



BOARD OF GOVERNORS: RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Tuesday 10 March 2025 at 08.30

Online via Zoom

| | | |
|----------------|--|---|
| PRESENT: | Jo Croft Jeo Dozono-Kim James Fernley Gillian May Antonia Spinks | <i>Acting Chair</i> <i>Group Principal and CEO</i> |
| APOLOGIES: | Sam Foley (Chair) Louise Fellows Signe Sutherland | |
| IN ATTENDANCE: | Susan Brady Dan Fairbairn Lucy Gill Karen Griffiths Tracy Reeve Wendy Stott | Group Director of People Group Director Digital Marketing & Admissions Group Director of Finance Group Vice Principal Group Director of Governance Group Management Accountant |

PART I

| <u>MINUTE</u> <u>No</u> | | <u>ACTION</u> |
|--|--|----------------------|
| 1. | <p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>The Director of Governance (TR) informed the meeting that apologies had been received as shown above. In the absence of the Resources Committee Chair (SF) the Acting Chair (JC) welcomed the new governors Jeo Dozono-Kim and James Fernley to their first Resources Committee meeting since being appointed as Corporation Members.</p> | |
| 2. | <p><u>Notifications of any other business</u></p> <p>There was no other business notified.</p> | |
| 3. | <p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>No Member or attendee declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.</p> | |
| 4. | <p><u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Resources Committee</u></p> <p>The meeting considered the minutes of the WFCG Resources Committee meeting of 25 November 2025 which had previously been circulated to all members and were agreed as a true record. They would be taken as signed by the Chair.</p> <p><i>All Members were agreed</i></p> | |
| 5. | <p><u>Matters Arising of the Previous Meeting of the Resources Committee</u></p> <p>The Group Director of Governance (TR) confirmed that all matters arising had been actioned or would be actioned in the future (timing not due for completion yet).</p> <p>TR presented a reminder of the written resolution that had been approved on 9 January 2025 by the Resources Committee in relation to attender for work at Slough and Langley College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appointment of South Anston Ltd as Principal Contractor for the First Floor North Wing refurbishment works. | |

- The appointment of Turnkey Facilities Services Ltd as the nominated M&E contractor for the project and associated services.

The Acting Chair (JC) sought confirmation on a written resolution in relation to Microsoft Licensing but TR confirmed that this would be reported to the Board (18/03/26) as it had been a Corporation resolution. It would also be referenced in agenda item 10 of the meeting.

NOTED

6. **WFCG Fees Policy and fees proposal 2026/27**

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.

LG highlighted the changes in relation to instalment plans and outstanding fees for withdrawing students.

Instalment Plans: LG informed the meeting that an additional section had been added at 3.2 to provide clarity on the availability of instalment plans for fees. This would cover any scenario where a student did not pay their fee at enrolment as they were applying for Student Loan funding. If they applied for a Student Loan and were not successful, they would not be able to split their fees into the standard four payments (25% each time). There would not be time to schedule four payments so payments would be expected in 50% then 25% and 25%. The Fees Policy now made this explicit where a student 'missed' the first 25% payment at enrolment.

Outstanding fees at withdrawal: LG highlighted that 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 separately and a decision could be taken but it provided a fallback position.

The Acting Chair (JC) sought confirmation on whether learners non-payment of fees was common and whether it was a significant risk for WFCG. LG confirmed that the Finance Team were now working more closely with MIS staff to identify whether withdrawing student had paid enough for the teaching that they had received. Withdrawals did not go ahead until any outstanding fees were considered. LG informed the meeting that moving forward the College was using AI more to flag debts due with students. LG confirmed that sometimes if it was a complicated withdrawal then the question of outstanding fees could get tricky but having a clear section in the WFCG Fees Policy would help. Deputy Group Principal (KG) informed the meeting that curriculum teams had also started having early conversations with learners if and when fees payments started to slip. The curriculum staff had easier access to learners and could pick up any issues earlier with them (once flagged by the finance team). Better shared communication between the finance team and curriculum staff would make this easier to manage.

The Fees Policy was APPROVED as presented.

(All Members were agreed.)

