

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of the Corporation

Monday 30th March 2026, 16:30 to 18:30

SBSA Campus

Part A Minutes

- Present:** Phil Smith (External Governor, Chair of the Corporation, PS)
 Danny Alfaraj (Staff Governor, DAL)
 Tony Antonius (External Governor, TA)
 Andrea Arlidge (External Governor, Vice Chair, Quality of Education Link Governor, AA)
 Neil Dimes (External Governor, ND)
 Sandra Gordon (External Governor, ED&I Link Governor, SG)
 Julia Gray, Principal & CEO (Ex-officio, P&CEO)
 Marc Griffiths (External Governor, Vice Chair, Digital Link Governor, MG)
 Judi Harper (External Governor, Personal Development & Behaviours and Attitudes & Careers Link Governor, JH)
 Daniel Jones (External Governor, DJ)
 Ruth Pickersgill (External Governor, RP)
 Palie Smart (External Governor, PSM)
 Shawn Smith (External Governor, H&S, Estates and Sustainability Link Governor, SS)
 Steven Tunn (Staff Governor, ST)
- In attendance:** Catherine Howett, Deputy Principal (DP)
 Tim Peacock, Chief Operating Officer (COO)
 Jessica Thorne, Corporate Services Officer (CSO)
 Lynette Wilson, Director of Governance & Clerk to the Corporation (Clerk)

Min No.	
1a	<u>Apologies for Absence and Quorum</u> Apologies were ACCEPTED from Steve Bennet, Jess Winkler, Dan Amin, Kateryna Kalinina and Sanyia Choudhury. The meeting was quorate.
b	<u>Declarations of Interest in any agenda items</u> There were no declarations of interest declared.
c	<u>Confidentiality of agenda items</u> 5b and 8cv were noted as potentially confidential items.
2a	<u>Minutes of meetings:</u> PART A Minutes Main Board 16.12.25

	- PART B CONFIDENTIAL minutes Main Board 16.12.25 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 December 2025 were submitted to the Board prior to the meeting and APPROVED as a true record of proceedings. Review of actions and any matters arising, including any written resolutions and use of the College Seal: Action Log: <table><tr><th>Action</th><th>Meeting</th><th>Owner</th><th>Deadline</th></tr><tr><td>Clerk to arrange a Strategic Action Plan Review Meeting for the Board later in the academic year.</td><td>16.12.2025</td><td>Clerk</td><td>Completed. Meeting arranged for 2nd July.</td></tr><tr><td>DP to check the figures in the Safeguarding Annual Report data table and update the Board</td><td>16.12.2025</td><td>DP</td><td>Figures were reviewed and a new dashboard has been created to ensure more accurate data reporting going forwards.</td></tr><tr><td>The Chair asked that the updated version of the Combined Leave Policy was circulated to Governors.</td><td>16.12.2025</td><td>Clerk</td><td>Completed. This was circulated.</td></tr></table> Use of the Seal: It was noted by the Board that the College Seal had been used for the following documents since the last meeting: - Lease (by the College) for Partners in Bristol premises (Executed as a Deed). - Grant Funding Agreement with Cornwall Council relating to Adult Skills and Free Courses for Jobs Funding for the 2025–2026 Academic Year (Executed as a Deed) for Trade Union studies. Written Resolutions: Chair/Vice Chair Approval: Procurement Strategy for HR and Payroll software It was noted that the Procurement Strategy for HR and Payroll software had been approved by the Chair and Vice Chairs following discussion by the F&R Committee.	Action	Meeting	Owner	Deadline	Clerk to arrange a Strategic Action Plan Review Meeting for the Board later in the academic year.	16.12.2025	Clerk	Completed. Meeting arranged for 2 nd July.	DP to check the figures in the Safeguarding Annual Report data table and update the Board	16.12.2025	DP	Figures were reviewed and a new dashboard has been created to ensure more accurate data reporting going forwards.	The Chair asked that the updated version of the Combined Leave Policy was circulated to Governors.	16.12.2025	Clerk	Completed. This was circulated.
Action	Meeting	Owner	Deadline														
Clerk to arrange a Strategic Action Plan Review Meeting for the Board later in the academic year.	16.12.2025	Clerk	Completed. Meeting arranged for 2 nd July.														
DP to check the figures in the Safeguarding Annual Report data table and update the Board	16.12.2025	DP	Figures were reviewed and a new dashboard has been created to ensure more accurate data reporting going forwards.														
The Chair asked that the updated version of the Combined Leave Policy was circulated to Governors.	16.12.2025	Clerk	Completed. This was circulated.														
3	<u>Principal & CEO's Report</u> The Principal & CEO (P&CEO) had provided a report to the Board, prior to the meeting, on her recent activities. She highlighted positive stories of student and staff achievement across the College. She also noted the unprecedented volume of policy changes from government in the previous 3 weeks. The P&CEO stated she had now received updates regarding the planned policy decisions for the Further Education sector and work was underway by the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to review and implement for the College. The P&CEO noted the importance of providing students with the best training and opportunities possible.																

