

The Corporation of New College Durham
Minutes of the Corporation meeting
held on 2 July 2026
NCD Training and Development (Armstrong House)

Present:

Stephen King (Chair)
Andy Broadbent
Allen Eccles
Matthew Gamsby
Hayley Farrell
Ben Fisher
Helen Golightly – *via MS Teams*
Mark Gomersall
Jonathan Hamill

Nigel Harrett
Rhiannon Hiles – *via MS Teams*
Kathryn McCloghrie
Chris Nicholls
Chris Patterson – *via MS Teams*
Philip Pollard
Bethany Robson

Apologies:

Suzanne Slater
Emily Baxter

In attendance:

Karl Fairley (Deputy Chief Executive)
Alison Maynard (Deputy Principal)
Paul Bradley (Chief Finance Officer)
Colleen Peters (Vice Principal)
Andy Stephenson (Vice Principal)
Adele Dowson (Vice Principal)
Peter Morrison (Vice Principal)
Rob Graine (Vice Principal)
Caroline Winter (Head of Governance and Corporation Secretary)
Chloe Freeman (Governance Support Officer)

Action

26/55 Chair's introduction and starred items

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including those joining online. Members were reminded to declare their interests in any item of business to be discussed at the meeting. The following interests were declared:

- Chris Patterson declared an interest in Paper P1 (Re-appointment of Corporation Member)
- Allen Eccles declared an interest in Paper P2 (Co-option of Corporation member)
- Chris Nichols declared an interest in the agenda items referencing the Advanced Manufacturing Technical Excellence College (AMTEC) (Papers D, E, I3). The Head of Governance advised that the nature of the updates to be considered at the meeting would not provide a level of detail requiring Chris to withdraw from the meeting.

It was noted that this was the last Corporation for Allen Eccles as his term of office was due to expire on 14 September 2026. Allen was appointed to Corporation on 15 September 2021, when he joined the Audit and Risk Committee before taking over as

Committee Chair in 2024. Members noted that subject to Corporation approval Allen had agreed to continue to support the Corporation as a co-opted member of the Finance and Resources Committee. The Chair advised that this would also have been the final meeting for Emily Baxter before stepping down from Corporation at the end of July 2026. Emily was appointed to Corporation on 2 November 2022 and has served on all but one of the Corporation's committees in her time as a governor, including Chairing the Remuneration Committee for the last year. On behalf of Corporation the Chair thanked Allen and Emily for their service to the College and Corporation.

Members confirmed that they did not require any further discussion about the starred agenda papers L, M1, M2, N, O1, O2, P1, P2, Q, R.

26/56 Apologies for absence were received from Suzanne Slater and Emily Baxter.

26/57 Minutes of previous meeting (Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2026 were agreed as an accurate record.

26/58 Matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda

26/35 – matter arising on previous minute (26/07a) – it was confirmed that following a review of the minutes of all Spring Term Corporation and Committee meetings, the strategic issues identified for further consideration had all been addressed at the Strategic Planning Day. These included HE partnerships and future direction, AI and its strategic implications, income diversification in response to funding changes, and risk management. It was confirmed that, should governors wish to explore any of these areas in greater depth, further reports or discussions could be scheduled for future meetings. It was also noted that the AI Steering Group was preparing a report for Corporation on the College's approach to Artificial Intelligence and that the Search and Governance Committee had requested a governor development session on AI.

26/36 – the Statement of Purpose was included on the current meeting agenda for further review.

26/48 – Colleen Peters confirmed that no feedback from sub-contractors had been received to date on the Sub-contracting (fees and charges) Policy since publication.

26/59 Principal's Report (Verbal)

The Principal gave a verbal briefing about matters of strategic interest including submission of the AMTEC delivery plan and funding proposals, the positive Annual Strategic Conversation

meeting with the DfE in June, an update on the position relating to NA College funding, the recent success at the North East Apprenticeship Awards including the College winning Provider of the Year and an NCD student winning Construction Apprentice of the Year, the recent meeting with DfE representatives which presented an opportunity to provide assurance on the strength of the College's Higher Education partnership arrangements and overall strategy, feedback from the latest strategic partnership meeting with the College's HE partner which considered latest performance and confirmed positive progress in relation to the new OfS condition E10, an update on Post 16 capacity capital funding allocation within the region and recent positive developments relating to college pay.

