BOARD OF GOVERNORS: RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes

Wednesday 24 June 2026 at 08.30

Online via Zoom

PRESENT:	Louise Fellows	Governor (*Committee Chair)*
	Jo Croft	Governor *(Chair of Governors)*
	Jeongmi Dozno-Kim	Governor
	Sam Foley	*Interim* CEO & Group Principal
	Signe Sutherland	Governor
APOLOGIES:	James Fernley	Governor
	Antonia Spinks	Governor
IN ATTENDANCE:	Joanna Birrell	Director of HR Planning & Delivery
	Susan Brady	Group Director People
	Dan Fairbairn	Group Director Digital, Marketing & Admissions
	Lucy Gill	Group Director of Finance
	Karen Griffiths	Deputy Group Principal
	Tracy Reeve	Group Director of Governance
	Wendy Stott	Group Management Accountant
	Oliver Symons	CEO & Group Principal *elect*

PART I

MINUTE No		ACTION
Pre	**Election of Chair** The Group Director of Governance (TR) took the meeting chair to facilitate the election of a new Resources Committee Chair. TR informed the meeting that following her email to all Resources Committee Members she had received one nomination for this vacancy; Louise Fellows (LF) had put her name forward to take on this role. Jo Croft nominated LF to take on the Chair of Resources Committee and Signe Sutherland seconded this proposal. Members thanked LF for stepping into this role. ***The meeting APPROVED the appointment of Louise Fellows as Chair of the Resources Committee with immediate effect.*** **All Members were AGREED.** [Louise Fellows stepped into the Chair's role.]	
1.	**Apologies for Absence** The Director of Governance (TR) informed the meeting that apologies had been received from Antonia Spinks. [Subsequent to the meeting The Group Director of Governance discovered that a calendar error had been made; a prior date of 25 June 2026 had not been superseded in James Fernley's diary.] The meeting welcomed Ollie Symons to the meeting who would take up his role as permanent CEO and Group Principal of The Windsor Forest Colleges Group (WFCG) on 1 September 2026. ***NOTED***	
2.	**Notifications of any other business** There was no other business notified.	
3.	**Declarations of Interest** No Member declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.	

MINUTE No		ACTION
4.	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting of Resources Committee**	
	The meeting considered the minutes of the WFCG Resources Committee meeting of 10 March 2026 which had previously been circulated to all members and ***were AGREED as a true record. They would be taken as signed by the Chair.***	
	All Members were agreed	
5.	**Matters Arising of the Previous Meeting of the Resources Committee**	
	The Director of Governance (TR) presented a report which confirmed that all matters arising had been actioned or would be actioned in the future (timing not due for completion yet).	

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

6. **Policies**

- *Procurement Policy* (new)
- *WFCG Financial Regulations* (updated)

The Group Finance Director (LG) presented the final WFCG Procurement Policy which had been drafted to meet the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023. LG reminded the meeting that the draft procurement policy had been brought to the March 2026 Resources Committee meeting. The policy had been subsequently reviewed and updated with the assistance of the Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC) to ensure that it was compliant with the Procurement Act 2023 and Managing Public Money regulations. LG highlighted that the Procurement Policy would operate alongside the College Financial Regulations so the WFCG Financial Regulations had also been updated to reflect the revised limits from 1 August 2026.

Although the approval limits in the WFCG Financial Regulations had been approved in draft at the March Resources Committee, LG informed the meeting that in order to align the limits with the Procurement Policy, the following subsequent changes were recommended:

Increase in Executive Leads sign off level from £15,000 to £29,999:

- Enabling all contracts classed as 'Low' (contract cost between £10,000 and £29,999) and requiring 3 written quotes or a Framework could be signed off by either the Group Finance Director or any of the Exec Leads.