	The following updates were summarised: - the Post-Education & Skills White Paper had been released in October 2025. - There had been a recent curriculum and assessment review: Level 2 pathways would undergo changes in future and there would be different opportunities for students who struggled to progress onto Level 3 training. - Apprenticeship opportunities for adults and for Levels 4-6 were being reviewed nationally also. - The 2026-27 funding rates for students aged 16-18 were published in March and were stated to be below expectations. The base rate for 16-18 year-old students had increased by 0.55% for the next academic year. There had also been no increase in the funding for Adult Skills. - In-year growth funding had still not been confirmed for the additional 400 students in the current year which the College had taken on. The P&CEO noted Colleges West group had sent a joint letter to MPs expressing disappointment in the funding announcements. It was also noted that the AoC (Association of Colleges) had been vocal in national media and through direct communications with the DfE and Secretary of State about the challenges around funding; FE (Further Education) had seen the lowest in-year rate rises in the education sector. The Board noted its disappointment in the current funding landscape affecting all educational bodies, including Higher Education, and supported collaborative approaches to campaigning, such as involving MPs and other educational institutions. The P&CEO stated that there had recently been a dinner held for MPs and those from the college sector in the House of Commons. The Chair asked about the potential risk to the College in the latest announcements. The COO noted the increased impact of lagged funding next year, due to the increase in the College's student numbers in 2025-26. External factors, such as conflicts internationally, were also of concern in terms of increasing costs. It was also stated that there were risks associated with curriculum developments, including the difficulty of planning the delivery of V-Levels at such an early stage. The P&CEO also highlighted concerns about the increasing volume of responsibility placed on teachers under the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) reforms. The P&CEO reported attending a range of external events and noted significant changes at both regional and national levels, emphasising the importance of remaining visible and engaged in these strategic discussions. The Board thanked the P&CEO for contributing to these external conversations and expressed concern for the P&CEO's well-being, stressing the importance of ensuring that they were fully supported by SLT. The P&CEO stated that there was suitable delegation to attendance at other external events to the COO, DP and other senior leaders. The P&CEO was pleased to also share information about the Recognise and Respect initiative and the good work being done by colleagues.
4	<u>Strategic Risk Register</u> The Board was provided with an updated copy of the Strategic Risk Register prior to the meeting.