In response to a question regarding the proposed capital allocation within the AMTEC bid, it was explained that funding was based on four delivery sites. Hartlepool College had not requested funding for buildings, while the proposals for Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Sunderland comprised a mixture of refurbishment works and specialist equipment. Members queried the relationship between the AMTEC and the High Value Manufacturing Catapult network. It was noted that the College was already working closely with local universities but expected collaboration to increase further as the programme developed. There was a wide range of existing innovation clusters, with some duplication, and members noted that the College had also been invited to explore opportunities with the Defence TECs.

In response to a member's question on the national pay position, it was confirmed that the additional 1% funding announced by the DfE related to schools' expected contribution rather than further education. Any funding provided to the FE sector would allow individual colleges to determine what level of pay award was affordable within their own financial circumstances.

Members discussed the potential implications of the new Prime Minister's policy agenda. It was noted that there was increasing discussion around devolution and mayoral strategic authorities seeking responsibility for 16–18 funding, although the complexity of such a change was emphasised. Members commented that strong relationships with the Mayoral Strategic Authority would become increasingly important as devolution progressed. It was noted that the College already had well-established relationships and a strong regional reputation, particularly through the Business Development Unit activity and its previous work with the North East Combined Authority.

26/60 Receipt of Committee minutes and verbal reports from chairs:

The Chair explained that the minutes from the June Committee meetings had not been finalised at the time of distribution of the meeting agenda pack and would be circulated following approval

by the relevant Committee Chair. Members noted the following verbal updates:

Audit & Risk Committee – 15 June 2026 - the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee reported that the Committee had considered the Risk Management Strategy and complemented the work to develop the new iteration of the strategy, which would be considered later on the agenda. The Committee had also reviewed the Internal Audit Plan, which was also on the current agenda. Representatives from Azets attended the meeting to present the External Audit Plan and the Committee received strong assurance on review of the internal audit reports relating to 16–19 work placements, compliance with the College Financial Handbook and follow up actions from previous reports.

Finance & Resources Committee – 17 June 2026 - the Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee advised that most of the substantive items considered were included on the current agenda, with the exception of the marketing update. The Committee had received a positive update on 2026/27 recruitment, with performance ahead of target across most areas. Members had discussed the recruitment tactics and approaches being adopted and were assured that these were proving effective, with the larger demographic pool contributing to increased applications and recruitment remaining on track.

Education Quality Curriculum & Students (EQCS) Committee – 18 June 2026 - in the absence of the Committee Chair, committee members provided a verbal update from the meeting. Members had received a presentation on the AMTEC proposal which was well-received and had reviewed the Strategic KPI dashboard, noting that performance was generally strong and that appropriate actions were in place where required. The Committee had been updated on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) dashboard and noted the impact of lagged data. It was explained that partnership data would not feed into the dashboard until the following year and that the only partnership data currently reflected was from the London School of Commerce. Members were reassured that the College would be able to provide contextual commentary explaining the actions taken to address any concerns arising from the data.

The Committee also considered curriculum strategies, the Annual Accountability Agreement and the HE partnerships update, all of which were included on the current agenda. Members discussed curriculum planning, including alignment with local skills priorities, employer demand and the opportunities presented by the AMTEC. Members discussed student recruitment, with particular emphasis on the importance of high-quality careers guidance. The FE Quality Development Plan was also discussed, including support for high-risk and vulnerable students and the actions being taken to improve attendance. The Committee was pleased to note that maths continued to be an area of strength.

Search & Governance Committee – 23 June 2026 – the Committee Chair reported that members had reviewed succession planning, committee membership and forthcoming vacancies, with particular focus on recruiting governors with finance, cyber security and digital expertise to support delivery of the College's strategy moving forward.

The Committee had also considered the HE Partnerships Link Governor proposal, an update on the Governance Development Plan and the wide range of training and development opportunities available to governors. Members reviewed the approach to publishing confidential meeting papers to support transparency and received an update on governor attendance. The Chair reminded members that the annual individual governor 121 meetings would be held over the summer.

Academy Sponsorship Committee – 13 November 2025 (Paper C) – Members noted a procedural matter relating to the minutes of the final meeting of the Academy Sponsorship Committee. As the Committee had been dissolved since the meeting, there was no mechanism for formal approval of the minutes. The minutes had previously been circulated to governors for information, and it was noted that the Committee members in attendance at the meeting had confirmed them as an accurate record.

26/61 College Strategies 2026-2031 (Paper D)

The Principal presented Paper D, the draft Strategic Plan and invited governors' feedback on its narrative, concept and overall presentation ahead of publication. Governors were thanked for their contribution to its development, together with the staff involved in producing the document and the 18 supporting strategies which underpinned the overarching Plan. Andy highlighted that the Statement of Purpose had been revised to provide a clear thread linking the College's key strategic documents and to reinforce the language and values that run through all aspects of the College's work.