Increase in Group Finance Director Sign off level from £50,000 to £99,999:

- Enabling all contracts classed as 'Medium' (contract levels between £30,000 and £99,999) and requiring a Framework or single source supplier could be signed off by the Group Finance Director or CEO.
- Note single source items:
  - Group Finance Director up to £25,000
  - CEO and Group Principal up to £50,000
  - Over £50,000 Resources Committee

Both of these changes were to allow some operational flexibility whilst maintaining suitable control. The detailed schedules and the two policies and changes made since the March meeting were discussed by the meeting. The Chair sought confirmation on the numbers of tenders and contracts at each of the levels and LG confirmed that there were considerably more lower level contracts. LF also sought confirmation on the level of automation within the finance system to reflect the authorisation levels. IT Director (DF) confirmed that the new finance system - Iplicit – which was taking over from the current EBIS system in July 2026 would contain threshold levels to trigger the necessary workflow and approvals; that was why the alignment of the Financial Regulations and the Procurement Policy was important. LG confirmed that the workflows were currently being finalised within the Iplicit project. The CEO and Group Principal elect (OS) confirmed that the proposals looked sensible and that he was happy for the Committee to approve them as presented.

The Resources Committee APPROVED the new WFCG Procurement Policy and the updated Financial Regulations; these would be RECOMMENDED to the Corporation for approval (8 July 2026).

All Members were agreed.

MINUTE No		ACTION

- *Modern Slavery Statement*

The Group Director of Governance (TR) presented the annual Modern Slavery Statement update for WFCG for the 2026-27 academic year which was in the standard format. TR confirmed that it was a legal requirement for a signed copy of this document (signed by the Chair of Governors) to be published on the WFCG website.

The Resources Committee APPROVED the WFCG Modern Slavery Statement 2026-27; this would be RECOMMENDED to the Corporation for approval (8 July 2026).

All Members were agreed.

7. **Budget 2026/27 and Financial Plan 2027/28**

The Group Finance Director (LG) presented the budget 2026/27 and the revised financial forecast through to 2027/28. Governors were assured that the budgets for FY27 and FY28 had been produced on a prudent basis and were based on nine months of actual data and three months of estimates. LG confirmed that the financial year 2026 (FY26), had seen the Group cement its' financial position, with continued strong financial health. Revenue had increased by £5.4m from FY25 following successfully growth in learner numbers. Careful management of costs had resulted in a positive forecast EBITDA £4.407m for FY26, and cashflow from operations of £4.1m; this would result in total cash held at year end of £10.470m. The meeting agreed that the increase in unrestricted cash from £4.5m to £7.6m (56 cash days) for FY26 would aid navigation of the challenges and uncertainties forecast to impact the FE sector in the coming years. These would include:

- *Curriculum reform*: significant changes from FY28 onwards would impact staff training costs (additional costs of £0.12m had been included from FY27 onwards for training and CPD).
- *Devolution*: the challenge that WFCG operated on the border of a number of local authorities and will need to contract with multiple devolved authorities.
- *Change in student demographic*: a forecast fall in student numbers from FY29 onwards would make ongoing growth a challenge.
- *SEND reform*: impact on element 3 income from FY29/FY30 onwards

Ongoing global events were also likely to continue to cause inflationary pressures on utility and fuel costs, maintenance materials, curriculum material costs, student transport costs, catering costs and underlying CPI. LG confirmed that these had been factored into the budgets for FY27 and FY28. The meeting noted the methodology and assumptions used in the budget and financial forecast:

- FY27 Income projections were derived from allocation statements and an anticipated 2.5% growth in commercial and estate income.
    - The grant to fund increased NI costs would cover April 2026-March 2027 and would be paid in September 2026; the budget assumed no grant for this from April 2027.
- For FY28, income projections assumed:
    - No growth in 16-19 learner numbers
    - No increase in funding rates in the light of 0.5% being awarded in FY27
    - The Inclusion Grant to be awarded at the same level as FY27 at £0.420m
    - No further NI grant after March 2027
    - TPS pension grant remaining in place
- Cost inflation was estimated at 2.5% annually, with total pay cost (including temporary staff and sessional staff) to rise by 4.7% for FY27 and 2.25% for FY28 to accommodate employer National Insurance, pension contributions and national living wage salaries.

The detail of the budget and financial plan was considered in more detail.

Income

- **DfE 16 to 19 income** for FY27 was expected to be at £37.524m including the NI grant. A provision for a decrease in T-level student numbers against the allocation had been set at £300,000.