	The COO noted that the overall picture remained stable with very few changes to net risk levels. The COO reminded the Board that committees were now undertaking areas of focus on the Risk Register at each committee meeting. The Clerk stated that this process had evolved effectively and supported the robustness of the Board's Assurance Framework. The Clerk noted that the FE Commissioner had emphasised the importance of a wider ranges of voices, aside from the Principal's, providing assurance to the Board. She also stated that discussions from committee meetings had been brought back into SLT meetings, informing some of the conversation around risk there, including recent focus on the external environment and potential wider political and social landscape. The Board asked about the usefulness of the Risk Register from a wider staff perspective. It was stated that SLT were pleased that strategic discussions about risk were being disseminated effectively through Heads of Departments and department team meetings. It was observed that the need to support students and their families through challenging circumstances were always key areas of focus. The COO explained that a risk tab had been added expressly for fraud in response to legislative changes which would render organisations liable if they failed to adequately prevent or detect potential fraud. Additional detail would be added in due course. The Board queried when the next review of risk appetite would be. It was confirmed that there would be a review of risk appetite scores this year. ACTION: Clerk to review the best time and method for the Board's review of risk appetite on the Risk Register. The Chair of the Audit Committee stated that the External Auditor had commented at the last Audit Committee meeting that that they were pleased to see the testing of risk controls on the register by the College and the review of subsidiary company risks by the Audit Committee.
5 a	<u>Finance</u> City of Bristol College Management Accounts P6 Period 6 Management Accounts were provided to the Board prior to the meeting for monitoring purposes, following review at the Finance & Resources and Audit Committees. The COO stated the following: • An updated commentary format had been introduced within the report. • In-year funding would not be confirmed until April 2026. It was thought it could be approximately £700,000 and it was stated that there needed to be careful consideration how best to use these funds. • There was good confidence in the forecasted budget. • Risks were noted, including apprenticeship recruitment and Bootcamp delivery. The Board thanked the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for the new report format and stated it was a helpful layout.

	The Board asked how far the College can plan ahead in terms of funding and stated that cashflow becomes even more important to monitor in an increasingly large organisation. It was stated that it is challenging to forecast too far ahead due to so many unknown factors. The Board queried whether the 16–18 income risk was correctly marked as green. The COO confirmed that this was correct, as the assessment related to the current year's funding position. He reported that the allocation statement had been received and that further information would be available shortly. A Staff Governor suggested that the growth funding should be used to recruit additional support staff to build upon wider pastoral support areas for students. The Deputy Principal (DP) agreed that appropriate consideration should be given to the balance of support roles, not only teaching roles. She also recognised the differences between campus site specific demands. It was stated that it would be useful for governors to understand more about the process behind the budget setting and curriculum planning before the next budget is presented. ACTION: An online meeting to be arranged for governors to provide information about the budget setting and curriculum planning process prior to the next Board meeting.
B	CONFIDENTIAL - SEE PART B MINUTES
c	Subsidiary Management Accounts P6 (reviewed by subsidiary Boards and F&R and Audit Committee): i. PiB ii. SWAC iii. BPS Period 6 Management Accounts for the subsidiary companies were provided to the Board, prior to the meeting, following review at the Finance & Resources and Audit Committees. They were NOTED by the Board. The COO confirmed there were no concerns to report.
7	<u>Link Governor Reports</u> H&S (Health and Safety) Link Governor Report The Health and Safety Link Governor reported that he had undertaken a Health and Safety Walk at the Parkway Campus and was pleased with the improvements observed in staff practice. He reported that regular H&S walks were now taking place and were being properly documented. He had questioned the visible availability of PPE (Professional Protective Equipment) items and this had been noted. SS also commented on the metrics report received by the Finance & Resources Committee, describing it as a reasonably mature report. He stated he had met with the Director of Estates, Facilities and ICT and asked him to provide further performance metrics in some areas. SS stated that the next Health and Safety Committee Meeting was scheduled for 29th June and confirmed that he would be in attendance.

	The Vice Chair asked for an update on a previously reported safety incident. It was confirmed that the matter had been addressed at the time and that relevant metrics around induction practices would be reflected in future reporting.
8 a	<u>Committees: Key reports, decisions and discussions from Chairs and link governors</u> Finance and Resources Committee i. Minutes – late paper. The minutes of the last meeting had been provided prior to the meeting and were noted by the Board. ii. H&S Update – It was noted that the last H&S update was available on the F&R OneNote and had been reviewed by the committee. iii. Area of focus – Risk 14 (Growth) The Committee Chair stated he was pleased with the close monitoring of growth and the detailed update provided by the Director of Strategic Partnerships and the Director Marketing, Admissions & Student Services at the committee meeting. iv. Sustainability Strategy A Sustainability Strategy paper was provided to the Board prior to the meeting for information and discussion. The Committee Chair highlighted the three priority areas recommended within the report, which included raising the profile of sustainability widely across the College. The Chair stated that committee members were pleased that an individual had been brought into the College to lead the strategy and noted the importance of embedding good practice. They recommended reporting of the Strategy to be frequent, to enhance its visibility and drive forwards progress in this area. The Chair stated that potential costs associated with the installation of solar panels had been discussed by the committee and would proceed through a formal procurement process. It was noted that it would be important to assess the cost–benefit balance carefully. The P&CEO observed that external factors, including the rising cost of oil and other energy sources, had significantly increased demand for solar panels. As a result, it was possible that market prices might rise beyond the quotations received to date. v. Sub-contracting Policy The updated Sub-contracting Policy was submitted to the Board prior to the meeting and came recommended by the F&R Committee. It was APPROVED by the Corporation Board. vi. Frequency of Report on Debtors in Financial Regulations It was stated that F&R Committee receive a report on debtors twice a year. It was suggested to reduce this to an annual report in future, as the committee had agreed this was sufficient oversight considering that there was a threshold for committee approval already written into the Financial Regulations. The recommendation was APPROVED by the Board. ACTION: Financial Regulations to be updated to reflect a reduction to an annual report on debtors to the F&R Committee.