It was explained that the new Strategy represented a significant shift from the previous text-based format to a more modern, outward-facing publication reflecting the College's identity, ambition and future direction. The Strategy was built around the four strategic pillars discussed at the Strategic Planning Day, supported by the underpinning strategies. Following completion of the design, the Strategy would be launched at the Business to Business event before being communicated more widely to stakeholders.

It was noted that further KPIs arising from recent committee discussions would be incorporated into the final supporting strategies. In discussion, members were highly supportive of the draft and welcomed the overall approach, praising the modern,

accessible design, reduced reliance on text and greater use of infographics, which they felt made the document more engaging and approachable for students, parents and external audiences. The document reflected discussions from the Strategic Planning Day and showcased the College's achievements. Members commented that the Strategy successfully conveyed the College's identity, ambition and future direction without becoming overly detailed.

Members suggested a small number of refinements, including ensuring that apprenticeships and enterprise were more prominently reflected, providing greater emphasis on how success would be measured, and incorporating additional references and imagery relating to the College's facilities. Andy confirmed that the final document would ensure all areas of the College were appropriately represented and advised that a number of the key performance measures were contained within the Accountability Agreement for 2026/27.

Members agreed to:

- **Approve the Strategic Plan in principle, subject to the incorporation of governor feedback and completion of final non-material amendments, visual design and publication (Appendix D1)**
- **Approve the revised Statement of Purpose (Appendix D2)**
- **Approve the Curriculum and related strategies, the amended KPIs and targets and additional KPI (apprenticeship attendance) for 2026-31 as recommended by the EQCS Committee (Appendix D3)**
- **Approve the Corporate Services and enabling strategies, the amended KPIs, targets, outcomes and additional KPIs (reduction in Tonnes CO2e, staff satisfaction and engagement) for 2026-31 as recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee (Appendix D4)**
- **Delegate authority to the Principal and Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of Corporation where appropriate, to approve final non-material amendments prior to publication, provided these do not alter the strategic intent or priorities approved by Corporation**
- **Note that the approved Strategy will be launched to College staff through the Back to Business programme before being published and communicated to external stakeholders**

26/62 Accountability Agreement Statement 2026/27 (Paper E)

Alison Maynard presented the College's Accountability Agreement and Local Needs Duty Statement for 2026/27. Alison advised that the Accountability Agreement was a DfE requirement for the release of 2026/27 funding and demonstrated how the College's curriculum planning and resource allocation aligned with local, regional and national skills priorities. It was noted that the

document had been considered in detail by both the Senior Leadership Team and the Education, Quality, Curriculum & Students Committee.

Alison emphasised the continued focus on priority growth sectors, the expansion of higher technical education, the College's AMTEC status and its commitment to inclusion. The key risks relating to workforce capacity, employer placements and qualification reforms were also noted, together with the mitigating actions in place.

Members noted that this was expected to be the final Accountability Agreement required by the DfE with new arrangements to be introduced next year. Members commended the report as a comprehensive and high-quality piece of work.

Corporation agreed to:

- **note the strategic risks, mitigations and monitoring arrangements outlined within this report.**
- **approve the strategic objectives and associated actions contained within the Agreement.**
- **approve the New College Durham Accountability Agreement and Local Needs Duty Statement 2026/27 for submission to the Department of Education.**

26/63 Strategic Transition Statement (Paper F)

Alison Maynard presented Paper F, which provided an overview of the Government's post-16 qualification reforms and the College's planned response through its Strategic Transition Planning Statement.

Members noted the strategic risks, opportunities and implementation challenges associated with the transition to the new qualification framework, together with the anticipated impact on curriculum delivery, workforce planning, employer engagement, estates, learner outcomes and the College's financial sustainability over the implementation period.

Alison highlighted the significant work of the Vice Principals and Director of Funding and Curriculum Planning on curriculum reform over the past three years, which had informed the Strategic Transition Planning Statement. It was noted that, although the final submission to the DfE was made via a standard online form, this did not reflect the considerable planning and preparation undertaken by the College. Members heard that many colleges were only beginning to consider transition planning, placing New College Durham ahead of the sector.

Members expressed concern at the additional risk in the potential distraction of implementing the reforms from the College's core priorities. In response to members' questions it was confirmed that transition planning had been aligned with the College's spatial plan and that the statement focused primarily on 16–18 qualification

reforms and progression from Level 2 to Level 3, although apprenticeship reforms would also have an impact. Members highlighted the importance of engaging with employers to communicate the changes.

