked to occupational standards plus a substantial industry placement

Level 2 pathways

- **Foundation Certificate** – progression to Level 3 study

- **Occupational Certificate** – progression to employment or apprenticeships

KG highlighted that the new system would replace many existing applied general and vocational qualifications, including a significant proportion of BTEC programmes currently delivered by further education colleges. The meeting noted that this reform represented the most significant change to the post-16 education system in recent decades and would require substantial curriculum and organisational change across the college. While the reforms aimed to simplify the system and strengthen links between education and employment, they would require substantial changes in curriculum planning, workforce development, employer engagement and financial management.

The timeline for implementation would be swift with initial transition statements due in June 2026. The actual reform to existing qualifications would be introduced between 2027 and 2031, with different subject areas transitioning at different times. KG informed the meeting that she had held a meeting with the Principals and Assistant Principals to talk through the curriculum changes and think about what it would mean for WFCG. The aim was to develop clear plans for the curriculum from September 2026 after the Easter break 2026. One impact was likely to be to encourage specialisation at the different campuses, there would be less scope for duplication of offer across the Group.

The meeting NOTED:

- i) the overview of the government's reform of the 16–19 qualification system.***
- ii) the timeline for implementation.***
- iii) the financial context in which these reforms were taking place.***
- iv) the strategic implications and risks for the Group.***
- v) areas where governor oversight would be required.***

14.4 ➤ SEN (Special Educational Needs) Reform

The meeting noted a paper for background reading which informed the Board of a recent government publication on SEN. On February 23, 2026, the Government released their Education White Paper titled "Every Child Achieving and Thriving." Governors noted that this document outlined a 10-year vision for the English education system, focusing on narrowing the "disadvantage gap" and implementing a generational reform of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system. The meeting noted the key points for future action and were assured that the leadership were aware of and responding to incoming policy change.

NOTED

14.5 ➤ Higher Education (HE) key developments in light of the Post-16 and Skills White Paper

The meeting took this detailed presentation as read. It outlined the changes under the Lifelong Learning Entitlement and a shift to the modularisation of HE.

NOTED

15. **FINANCE DIRECTORATE REPORT**

The Group Finance Director (LG) presented the Finance Directorate report.

➤ Management Accounts January 2026

LG presented the second quarter management accounts for 2025-26 for information and assurance. The meeting was pleased to note that the results for Quarter 2 FY26 indicated sustained improvement to the group's operating performance; which had been supported by lagged funding from the 16-19 student growth in the previous year. The January 2026 results showed an operating surplus of £0.751m and the college was still on track to be operationally break-even for the year (this reflected the pay proposal of an additional £500 to each pay band and for all staff except senior postholders which had been included in the December reforecast). As a result of this pay increase staff costs would rise from £37.173m to £38.373m for FY26. LG confirmed that the cash balance held at 31 January was £9.455m (£1.665m

ahead of budget), of which £2.489m related to restricted capital funding. Governors noted that cash days at 31 January 2026 was at 51 days excluding the restricted capital funding. The meeting commended this cash position which was now above the revised sector minimum benchmark of 40 days. LG confirmed that cash continued to be closely monitored.

The meeting was pleased to note that payroll was also being controlled in line with budget. Planned pay increases had been made in the current year and back dated to 1st September 2025 but there continued to be a very clear focus on ensuring no creep in staff costs; all new or replacement posts were only approved after consideration by the Exec Team at their weekly meetings. The meeting was also assured that all non-pay costs continued to be well controlled. Income for the first quarter was slightly ahead of budget - £28.741m (£0.579m favourable). LG informed the meeting that the Element 3 High Needs funding had now been secured for the year with only a small amount (£15,000) yet to be received from the local authorities.

The meeting was pleased to note that the financial health score for the year-to-date was 230 and 'good'; the year end forecast was 270 points which would give an 'outstanding' grade.

The meeting noted the following summary of performance and took the detailed management accounts as read.

Key Performance Indicator	Quarter 2	Budget
EBITDA	£2.231m	£4.022m @ yr end
EBITDA % of revenue	7.95%	8.09%
Cash balance	£9.455m	£7.790m
Cash days	51 days	
Income	£28.741m	£28.162m
Pay costs	£19.361m	£18.485m
Pay as % of income	68.9%	67.73%

The Management Accounts to January 2026 were NOTED and RECEIVED.

➤ Internal Audit Reports: Safeguarding and Estates

The meeting noted the recent audit report from internal auditors WBG after their reviews of Safeguarding (January 2026) and Estates (January 2026).

Governors were pleased to note the strong level of assurance provided in relation to WFCG's safeguarding arrangements and the fact that there had only been one low level recommendation from the review. A number (19) of areas of good practice had been highlighted by WBG.

Similarly, a substantial level of assurance had been provided in relation to the WFCG's Estate Management arrangements and the fact that there had only been one medium and one low level recommendation. A number (14) of areas of Estate Management good practice had been highlighted by WBG.