b	Audit Committee i. Minutes – late paper - The minutes of the last meeting had been provided prior to the meeting and were noted by the Board. The Chair highlighted the following: - A new co-opted member had joined the committee - The new external auditor was in attendance. - The Internal Auditor presented a new charter - The Committee received a positive report on Skills Boot Camps. ii. Area of focus – Risk 4 (High Needs) The Chair reported that the area of focus on the Risk Register had been Risk 4, High Needs. iii. Financial Regulations update request regarding Single Tenders The Board were asked to approve an amendment to the Financial Regulations regarding the threshold for reporting Single Tenders to the Audit Committee. The recommendation was that tenders under £50k need not be reported to the committee as they were very operational and presented little risk. This update was APPROVED by the Board. ACTION: Financial Regulations to be updated to reflect the introduction of a £50k threshold for the reporting of Single Tenders to the Audit Committee. <i>[SG joined the meeting]</i>
c	Curriculum and Quality i. Minutes – late paper The C&Q Minutes were provided to the Board for information prior to the meeting and were noted by the Board. The Committee Chair had asked the following be noted in his absence: • There continued to be a positive data trajectory in anticipated outcomes. • There had been a reduction in safeguarding referrals. • The committee had received a ‘destinations’ paper for the first time, highlighting an increase in ‘Gold’ applications, UCAS applications (particularly Russell Group / Top 30) and that there was more work to be done in gathering apprenticeship data. ii. QIP (Quality Improvement Plan) Update It was noted that the QIP update could be found on the C&Q Committee OneNote and had been reviewed by the Committee. iii. TLA (Teaching, Learning and Assessment) Update including Curriculum Plan Progress Update It was noted that the TLA update could be found on the C&Q Committee OneNote and had been reviewed by the Committee. iv. Area of focus - Risk 1

	It was noted that the Committee had received detailed information from the Director of Further and Higher Education regarding Risk 1. v. Safeguarding Update It was noted that the Safeguarding update could be found on the C&Q Committee OneNote and had been reviewed by the Committee. vi. DRAFT Safeguarding Policy Addition The DRAFT Safeguarding Policy Addition had been submitted to the Board prior to the meeting, following review from the DP after the C&Q Committee meeting. The DP noted the proposed policy addition, emphasising the external legal advice received when composing the statement. The Safeguarding Policy addition was APPROVED by the Board. vii. Complaints Policy The Complaints Policy had been submitted to the Board, prior to the meeting, with recommendation for approval from C&Q Committee. It was explained that additions had been made to the policy relating to data protection and to clarify the College's approach to student ownership of their experience, making it explicit that communication would be directed to students rather than parents or carers. The Board asked about including a more explicit reference to the right of an advocate or interpreter and to the need to provide information in accessible formats appropriate to individual needs. This included whether formal response letters were written in language accessible to students. The DP cautioned that correspondence regarding complaints do have to have a certain element of formality due to the potential for litigation if the complainant feels the College has not resolved the matter. However, she agreed it would be prudent to add a statement about reasonable adjustments into the policy. The Board noted the increasing impact of AI technologies, with students sometimes using these tools to assist in composing messages. The Complaints Policy was APPROVED by the Board, subject to the addition of some further clarity about accessibility of the complaints process. The Board queried whether a deep dive into complaints would be useful by C&Q Committee. The Clerk replied that C&Q Committee do receive an annual report on complaints and that this could be a focus of the meeting in next year's Schedule of Business.
6 a	<u>EDE&I (Equality, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)</u> Report from EDE&I Link Governor The Board received a verbal report from the College's EDE&I Link Governor. SG reflected on the College's two-year journey, noting the positive outcome of the Ofsted inspection and the increased scope now available to focus on further improvement.