The Corporation agreed to:

- **Note the national post-16 qualification reforms and the emerging strategic risks and opportunities associated with implementation.**
- **Approve the College's Strategic Transition Planning Statement submission to the DfE**

26/64 Internal Audit Plan 2026/27 (Paper G)

Allen Eccles presented Paper G, the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2026/27.

Allen explained that one of the Committee's key responsibilities was to provide an annual opinion on the effectiveness of the College's internal control framework. Internal audit activity formed a key source of assurance in reaching that opinion, with the plan developed through consideration of the College's principal risks, existing sources of assurance and the need to ensure appropriate audit coverage over a rolling three-year period.

Members noted that the proposed plan included audits of safeguarding, cyber security, curriculum planning and implementation of the new HR system. During discussion, governors suggested that the impact of Artificial Intelligence on the College should be considered within a future Internal Audit Plan. It was noted that AI had also been discussed at the last meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee and was being incorporated into the Teaching, Learning and Enhancement Strategy, including development of associated KPIs.

The Corporation approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2026/27.

26/65 HE Partnerships – E10 Update (Paper H)

Peter Morrison presented Paper H, which updated members on the College's HE partnerships and compliance with the Office for Students' (OfS) new registration condition E10: Subcontracting, which would take effect on 30 June 2026. It was noted that the paper had been considered in detail by the EQCS Committee at the June meeting.

Peter advised that compliance with the new condition required the College to maintain a Subcontracting Information Source (SIS) which consolidated into a single evidence source the College's strategic rationale for engaging in subcontracting, due diligence processes, governance oversight, risk management, policies and procedures, and arrangements for monitoring quality and student outcomes. A number of policies and procedures applying to

subcontracting had been strengthened to ensure compliance with the OfS requirements and approved by the Senior Leadership Team and Academic Board.

The Board noted that two prior internal audits had provided strong assurance in relation to the governance and oversight of HE partnerships at the College.

Part of this item is recorded confidentially under confidential minute 26/65a.

Members also noted the proposal to appoint an HE Partnerships Link Governor, which would be considered later on the meeting agenda.

In response to a question seeking an update on partner registration with the OfS, members were advised that OfS had confirmed that all providers in the initial application cohort remained within the second stage of the registration process. Owing to resource constraints within OfS, the process had been delayed and was now expected to conclude during the next academic year. Peter confirmed that the College remained well advanced in its preparations and continued to be ahead of the sector in responding to the new regulatory requirements.

The Head of Governance advised that as confirmation had been received that the amendment to the legal contract with CECOS would not require execution as a deed, there would be a minor amendment to the recommendation seeking delegated authority to sign the contract variation.

Corporation agreed to:

- **approve the Strategic Rationale document to be used in the Subcontracting Information Source (SIS) and form part of the College's published accounts;**
- **confirm the report provides adequate assurance of the College being able to meet the requirements of condition E10; and**
- **delegate authority to the Principal and Chief Executive Officer, to sign the variation to the legal contract with CECOS so that we can legally enforce elements of the E10 condition.**

26/66 Financial Monitoring to 31 May 2026 (Paper I1)

Paul Bradley presented Paper I1, which detailed the financial position of the College at 31 May 2026.

Members noted the increase in projected surplus and the key factors that impacted the position, including additional growth funding from DfE which had been higher than anticipated, confirmation of High Needs funding from Durham County Council, successful early delivery of Bootcamp programmes bringing

income forward from the next financial year, HE partnerships outperforming expectations and staffing underspends arising primarily from ongoing vacancies. Paul confirmed that cash balances were strong and whilst emphasising that the medium-term outlook would require active management, the in-year financial position remained very positive.

Members noted the forecasted year-end financial position at 31 May 2026.

Rhiannon Hiles left the meeting at 5.27pm.

26/67 Financial Monitoring – Westfirst Limited to 31 May 2026 (Paper I2)

Members received Paper I2, which detailed the latest financial performance and balance sheet position of Westfirst Limited.

Corporation agreed to note:

- The Profit and Loss Account for Westfirst Limited to 31 May 2026
- The Balance Sheet position and net asset position of Westfirst Limited
- The ongoing monitoring arrangements relating to the financial performance of the company

26/68 Strategic Financial Plan - Budget for 2026/27 and Indicative Budget 2027/28 (Paper I3)

Paul Bradley presented Paper I3, the proposed 2026/27 budget and indicative financial forecast for 2027/28, which had been recommended for approval by the Finance and Resources Committee.