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- **Adult Education income** including Greater London Authority (GLA) devolved funding was expected to be £2.724 in FY27, down from £3.209m in FY26. Thereafter the assumption was that FY28 income would fall by a further 10% due to the ongoing impact of devolution.
- **Apprenticeship income** was forecast to grow by 2.5% from £2.784m in FY26 to £2.854m in FY27; an additional 2.5% growth was also included for FY28. This steady growth was based on current pipeline strength and employer demand.
- **High Needs income** was forecast to continue to grow due to sustained high demand. The group had 503 DfE funded places confirmed for FY27 (same number as FY26). The 'element 3' funding from local authorities was projected to remain consistent with FY26 levels at £3.997m with an expected £4.097m for FY28. The meeting noted that the actual number of Slough Borough Council (SBC) learners needing support in 2025-26 as 546; SBC did fund the additional 43 learners but would not accept any increase for 2026-27. LG confirmed that SBC had agreed to meet with the College in September 2026 to discuss students enrolled for FY27. If the college had significantly greater than 503 learners with additional learning support needs, SBC had committed to engage with the College to provide further funding.
- **Other income streams** had been increased by 2.5% on all non-DfE income streams. The government grant for the additional TPS costs would continue and was assumed as £1.601m for each year based on the March 2026 DfE statement.

Pay Costs

- Pay costs would continue to put pressure on the financial performance of the College. The budget assumed an increase in pay costs (excluding FRS102 pension charges) from £38.203m (FY26) to £39.998m (FY27) and £40.885m (FY28). The meeting noted that the AoC had not yet announced their pay recommendation. LG confirmed that the budgeted £1.798m pay award allocation for FY26 was broken down as follows: progression related pay £680,000 and a consolidated pay award for all staff £1.118m.
- With 16-18 student numbers at a static level for FY26 and FY27 and pay award in September 2026, pay as a percentage of revenue was forecast to remain above the FE Commissioner benchmark of 65%; FY26 68.6%, FY27 69.87% and FY28 71.92%. The meeting agreed that this was problematic and additional thought would have to be given to how to bring this in line with sector norms.

The meeting discussed the proposal for a cost of living pay award in some detail which is minuted in the part II minutes.

Non-pay costs

- A 3% inflationary assumption had been made on all non-pay costs for both years, except for bus transport costs for FY26 at 5%.
- £0.110m had also been included in each year for SOC and SIEM contracts to manage the cyber security risks faced by the Group.
- Forecast operating expenditure was: FY26 £13.165m, FY27 £12.705m, FY28 £14.114m.

Capital expenditure

- The meeting noted the FE capital grants received in June 2025 and May 2026 and the completed and planned expenditure to meet the deadlines of March 2028 and 2029.

Outputs

- EBITDA was forecast to be £4.407m positive in FY26 but reducing to £3.547m positive in FY26 and £1.844m positive in FY28. This reduction reflected no assumed growth in learner numbers and an increase in pay costs (progression pay would drive costs upwards regardless of any cost of living increases).
- Year-end cash balances were forecast to be £7.597m in FY26 (56 cash days) moving to £9.769m (66 cash days) in FY27 and £10.269m (68 days) in FY28. The meeting was pleased to note this was above the new FEC benchmark of 40 cash days but the Group Director of Governance reminded the meeting that the WFCG figure was still below the sector average.

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- Financial health for FY26 was forecast to be 260 points (outstanding); reducing to 250 points (outstanding) in FY27 and 220 points (good) for FY28.

LG reminded the meeting that the College was required to submit the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) with an accompanying narrative to the DfE by 31 July 2026.

The meeting was reminded of the impending impact of devolution which was already having a negative impact on Adult Skills Funding available to the group. The complex nature of where WFCG sat geographically – dealing with 16 separate local authorities – would add further uncertainty to learner income (possibly affecting 16-19 provision) over the next few years.

Governors sought confirmation on what had been factored in for a cost of living pay award for FY27. Interim CEO (SF) suggested that the Group should try and ensure that the annual offer should be put on the table in September 2026 and paid as one increase (unlike FY26 where a 1.7% award was followed by an extra £500 on spine points - backdated to September 2026 – which was only agreed in April 2026). The meeting agreed that these staged payments made it harder for staff to appreciate the value of the total compensation package.
(Further discussions on the proposed pay award for 2026-27 are minuted in the part 2 commercial minutes.)