SG offered the following observations:

- Although there had been aspirations around EDE&I previously, at one point they had not been fully embedded into the College culture nor developed into a college-wide framework for change across all campuses. The FREDIE audit had provided a structured framework, which had since been integrated into the College's aims and ensured real progress in this area.
- A stronger voice for EDE&I had been established across the College, supported by the work of Campus Community Leads. These roles seemed to be providing valuable insight into the lived experience of students, enabling information to be fed upwards effectively. As the Link Governor role itself was relatively new, SG had been considering the most effective ways to test, measure and review progress, without becoming too operational.

SG had recently attended an AoC EDI meeting and reflected on how approaches to EDI in further education were evolving, with many colleges now focusing on cultural change and embedding standards across their provision. Feedback had been received from Chelmsford College, who presented on Ofsted's EDI toolkit; she highlighted that Ofsted were now viewing EDI as a key target area for colleges, with a focus on inclusion, safeguarding, learners' skills needs and programme types.

SG emphasised that all governors had a role in maintaining focus on EDI, challenging leaders, reviewing conclusions drawn from data, seeking assurance that staff CPD was kept up to date and maintaining strategic oversight rather than becoming too focused on operational aspects. In particular, she advised governors needed clear visibility of outcome data, including evidence of progress for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Closing achievement gaps remained a central priority.

SG also noted the College's commitment to the AoC EDI Charter, which now had 137 signatory colleges nationally, and the valuable networking and equity exchange opportunities emerging from it. She encouraged governors to reflect on what more could be done collectively.

SG reported on visits she undertook to SBSA Campus and College Green, with a further visit to Ashley Down planned for May. She explained she had met Campus Leads and students and heard directly from them about their experiences. She said students had appeared confident and empowered to give feedback and there was a strong sense of campus culture with vibrant lunchtime enrichment activities, many of which were student led. Security staff were employing trauma informed approaches and one was undertaking British Sign Language training. Respect and behaviour across sites were noted as very good, with visible positive change.

SG also reported that student councils seemed to be operating effectively across all sites, with particularly strong engagement at College Green. She stated that attendance figures had improved at Personal Development sessions across the College. Campus Leads were enhancing community links and partnership working with external organisations. SG noted that although some inconsistency between sites remained, improvements were evident. Parkway and Ashley Down were identified as requiring further development. SG also observed that College staff were working effectively to re-engage students, including those who had disengaged earlier in the year, by exploring alternative training pathways for them.

	SG acknowledged that the Link Governor role was substantial and asked whether there could be opportunities for cross-over work with other governors, outside of formal committees and Board meetings. She recommended that more governors become involved in examining and discussing EDE&I across multiple forums. The Deputy Principal (DP) reported that the SLT had earlier reviewed the effectiveness of the Strategic Action Plan and discussed how progress against EDE&I could be more clearly codified across other strategic strands, enabling governors to see and measure progress against specific actions more easily. The Chair asked for more guidance around key KPIs that governors could focus on regarding EDI. The Board recommended measuring workforce EDI data, pay equity and participation in organisational practices, among other high-level indicators. The P&CEO confirmed that gender pay gap reporting was already completed, with further reporting planned later in the year. The P&CEO also noted the high staff turnover and capacity challenges experienced within the People Services Team during the previous year and reported that staffing within the team had now been increased to meet workload demands. ACTION: Clerk, DP and SG to meet to discuss the scale of the EDE&I Link Role and how EDE&I is monitored across the Strategic Action Plan and reported to governors. A Staff Governor noted the progress being made in staff CPD and stressed the importance of continuing training. The DP highlighted improvements in reporting, enabling staff to understand the impact of interventions on different groups and individual learners. The P&CEO noted improvements in student achievement across protected characteristics. The Digital Link Governor emphasised the importance of digital skills, technology and equipment in supporting student success and how these factors aligned with EDE&I. The Clerk agreed with the importance of communication between governors about progress in their areas of responsibility and the value of sharing insights. SG commended the substantial work undertaken by the College and suggested exploring ways to communicate these positive developments more widely within the College community.
b	DRAFT Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement (Reviewed by F&R Committee) A draft EDE&I Statement was presented to the Board for review and approval, following scrutiny by F&R Committee. The Board recognised the importance of producing a statement that met current legal requirements. However, it was thought that the College was undertaking work that exceeded legal obligations, which wasn't reflected in the statement, such as including strong support for disabled students and improving accessibility across the estate, such as in the College salon, and queried whether this was an issue.