The meeting was assured that these reports had been considered in detail at the Audit Committee meeting held on 11 March 2026.

The internal audit reports on Safeguarding and Estates Management were NOTED and RECEIVED.

16. **GOVERNANCE SUMMARY REPORT**

16.1 Board Membership

The Director of Governance (TR) presented a paper which detailed the Members of the Corporation with cessation dates and sub-committee membership. Governors were reminded that the current Board membership of TWFCG was determined at 22 members and there were no vacancies.

The meeting noted that the induction event for the six newly appointed governors had taken place on 9 March 2026 at BCA. This half-day induction event had included briefing from a

number of members of the senior leadership team as well as safeguarding training. Feedback from the new governors had been positive.

The meeting was reminded that Ian Thomson (IT) would be retiring from the WFCG Board on 31 March 2026; his first term of office was due to expire on 31 July 2026 but he was leaving slightly earlier to allow the recent recruitment of new governors. IT had served as a governor at BCA and WFCG for the last 10 years and his contribution to the Board would be missed. However, TR reminded the meeting that IT would remain as a co-opted member of the Capital Development Steering Group (CDSG) which was overseeing the land sale at Honey Lane on the BCA campus.

The meeting recorded a vote of thanks to IT for his considerable contribution to BCA and WFCG during his tenure as a governor.

16.2 Link Governor Scheme

The meeting noted a revised schedule of links under the Governor Link scheme and the overarching protocol. TR confirmed that the SLT links would be asked to initiate contact with their link governors. A priority for the future would be for Link Governors to attend Quality Review Boards whenever possible.

The meeting NOTED the Governance Update Report

16.3 WFCG Governance Action Plan 2025-26

The meeting discussed progress against the Governance Development Plan 2025/26 and the seven suggested components:

- i) **Succession Planning** for future Board and sub-committee membership to ensure that the Board improved its EDI composition and maintains the correct balance of skills and experience. TR highlighted the successful recruitment of six new external governors which was undertaken during December 2025 and January 2026 working with Peridot Partners.
- ii) **Senior Postholder recruitment** (CEO and Group Principal): the Board had now recruited a replacement for Gillian May who would be leaving WFCG at the end of May 2026. This would be discussed in detail during the Part II confidential section of the meeting.
- iii) Improved **information (rather than data)** to all sub-committees and Board meetings to enable governors to focus on key areas of strength and weakness. TR assured the meeting that the governors' data dashboard which started to be developed in 2024-25 would be taken forward. Governors were also reminded of the useful DfE Data Dashboard which was targeted for governors use.
- iv) To develop and maximise the input of the Mirror Board at TWFCG to improve the diversity of perspectives and views considered by the Board. This would include the establishment of an Employee Representative Board (ERB) across the group (as discussed earlier in the meeting). Governors asserted the importance of ensuring that feedback from the ERB and Mirror Board reached the governors. The meeting noted that governors should be invited to attend Mirror Board meetings moving forward (only one or two at each meeting).
- v) Further development of the **Governor Link Programme** to encourage better engagement from Governors. TR highlighted the guidance to the executive to try and make Link meetings more meaningful with a focus on existing student meetings e.g. student council and student conference.
- vi) Ongoing **support and mentoring for WFCG student governors and staff governors** when requested.
- vii) Continue to review and refine **WFCG constitutional documents and governance policies** to align with best practice.

Governors were pleased to note that all elements were on track for timely completion. TR confirmed that a self-assessment of governance would take place at the end of 2025-26 ahead of the next External Governance Review which would need to be undertaken in spring 2027.

The meeting NOTED progress against the Governance Action Plan 2025/26.

MINUTE

NO.

16.4

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 December 2025.

The nil return for use of the WFCG seal was NOTED.

17.

ESTATES UPDATE

GM presented the update and reminded the Board that all Estates matters had been discussed at the Capital Development Steering Group (3 March) and the Resources Committee (10 March).

- ***Standstill agreement with Stephenson Harwood***

The meeting noted an update on the legal position following signature of the standstill agreement with Stephenson Harwood (SH). This paper also set out the recommended strategy given that the Council was unlikely to progress enabling works for several years. GM reminded the meeting that the Group had potential claims arising from legacy site works (road access and services) at Slough and Langley College. A standstill agreement with previous WFCG legal advisers Stephenson Harwood (SH) had been signed under delegated authority already approved by the Board. This agreement preserved the College's legal position by suspending limitation until 31 December 2026. As Slough Borough Council was unlikely to proceed with enabling works for several years, the Board was asked to note the increased likelihood that negotiation and/or litigation might be required, and to support a cost-controlled plan to preserve evidence and quantify loss. GM confirmed that the standstill agreement provided governance assurance that rights would not be lost due to inaction in the short term. GM highlighted the need for the standstill agreement to be renewed on an annual basis – October/ November each year.

The update was NOTED.

ACTION: Standstill agreement with Stephenson Harwood to be added to the Resources Committee work schedule as an annual standing agenda item.