7. **Procurement Policy**

The Group Finance Director (LG) presented a draft WFCG Procurement Policy; this was a new stand-alone policy although WFCG did have a procurement strategy. LG informed the meeting that the narrative of this draft policy was in draft format as she was still awaiting final clearance from the College's procurement specialists, CPC (Crescent Purchasing Consortium). LG highlighted that she was awaiting confirmation from CPC that the wording of the draft Procurement Policy met the requirements of The Procurement Act 2023 (which came into force on 24 February 2025). This act was applicable to the UK's public procurement regime; FE Colleges had to comply with the requirements of this new act. It was also noted that the procurement policy would need to meet the requirements of the Treasury's Managing Public Money (MPM) guidelines. The meeting noted that the WBG internal audit of procurement at WFCG (June 2025) had flagged the need for this separate policy. LG confirmed that the college Financial Regulations included a section on procurement but this was not full enough to comply with the requirements of the new

Procurement Act. LG confirmed that she would ensure that the sign-off limits in the Finance Regulations aligned with the Procurement Policy. The meeting considered the draft policy (presented as clean and tracked changes for clarity). LG highlighted the increase in sign-off limits for Heads of Department (HoDs) – from £500 to £2,500 - which had not changed since the merger in August 2022. The aim of the procurement Policy was to provide clarity on reporting limits, approval limits and the necessary procurement route in relation to procurement thresholds.

The detail of the Procurement Policy was noted as follows:

- **Procurement thresholds** defined requirements for competition across the College Group:
 - under £2,500 value-for-money checks;
 - £2,500 to £10,000 two written quotes;
 - £10,000 to £30,000 three quotes;
 - £30,000 to £100,000 framework or waiver;
 - above £100,000 full tendering.
- **Reporting requirements** would ensure oversight and governance across the College Group:
 - purchases above £500,000 require Corporation approval;
 - £200,000–£500,000 require Resources Committee approval;
 - £100,000 to £200,000 require Principal & Chief Executive approval with noting by the Resources Committee.
 - All contracts above £30,000 must be added to the contract register.
- **Approval authority** across the College Group would be hierarchical:
 - Department Managers approve under £2,500;
 - Assistant Principals/Curriculum Directors £2,500–£10,000;
 - Executive Leads £10,000–£15,000;
 - Group Finance Director £15,000–£50,000;
 - Group Principal & CEO £50,000–£1,000,000.
- **Single-source procurement (waivers)** would only be permitted where justified and approved:
 - up to £25,000 by the Group Finance Director;
 - up to £50,000 by the Group Principal & CEO.
 - Above these limits requires committee or Corporation approval.

JC sought clarity on how staff would know whether to go to Finance Regulations or the Procurement Policy to seek guidance the process. LG agreed that she needed to make the Finance Regulations clearer on when staff needed to consult the full Procurement Policy. LG highlighted that the requirement for a full tender process would only kick in at £30,000 so this was the key threshold when staff needed to consult the Procurement Policy. **JC highlighted the need to change the individual SLT names to job roles in the Annex table.**

LG

The meeting discussed the training requirements for managers. LG confirmed that training on the procurement rules would tie in with the training for the new finance system and would be built into staff CPD days at the end of the 2025-26 academic year. LG informed the meeting that a very recent internal audit report looking at 'budgeting' had made a recommendation in relation to training for HoDs so this would tie together. JC commended what would appear to be a smoother more controlled procurement process and sought confirmation that the new finance system would flag the changes to the procurement limits. LG confirmed that any Purchase Order would be referred up the chain of command until it was authorised at the correct level. LG informed the meeting that internal auditors WBG

would undertake a follow-up audit in June 2026 so would be able to report on the progress made in implementing the Procurement Policy.

The meeting NOTED the draft Procurement Policy which would be checked by CPC for compliance with the Procurement Act 2023.

ACTION: Final WFCG Procurement Policy to be presented to Resources Committee in June 2026 alongside the updated Finance Regulations.

LG

8.

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. The Group Director of Digital (DF) presented 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'): DF 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.

DF outlined recent updates which 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 required continued monitoring. DF also 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. Governors were reminded that the whole estate would have circa 2,500 machines reaching 'end of life' during the next twelve months and the increased costs would also affect the replacement programme for classroom display screens.