Governors (SS) highlighted the declining position in FY28 – due to increased staff costs and no assumed learner number growth; she sought confirmation that the DfE would not be concerned when the CFFR was submitted showing this forecast. LG reminded the meeting that the improved financial position at WFCG was predicated on ongoing growth in learner numbers but falling demographics could not guarantee this in future years. Anecdotal evidence suggested that many colleges were experiencing falling EBITDA already. LG assured the meeting that the narrative which was required to accompany the CFFR would explain the assumptions and provide assurance for DfE that the WFCG forecast FY28 was cautious.

- *IT expenditure*

The Director of IT (DF) presented a paper summarising the planned IT expenditure over the three year period 2025/26 to 2027/28 to improve the college's technology infrastructure. DF reminded the meeting that this subject had been discussed at the May 2026 Strategy Board meeting and this report was to support the CFFR budget presentation. The contents of the plan were framed around the DfE standards for colleges with management aiming for flexibility and 'smarter' expenditure. Key items discussed included a £840,000 tender for replacing student devices, plans to consolidate servers at a cost of around £600,000, and the implementation of a Security Operations Centre (SOC) expected to cost £110,000 per year. DF confirmed that the strategy aimed to meet DFE standards while managing software licensing costs of circa £1 million annually. The meeting noted that it included provision for replacing outdated classroom technology and implementing a new CRM system using Salesforce Education Cloud. The meeting also discussed market volatility in IT pricing due to AI and conflict driven supply chain issues. ***Resources Committee supported the Group proceeding with the student device lease tender (c £840,000) and asked that a lease paper should be taken to the Board for approval.***

The meeting noted that the tender for the SOC and SIEM contract would be undertaken over summer 2026; the previous offer from JISC was not compatible with the WFCG estate so further tenders would be sought. DF confirmed that he would seek guidance from governors with specialist knowledge during this process. The Chair commended the clear strategy and planned expenditure and highlighted the current market price fluctuations. LF confirmed that it would be imperative for the group to have a diligent procurement process and to negotiate assertively as sellers would want the business.

The Chair thanked the Finance Team for the clear and helpful paperwork which explained the prudent budget and forecast. LG reaffirmed the cautious approach to the FY28 forecast as there were so many uncertainties.

The meeting APPROVED the budget 2026/27 and the financial plan 2027/28 and would RECOMMEND this to the Board for approval.

ACTION: Take budget and financial plan to Board for approval including details of the student device lease. **LG/ DF**

MINUTE No		ACTION
8.	**Teaching Pay and Career Framework**	

Director of HR Planning and Delivery (JB) provide an update on the proposed Teaching Pay and Career Framework for WFCG and the associated consultation process. JB reminded the meeting that significant work had taken place in recent years to bring greater consistency to teaching pay arrangements across the Group. This new Teaching Pay and Career Framework would build on that work by bringing together pay placement, progression and career development within a single framework. The framework was intended to provide a fair, transparent and more consistent approach to future pay placement and progression decisions whilst recognising teaching expertise, professional qualifications and relevant vocational or industry experience.

JB highlighted that this proposal would support the Group's strategic objective of recruiting and retaining high-quality teaching staff by establishing clearer career pathways, recognising teaching expertise, professional qualifications and relevant industry experience, and strengthening workforce and succession planning. The meeting noted that a review of workforce data (November 2025) indicated that the framework was broadly aligned with current staff positions, with most teaching staff remaining on their existing salary placement. The largest number of changes were likely to take place with land-based teaching staff at BCA where there were approximately 17 staff who might be affected. JB confirmed that a key principle would be that no employee would move to a lower salary point as a result of implementation.

The meeting noted that the financial impact had been assessed, although the final cost implications would depend on the implementation arrangements agreed following consultation. These costs would be confirmed as part of the final proposals but were estimated at circa £45-£50,000 per annum plus oncosts. JB confirmed that formal consultation with the recognised trade unions would commence at the JCNC meeting later in the day (24 June). Consultation materials included the Consultation Paper, Teaching Pay and Career Framework, and Placement Guidance. Feedback received from union representatives would inform any amendments before final proposals were developed for Corporation approval (via Resources Committee). The Chair of the Corporation (JC) sought, and was given, confirmation that these additional salary costs had been included in the budget 2026-27 and plan 2027-28.