- ***Sale of land at Honey Lane, BCA***

The meeting received an update on the likely completion timeline for the sale of the Honey Lane site at BCA to Elivia Homes. GM informed the meeting that at the end of February Elivia submitted Condition 12 – Surface Water Drainage Scheme to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM). Once this planning condition was discharged, the sale contract would require an 8-week legal challenge period followed by 5 working days before completion. The meeting noted that based on current assumptions, completion was anticipated around late May 2026, although this would be dependent on the Council's determination in relation to condition 12 and might move into June 2026 or later. So although frustrating there was still a clear timeline to completion and hopefully receipt of the sale funds in 2025-26; this would allow the heritage repair and restoration project to commence. Governors were reminded that the Capital Development Steering Group (CDSG) – which reported into resources Committee – continued to monitor the land sale; CDSG last met on 3 March 2026. The meeting noted and received the minutes from this CDSG meeting.

The update was NOTED.

18.

APPLICATIONS REPORT

The meeting noted the current applications report for 16-19 programmes at 10/03/26 which showed that the Group was 16% (570 learners) ahead of the same position in the prior year for applications. Offers accepted were 38% (496 learners) ahead of the prior year. All four colleges were ahead of the prior year for applications and offers accepted.

GM reminded the meeting that the demographic data did not support this forecast growth so management were treating the figures with caution. However, as with previous years the budget for 2026-27 would assume no learner growth; any growth achieved in September 2026 would then have a positive impact on lagged funding for 2027-28.

The applications update was NOTED

ACTION

TR

<u>MINUTE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-year Funding 2025-26 <p>Governors noted a report which confirmed that the college was meeting or exceeding all elements of its DfE and Adult Skills Budget for 2025/26. The meeting noted the progress against the detailed targets in the strategic plan for all key elements of funding.</p> <p>Members NOTED the funding update.</p>	
19.	<p><u>Minutes from Capital Development Steering Group – 3 March 2026</u></p> <p>The meeting noted the minutes of this meeting and were assured that all key matters had been reported to the meeting under the preceding Estates Report.</p> <p>NOTED</p>	
20.	<p><u>Minutes from Strategy Governance & Search Committee – 3 March 2026</u></p> <p>The Director of Governance confirmed that the major matters considered by the meeting had been brought forward to the Board within the current agenda. <i>The minutes from this meeting would be circulated as soon as finalised.</i></p> <p>NOTED</p>	TR
21.	<p><u>Minutes from Quality & Curriculum Committee – 5 March 2026</u></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee (SS) confirmed that the major matters considered by the meeting had been brought forward to the Board within the current agenda. <i>The minutes from this meeting would be circulated as soon as finalised.</i></p> <p>NOTED</p>	TR
22.	<p><u>Minutes from Resources Committee – 10 March 2026</u></p> <p>The Resources Committee Chair (SF) confirmed that the major matters considered by the meeting had been brought forward to the Board within the current agenda. <i>The minutes from this meeting would be circulated as soon as finalised.</i></p> <p>NOTED</p>	TR
23.	<p><u>Minutes from Audit Committee – 11 March 2026</u></p> <p>The Chair of the Committee (AH) confirmed that the major matters considered by the meeting had been brought forward to the Board within the current agenda. <i>The minutes from this meeting would be circulated as soon as finalised.</i></p> <p>NOTED</p>	TR
24.	<p><u>Dates and Times of Future Meetings and Events</u></p> <p>The dates and times of future meetings were noted.</p> <p>TR confirmed that Corporation meetings were scheduled on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday, 15 May 2026, 8am to 1pm Strategy Event and meeting (venue TBA) Wednesday, 8 July 2026, 5.00pm at Slough and Langley College <p>NOTED</p>	
25.	<p><u>Any Urgent Business</u></p> <p>➤ <i>Retirement of governors</i></p> <p>Ian Thomson: The meeting thanked Ian Thomson (IT) for his long-term service as a governor of BCA and latterly WFCG; IT would be retiring from the WFCG Board on 31 March 2026. IT had joined WFCG at merger in August 2022 and had served as a key member of Audit Committee, Strategy Governance & Search Committee and as a member of Capital Development Steering Group. The Chair reminded the meeting that, as mentioned earlier in the meeting, IT had agreed to stay on as a member of CDSG until the Honey Lane land sale was finalised.</p>	

MINUTE
NO.

ACTION

Kerry Blandin: The meeting thanked ex-governor Kerry Blandin (KB) for her short tenure as a governor of WFCG and wished her well in her new role. KB had resigned from her role earlier in the year.

NOTED

There was no other urgent business. The Chair closed the meeting and thanked all governors and executive members for their hard work and congoing commitment during what had been a busy term.

The Part I meeting ended at 6.40pm.

At this stage of the meeting, it was agreed by all members present that matters of a private and confidential nature were to be discussed and had there been any members of the public present they would have been asked to leave the meeting.