	The DP explained the need for the statement to remain concise due to its compliance function; more detailed reporting on EDE&I was being complied to encapsulate the wider inclusive culture of the College and would be presented to the Board for information once complete. The DP agreed to review the statement a final time and stated that a final version would be circulated for approval by written resolution. ACTION: Draft EDE&I Statement to be updated and circulated for approval by written resolution.
9	<u>Governance</u> a Board agenda format and papers for governors The Clerk stated that the format of Board paper packs was being frequently discussed at SLT and that work continued to ensure papers were as streamlined and accessible as possible. She informed the Board that Sally Dicketts was scheduled to attend the SLT Day in May to offer advice on best practice in writing Board papers. The Clerk acknowledged the IT issues some governors were continuing to experience and stated that additional support with the use of technology and Multi Factor Authentication was also being provided to governors, as was providing College laptops where needed. b External Board Review An outline for the External Board Review programme had been provided to the Board prior to the meeting for information. The Clerk reminded the Board that the next External Board Review was due to commence shortly. She stated that the Search & Governance Committee had agreed that the Association of Colleges (AoC) would conduct the review, following a procurement exercise. The Clerk outlined the activities that would be undertaken, including meetings with Committee Chairs, the Corporation Chair and Vice Chairs, and attendance by the reviewer at Board and Committee meetings during the next term. An action plan would be produced, alongside assurances and recommendations regarding the effectiveness of the Board. A final report would be published on the College website after completion of activities. c Scheme of Delegation The Scheme of Delegation had been provided to the Board prior to the meeting. It had been updated to align with 8avi and 8biii of this agenda. The Board APPROVED the updates.
10	<u>Any other Business</u> • The Clerk stated that the Governor annual review meetings will be held from June 2026 onwards. The CSO would circulate available dates via email (and One Note). • The Board asked about the Employment Rights Act and how this would impact on the organisation. The P&CEO confirmed there was immediate work underway and there would be an update provided to the F&R Committee in due course. • The Clerk also noted campus site visits had been organised and offered to governors and the CSO would circulate these dates again.

11	<u>Dates of Corporation Meetings this Year:</u> 14 July 2026 4.15-6.15pm <u>Additional meeting at the request of the Board:</u> Strategic Action Plan Review Meeting. 2nd July 2026. 9.30-11.30am
----	--

ACTIONS:

Action	Meeting	Owner	Deadline
Clerk to review the best time and method for the Board's review of risk appetite on the Risk Register.	30.03.26	Clerk	ASAP
An online meeting to be arranged for governors to provide information about the budget setting and curriculum planning process prior to the next Board meeting.	30.03.26	CSO	June
Clerk, DP and SG to meet to discuss the scale of the Link Role and how EDE&I is monitored across the Strategic Action Plan and reported to governors.	30.03.26	Clerk	May
Draft EDE&I Statement to be updated and circulated for approval by written resolution.	30.03.26	Deputy Principal	ASAP
Financial Regulations to be updated to reflect a reduction to an annual report on debtors to the F&R Committee.	30.03.26	COO	ASAP
Financial Regulations to be updated to reflect the introduction of a £50k threshold for the reporting of Single Tenders to the Audit Committee.	30.03.26	COO	ASAP