The Resources Committee NOTED the development of the WFCG Teaching Pay and Career Framework, the ongoing consultation process, and the intention to bring final recommendations forward once consultation had concluded.

9. **Risk Register**

The meeting noted the current Risk Register for June 2026 which continued to be reviewed and updated by the Senior Leadership Team; TR informed the meeting that this document had been fully reviewed by the SLT on 23 June in readiness for an update to the Board meeting in July. The most significant risks were noted as follows.

Risk 1 IT Failure with loss of data for staff or students. Risk of cyber-attacks across FE sector (risk score at 20 'red'):

The meeting discussed the ongoing work in relation to cyber-security and the regular anti-phishing training taking place with all WFCG staff. LG confirmed that once the SOC and SIEM was implemented this would enable management to reduce the risk rating. She reminded the meeting that this had been costed and included in the 2026/27 WFCG budget.

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.

Risk 3 Uncertainty and risks associated with emerging national curriculum reforms (risk score remains at 12 'amber'): This key 'acute' risk was being well managed and senior staff continued to be engaged in advisory groups linked to reform. Curriculum planning for recently announced reforms including new Vocational (V) Level qualifications from September 2027 was now well underway as had been discussed at the Governors' Strategy meeting on 15 May 2026. The meeting was reminded that all FE colleges were required to submit a Strategic Transition Plan Statement to the DfE by 6 July 2026 which outlined headline plans for delivery under the new qualification landscape.

MINUTE No		ACTION

Risk 4 Failure to complete the sale of the Honey Lane site resulting in loss of anticipated capital receipt and delay to strategic capital (heritage) investment (risk score remains at 12 'amber'): An update would be discussed in the Part II Resources Committee meeting and brought to the Board on 8 July 2026.

The meeting NOTED the WFCG risk register.

10. **Estates Update**

- *Update for Capital Development Steering Group (CDSG), June 2026*

This item was discussed and minuted as a Part II confidential item.

11. **Human Resources Update Report**

The Group Director of People (SB) presented a report which provided governors with an overview of HR activity and workforce trends across the College Group from September 2025 to June 2026.

- *Recruitment* remained challenging, particularly in specialist teaching areas such as engineering, maths and construction, as well as some support roles. During the period, 177 vacancies were advertised, resulting in 133 appointments; however, 61 posts remain unfilled. SB confirmed that managers were now recruiting in a timelier way and she was hopeful that a number of the vacancies would be filled over the summer.
- *Average workforce headcount* was 966 employees, broadly consistent with previous reporting periods. Staff turnover currently stood at 10.9%, continuing the improvement seen over recent years. However, as flagged in previous HR reports early resignations were increasing; 40% of leavers were exiting within their first year of employment, highlighting the need for targeted action to strengthen early-stage retention. SB informed the meeting that it was hard to get staff to attend exit interviews to understand why people were leaving. The meeting discussed this in more detail as they were concerned that the effort of recruitment and associated costs made this matter important to resolve. Governors asked for more detail on why SB thought this was happening and a suggested action plan for improvement. SB informed the meeting that current anecdotal feedback was centred around induction; this was even more concerning as the HR Team had revamped the induction process for 2025/26 and increased it to two weeks. SB confirmed that HR needed to check that this clear induction period was being followed in practice and that managers were not throwing new staff in 'at the deep end'. One possible action was to establish focus groups for new joiners.
- *Sickness absence* had increased to an average of 4.61 days per employee and would continue to be monitored closely.
- *Workforce diversity data* has improved, with disability declarations increasing to 12% of staff and 26% of employees identifying as being from an ethnic minority background. The focus on improving staff declarations was working but would continue.
- *Employee engagement* initiatives continued through enhanced induction, staff development programmes, wellbeing support and the introduction of the Employee Representative Board (ERB), which had identified priorities relating to communication, staff wellbeing and organisational effectiveness. The first meeting had been held in April 2026 and was a useful means of communicating with staff.
- *Industrial relations* remained challenging, with UCU continuing its formal dispute with the Group over pay and workload. Despite further pay enhancements, agreement had not been reached and six days of strike action took place during the academic year on three separate occasions (January, March and May 2026). SB reminded the meeting that although very active the unions only represented a small percentage of WFCG staff; union membership was currently sitting at 12-15% of all staff. The Chair (LF) sought confirmation on whether WFCG was an outlier as it was currently still in dispute with UCU. SB confirmed that a number of colleges had been in dispute at the start of 2025/26 but had now settled; only a few colleges remained in dispute with UCU.