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. The meeting discussed the managed SIEM (Security Information and Event Management) and SOC (Security Operations Centre) provided by JISC. The move to the JISC provision was going to cost more than expected due to the large college legacy infrastructure; deemed to be more like a small university than a typical FE college. There had also been an issue in relation to compatibility with the existing firewall which had a two year contract remaining. DF assured the meeting that the IT Team were looking at other providers to check costings and look for any reduction. Governors (JF) suggested that he could provide some guidance for the team on potential routes to secure costs savings e.g. by pushing back to JISC on the data going into the managed SIEM. The meeting discussed how the interventions and mitigations were affecting the risk score and whether this was accurately reflected on the risk register. JF commended the work done to date and suggested that management now needed to think about where the college was now, what it was doing currently and where WFCG wanted to be. This would allow spending to be targeted on actions to achieve impact e.g. in reducing cyber insurance costs. **DF and JF would meet outside of the Resources Committee to unpick the IT risk analysis and look at costings moving forward.**

DF/ JF

- 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 the ongoing threat of rising costs associated with IT infrastructure replacement (as previously discussed); the college was investigating leasing options 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. Curriculum planning for recently announced reforms including new V Level qualifications from September 2027 would be taken forward.
- 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.

Members NOTED and RECEIVED the updated College Risk Register.

ACTIONS: Management to refresh the IT Risk reflecting discussions at the meeting.

9. **Write-off salary overpayment**

The Group Director of People (SB) presented a paper asking for the Resources Committee to approve a write-off of a payroll overpayment (£12,519) to a member of staff. SB confirmed that this proposal complied with the rules set out in *Managing Public Money* issued by HM Treasury.

SB outlined the circumstances leading to the overpayment which started in March 2023 when a member of staff was move from a sessional contract to a fractional contract. An error on the hours of work (too high initially) was corrected on the contract but not notified to payroll. This error had been picked up on a recent internal audit of payroll. The correct salary had resulted in a drop of circa £4,000 per year to £19,000. SB asserted that recovery of £12,519 on a salary of circa £19,884 would result in hardship compounded by the recent reduction in salary. SB also informed the meeting that she did not believe that the member of staff was aware of the error; it had been masked by the move from sessional pay. SB confirmed that the member of staff concerned had been notified of the error and the salary reduction; they remained concerned about recovery if the overpayment was not written off. The HR Team had also considered the legal framework for deductions under the Employment Rights Act 1996. Whilst recovery may technically be permissible, management considered full recovery to be disproportionate and potentially unreasonable in the circumstances.

The meeting was assured that payroll processes and controls had been changed since this error so it was very unlikely that this could happen again. Actions implemented since March 2023 included: a review of payroll change processes; additional checking during contract changes; and improved reconciliation between HR contracts and payroll records. JC asked officers to confirm whether there were any other implications in terms of audit or compliance. Group Finance Director (LG) suggested that the error and any subsequent write-off should be flagged with the external auditors when they undertook the payroll review (within the audit of the 2025-26 financial statements). Although not a material sum of money it would be better to flag it rather than having it found by auditors.

Governors asked how any write-off would be managed in terms of communication. SB confirmed that the HR Team would have to be mindful about what was said and it would be important to make it clear that this was a 'special circumstance' and that not that every overpayment would be written off.

The meeting agreed that this case and the fact that it was caused by an error in HR made the

write-off of the over payment the right course of action. However, the committee did emphasise the need for a tight process moving forward to mitigate any reoccurrence. It was suggested that a review of the internal operational error should identify the root cause and stop it happening again.

The Resources Committee NOTED the circumstances leading to the salary overpayment and APPROVED the proposed write-off of £12,519.

(All Members were agreed.)

10.

Update on current tenders

- **Langley brick workshop roof**

Following completion of the competitive tender process for the Brick Workshop Roof Refurbishment Works at Langley College, three compliant tenders were received. The meeting was reminded that this tender had been managed by the college's procurement advisers CPC and commercial property specialists Vail Williams.

After detailed review and clarification, the lowest valid tender was submitted by Inspire Contracts Limited in the sum of £96,415 plus VAT. This figure reflected a post-clarification adjustment of £2,196 to correct labour allowances identified during tender analysis. The amended tender remains approximately 18% below the pre-tender budget of £117,770 plus VAT and is considered arithmetically correct, compliant, and unqualified. The meeting was assured that the tender represented good value for money and was recommended for acceptance within the professional report from Vail Williams.

LG reminded the meeting that funding had been received in June 2025 through the DfE Building Conditions Grant. Works on this project were programmed for delivery during the summer break, with site works anticipated between July and August 2026.