SB confirmed that overall, the Group had maintained workforce stability and improved turnover performance, but recruitment, early-career retention, sickness absence and industrial relations remained key areas of focus.

- *Staff Survey Action Plan*

The meeting noted the feedback 'You said…We will' provided to staff after recent staff surveys. The 2026/27 Roadmap for action covered the following areas: workload; staffing levels and capacity, resources, equipment and working environment; pay, progression and career development; communication and consultation; staff wellbeing, morale and recognition; training and CPD; management visibility, consistency and professional conduct.

The human resources update report was NOTED

12. **Management Accounts May 2026**

Group Management Accounts (WS) presented the management accounts for May 2026 which had previously been circulated to all governors by email. Governors noted that the accounts continued to be presented on a prudent basis reflecting the performance to date and the on-going cost challenges that the group was facing in the current financial year. The management accounts were taken as read as the FY26 outcome had been considered during agenda item 7.

- Capital grant funding and expenditure

The meeting discussed the detailed table in the management accounts which outlined the capital grant funding that the college had received and the planned projects across the Group. This included the £2.075m FE Capital transformation grant received in June 2025 (to be spent by 31 March 2028) and the £2.154m FE Capital Condition grant received in May 2026 (to be spent by 31 March 2029). The meeting was assured that plans were in place to meet these deadlines. LG confirmed that the refit of the first floor North Wing at Slough and Langley College to provide more teaching space was now complete and the team were awaiting delivery of the IT equipment. The Top Farm Drive project at BCA was also completed. There were several projects which would be undertaken over the summer break 2026.

The WFCG management accounts for April and May 2026 were NOTED and RECEIVED.

13. **Applications Report**

The meeting noted the current applications report for 16-18 programmes at 1 June 2026 which showed that the applications for the Group were +7.1% (+347 learners) ahead of the same position in the prior year. The current change in applications by college was BCA +0.7% (+ 14), Langley +9.7% (+119), Strode's +13.8% (+172) and Windsor +13.9% (+114). The meeting also noted the offers accepted by college which was running 5.5% ahead of the prior year; BCA +8.8% (+104 learners), Langley –2.6% (-17), Strode's +6.4% (+60), and Windsor +5.2% (+26). Governors were reminded that this data was shared with all staff and governors on a weekly basis to maintain focus in advance of enrolment.

The applications update was NOTED

14. **Dates and Times of Future Meetings**

TR confirmed that the next meeting was timetabled for Wednesday 30 September 2026 at 08.30am on Zoom. All dates in 2026/27 would be confirmed after approval of the draft meeting schedule by the Board on 8 July 2026.

NOTED

15. **Any Urgent Business**

- **Current risks around complaints and litigation**

The interim CEO (SF) updated the meeting on two separate cases; the detail is minuted in the Part II minutes.

NOTED

MINUTE No		**ACTION**
	There were no other urgent items of business raised.	

The meeting closed at 10.05 am.

Chair.. Date...

BOARD OF GOVERNORS: RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes
Wednesday 24 June 2026 at 08.30
Online via Zoom

PRESENT:	Louise Fellows	Governor (*Committee Chair)*
	Jo Croft	Governor *(Chair of Governors)*
	Jeongmi Dozno-Kim	Governor
	Sam Foley	*Interim* CEO & Group Principal
	Signe Sutherland	Governor
APOLOGIES:	James Fernley	Governor
	Antonia Spinks	Governor
IN ATTENDANCE:	Joanna Birrell	Director of HR Planning & Delivery
	Susan Brady	Group Director People
	Dan Fairbairn	Group Director Digital, Marketing & Admissions
	Lucy Gill	Group Director of Finance
	Karen Griffiths	Vice Principal Quality and Apprenticeships
	Tracy Reeve	Group Director of Governance
	Wendy Stott	Group Management Accountant
	Oliver Symons	CEO & Group Principal *elect*

CONFIDENTIAL - PART II

MINUTE No | **ACTION**

16. **Human Resources Report**

- **Pay discussions** *(following on from minute 7 page 5)*

LG confirmed that the budget assumed a pay award of 3% (plus £680,000 progression pay). The meeting was informed that this had not yet been discussed with unions who were seeking 10%. The group discussed the pay award and LG confirmed that that while there would be a decline in EBITDA in FY28, this decline was expected across the college sector as discussed earlier in the meeting. The meeting agreed that a consolidated pay award of 3% was affordable for FY27 but multi-year settlements could not be agreed due to financial uncertainty. SF highlighted that while growth had been good, the Group needed to carefully manage EBITDA and would need to carefully consider future staffing levels.

Interim CEO (SF) discussed the approach to union negotiations, emphasizing the importance of being transparent about what WFCG could afford rather than engaging in protracted discussions. Deputy Group Principal (KG) provided insights on the union relationship, noting that while UCU had been challenging, a 3% pay increase might be acceptable given current circumstances. It was agreed that management should not flag the possible 3% offer in early negotiations with unions (JCNC 24 June) until Board approval was finalised.

The CEO/ Group Principal elect (OS) highlighted his concern in relation to the high figure for staff costs as percentage of income. He believed this possible structural issue was more of a concern than the consolidated pay award which he felt needed to be paid in September 2026.

The proposed pay award within the agreed budget 2026-27 was NOTED and would be considered by the Board in July 2026.

17. **Estates Update – Sale of land at Honey Lane (BCA)**

The interim CEO (SF) gave the meeting a verbal update on the sale of the land. SF confirmed that progress on the land sale at Honey Lane (BCA) to Elivia Homes had stalled and Elivia had now pulled out. The meeting was assured that the Director of Estates at BCA was maintaining very close contact with the appointed land agent Bidwells as they put together a revised marketing plan for the site. Resources Committee noted that the Capital Development Steering Group had met on 9 June and was reconvening later in the day (24

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	June) to consider plans from Bidwells to take the development plot back to market. It had become apparent that it would not be in the college's best interest to revisit the planning permission to look for a more diverse mix of house sizes (this is what Elivia had been seeking). Expert external advice suggested that this would be too risky, costly and time consuming. Bidwells had already had a number of conversations with other possible developers to gauge interest in the plot with the current planning permission. SF informed the meeting that the sale price was likely to be considerably lower than previously achieved as the market had dipped during the last 3 years. Options for future sales would also consider proposals for phasing of payments in order to make the land more attractive in the currently depressed market for large homes. CDSG had also asked for a clear summary of priority heritage costs for the next few years to keep the Mansion operating on a functional basis (i.e. excluding the cosmetic improvements). This would be considered at the CDSG meeting later in the day. SF confirmed that a more detailed update would be taken to the Board on 8 July 2026. ***The update on the Honey Lane land sale was NOTED***	
18.	**<u>Any other business</u>** • **<u>Complaints litigation</u>** The interim CEO informed the meeting that there were two ongoing legal cases following on from learner/ parental complaints in relation to EHCP learners. The Deputy Group Principal (KG) outlined the two cases and provided assurance that risks were being managed using expert legal input. One of the cases was claiming £15,000 compensation and had a low likelihood of success based on legal advice. The other case had initially claimed for £60,000 then £84,000 and this had now risen to £235,000 based on potential future loss of earnings. The BCA learner had achieved Merit-Merit-Merit rather than Distinction-Distinction-Merit (their target grade) which they were claiming would stop them pursuing a career as a physiotherapist. Legal advice suggested that there was some likelihood of success based on college policies not being adhered to and insufficient adaptations being made in the treatment of autistic learners. KG informed the meeting that under the public sector Managing Public Money duty any compensation payment of more than £50,000 needed HM Treasury approval, via the DfE. KG assured the meeting that relevant staff at DfE had been made aware of this case and were working with the SLT and WFCG's legal advisers to consider the best course of action. KG highlighted the enormous amount of senior management time that had been spent dealing with just these two complaints. Anecdotal evidence from across the FE sector suggested that complicated legal focussed complaints generated using AI were becoming ever more of an issue for colleges. Governors were assured that management were using expert external advice to deal with these legal cases in order to minimise risk and exposure for WFCG. ***NOTED***	