The Committee NOTED the update on the tender process and the appointment of Inspire Contracts Limited to undertake the Brick Workshop Roof Refurbishment Works at a cost of £96,415 plus VAT.

- **MS Licences**

The Group Director of Governance reminded the meeting of the recent Board approval of the new MS Licence by written approval (dated 27 February 2026). This had been taken for written resolution due to the tight timeline and the level of the contract value which necessitated approval at Board level.

The WFCG Corporation had noted the outcome of the competitive procurement exercise conducted via the CPC education framework and approved the full migration to Microsoft A5 licensing via Phoenix Software Limited, at a total contract value of £629,371.68 (exc. VAT) over the 3+1 year term, equating to £157,342.92 per annum.

NOTED

11.

Management Accounts

The Group Management Accountant (WS) presented the management accounts for January 2026 which had previously been circulated to all governors by email. 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. WS informed the meeting 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 the cash day position 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 and LG confirmed that cash continued to be closely monitored.

Planned pay increases had been made in the current year and back dated to 1st September

2025 which had meant that pay costs were £876,000 over the initial budget at the mid-year point. The meeting was assured that 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 Executive 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). Adult income was on track to reflect the additional 2% secured via GLA funding. WS highlighted the High Needs Element 2 funding where the college was teaching 542 learners but Slough Borough Council (SBC) were only paying for 503; the claim for the additional learners had not yet been agreed. Group Finance Director (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. This income was projected to be £400,000 over budget by the year-end. The Acting Chair (JC) sought confirmation on whether the additional Element 2 High Needs funding would be paid by SBC and if so, when this was likely to happen. LG confirmed that she had received an email (dated 11 February 2026) confirming that SBC would pay for the additional 39 learners so she had raised and sent an invoice for £156,000. However, the SBC finance team were not prepared to pay without a signed purchase order which had not yet been raised. LG assured the meeting that she would keep pushing SBC for this money but reminded governors that the £156,000 was not included in the 2025-26 forecast. The meeting also noted that SBC had used the 503 figure for the 2026-27 allocation which was a worry. LG confirmed that the executive had raised an enquiry with the specialist team at DfE in relation to this lower number as SBC had previously agreed to an allocation of 603 learners for 2026-27.

The meeting was pleased to note that the financial health score for the year-to-date was 230 and 'good'; this had been downgraded from 'outstanding' following the recent £500 pay increase for all staff (as agreed by the Board). Governors 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% |

WS drew the meetings attention to the last page of the management accounts which gave a summary of ongoing grant funded projects and the total spend to date as well as the college funded capital projects.

The CEO and Group Principal confirmed that the Group was in a strong position and on track to end the year with cash reserves of circa £8m as planned. This would allow WFCG to consolidate its operating position ahead of a challenging funding year with ongoing upward pressure on pay costs.

The Management Accounts to January 2026 were NOTED and RECEIVED.

12.

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).

- *Standstill agreement with Stevenson 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 Resources Committee 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 had 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 decision in relation to condition 12 and might move into June 2026 or later. GM assured the meeting that although the ongoing delay was 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. Regular meetings between Elivia and college management were taking place. Governors were reminded that the Capital Development Steering Group (CDSG) 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

- Capital Expenditure: including DfE grant funded projects

The meeting noted a detailed schedule of capital expenditure split by grant funded and college funded projects. This paper had also been discussed by the CDSG on 3 March 2026. The meeting commended this standing report which would be brought to every meeting of the Resources Committee as it gave governors a clear view on future committed expenditure.

The update was NOTED.

13.

Human Resources Report

The Group Director of People (SB) presented her report which provided information on the Group's key HR data for the academic year-to-date 2025-26. This report provided an analysis of key workforce metrics, including recruitment, headcount, turnover, sickness absence, and staff profile data, with a focus on identifying trends and areas requiring intervention. The report highlighted recruitment performance, workforce profile, retention activity, absence levels, and employee relations matters. The report indicated that there were improvements in staff retention, stable workforce growth, and continued progress in staff development and engagement initiatives. However, recruitment challenges, early-career turnover, rising absence levels, and ongoing industrial relations issues remained key workforce risks requiring continued monitoring and targeted intervention

The very detailed data was taken as read and the key findings were noted as follows:

- **Recruitment and Workforce Capacity:** Recruitment continued to present a significant organisational challenge, particularly in specialist teaching areas such as engineering, mathematics, and construction, alongside administrative roles where suitably qualified candidates remained limited. Market pressures were also driving higher salary expectations among applicants. During the reporting period, 83 vacancies were managed, resulting in 80 appointments, with 11 posts remaining unfilled. While overall turnover had reduced compared with previous years, recruitment difficulties continued to impact workforce planning in shortage areas.
- **Workforce Profile and Headcount:** Average staff headcount had increased to 970 employees, representing an increase of 18 staff compared with the previous academic

year. The workforce composition showed a continued shift toward support staff growth, while teaching staff numbers had gradually reduced over recent years. SB confirmed that a full-year comparative analysis would be undertaken in the next annual reporting cycle.

- **Staff Turnover and Retention:** Year-to-date staff turnover stood at 7.4%, significantly below the 17.1% recorded in 2024/25 and 25% in 2023/24. If current trends continued, a further improvement was expected by year end. However, early-career attrition remained a concern, with 36.1% of leavers leaving within their first year of employment. In response, several retention initiatives had been implemented – several of which were suggested by the Mirror Board. These included:
 - Establishment of a Recruitment and Retention Steering Group focusing initially on English and Maths.
 - Expanded staff development and teaching qualification support.
 - Introduction of mentoring and enhanced induction programmes.
 - Launch of a new Employee Assistance Programme.
 - Development of an Employee Representative Board to strengthen staff engagement and feedback mechanisms.

SB assured the meeting that benchmarking through the Association of Colleges indicated that Group turnover remains comparatively favourable within the sector.

- **Sickness Absence:** Average sickness absence currently stood at 3.15 days per employee year to date. Although lower than the previous full academic year total at this stage, projections indicated that absence levels might increase by year end 2025-26. Further analysis was planned to identify underlying causes and inform targeted interventions.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** The workforce gender profile remained stable at approximately 70% female and 30% male. Disability declarations had increased to 6.8% of staff, although still below national benchmarks, suggesting continued work was required to encourage disclosure through supportive practices. Ethnic diversity had improved, with 26.55% of staff identifying as being from ethnic minority backgrounds (this represented a year-on-year increase).
- **Employee Relations/ UCU Pay dispute:** SB reminded governors that the College remained in formal dispute with the UCU regarding pay and workload. Following negotiations and an enhanced pay offer, union members voted narrowly to reject the proposal after three days of strike action in January. The meeting noted that a second ballot had narrowly rejected the offer of an additional consolidated £500 on each pay point back dated to September 2025. This would result in two further days of strike action on 17 and 18 March 2026; the meeting noted the letter from UCU outlining this action. GM confirmed that management had made it clear to the unions that there was no additional money available for 2025-26 but the Group was willing to start early negotiations about 2026-27 pay. This had not been received well by the union representatives but they had agreed that early discussions about 2026-27 would be good. SB confirmed that the College intended to implement the enhanced pay award while preparing for the possibility of further industrial action following a new ballot.

SB updated the meeting with progress achieved in establishing an Employee Representative Board (ERB) across WFCG. An initial meeting to gauge interest from staff would take place at each of the FE campuses and the Sixth Form had talked about the principles of the ERB. The aim was to have the ERB established for a first meeting after the Easter break; a further update would be brought to the next Resources Committee meeting.

Severance Pay

The Group Director of People confirmed that there had been no severance payments made since last reported to the Resources Committee in November 2025. The Group Director of Governance reminded the meeting that this standing report would be brought to each meeting of the Resources Committee in order to give assurance around compliance with the Treasury's Managing Public Money guidelines.

The Human Resources Report was NOTED

MINUTE
No

ACTION

14.

Applications Report: Enrolment 2026/27

The meeting noted the current applications report for 16-19 programmes at 24/02/26 which showed that the Group was 17% (589 learners) ahead of the same position in the prior year for applications. Offers accepted were 44% (489 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

- ***In-year Funding 2025-26***

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.

Members NOTED the funding update

15.

Dates and Times of Future Meetings

The Director of Governance confirmed that the next meeting was timetabled for Thursday 25 June 2026 at 08.30am on Zoom. *(Later amended to 24 June at 8.30am.)*

NOTED

16.

Any Urgent Business

There were no other urgent items of business raised.

The meeting closed at 10.00am.

Chair.....

Date.....