Paul advised that the forecast outturn for 2025/26 had improved since consideration by the Committee, although this did not affect the proposed budget for 2026/27 or the 2027/28 forecast. It was explained that the budget had been developed to support delivery of the College's Strategic Plan and the forecast income and an operating surplus for the next two years were noted.

Paul highlighted the impact of the revised FRS102 accounting standard, which required lease commitments to be recognised on the balance sheet. It was emphasised that this represented an accounting change rather than new borrowing and would not affect the College's cash position or underlying financial strength, with the College remaining on track to achieve an Outstanding Financial Health classification. Members noted that the budget also included significant investment in learner growth, staffing, digital transformation, the Construction Centre of Excellence, the Sports and Sixth Form redevelopment and AMTEC, whilst excluding uncertain income streams and providing sufficient resilience to manage future risks. Paul thanked the finance team and

colleagues across the College for their contribution to the detailed financial planning process.

Members welcomed the detailed budget and the inclusion of sensitivity analysis illustrating both upside and downside scenarios, which they felt brought the key financial risks to life and reflected the current volatility of the sector. Members queried the target for cash days in hand under the financial KPIs. Paul explained that the financial strategy had been developed to maintain the College's Outstanding Financial Health classification whilst recognising that reserves should be used to support strategic investment rather than simply accumulated. The projected cash position represented a prudent minimum rather than a target, with the College expecting to maintain cash balances of around 60 days in practice.

Members sought and received assurance that the financial modelling reflected changes to apprenticeship policy, including the increased emphasis on lower-level apprenticeships and younger learners. Paul highlighted the 2.5% provision for staff pay and advised that there was potential to review this further should additional DfE funding become available.

Following detailed consideration of the underlying assumptions and noting the sensitivity analysis, Corporation:

- **noted the forecast outturn for 2025/26, the proposed budget for 2026/27 and the forecast budget for 2027/28 and**
- **approved the budget for 2026/27 and the two-year financial plan which will be used for the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) return due for submission at the end of July 2026.**

26/69 Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2030/31 (Paper I4)

Paul Bradley presented the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2026/27 to 2030/31, which had been recommended by the Finance & Resources Committee.

Members noted that the Plan provided the financial framework to deliver the College's new Strategic Plan, maintaining long-term financial sustainability despite a challenging external environment. It forecast continued operating surpluses, no external borrowing, Outstanding Financial Health and ongoing investment in strategic priorities including the AMTEC, estates, digital transformation, sustainability and the workforce. The Plan also incorporated scenario planning and sensitivity analysis to support effective financial risk management.

Members considered the opportunities presented by AI to improve productivity and support the College's long-term financial sustainability. It was suggested that AI had the potential to reduce staffing costs over time by increasing efficiency, although it was recognised that this would be achieved incrementally rather than through significant workforce reductions. Members noted that the

College's focus was on using AI to release staff capacity from repetitive tasks in favour of higher-value activities requiring professional judgement and address workload pressures identified through the staff survey. Initiatives such as AI Champions were being introduced to support adoption across the College.

The Corporation noted that the College remained in a strong financial position and that continued investment in AI and digital transformation would further strengthen its long-term resilience.

Corporation agreed to accept the Finance and Resources Committee recommendation to approve the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2026/2027 to 2030/2031 including:

- **The forecast financial position, reserves strategy and key financial assumptions.**
- **The strategic financial direction outlined within the Plan and the continued alignment of financial resources to the College's strategic priorities.**

26/70 Risk Management Strategy 2026 to 2031 (Paper I5)

Paul Bradley presented the proposed Risk Management Strategy for 2026–2031, which had been recommended for approval by the Audit & Risk Committee.

Members noted that the Strategy supported delivery of the College's new Strategic Plan by modernising the College's approach to risk management in line with good practice as well as addressing recommendations in the External Governance Review and reflecting increasing regulatory expectations.

Paul highlighted that the Strategy introduced a formal Risk Appetite Framework, together with enhanced assurance arrangements including Bow Tie Risk Analysis, Critical Controls and Assurance Mapping, shifting the focus from risk scores to the effectiveness of controls. It also strengthened the College's approach to identifying emerging risks through regular horizon scanning.

Helen Golightly left the meeting at 5.52pm.

Paul thanked the Audit and Risk Committee members for their constructive challenge in considering the draft strategy, which had strengthened the final document. The Audit and Risk Committee Chair commended the strategy and commented that it responded well to the recommendations of the external governance review.

Helen Golightly re-joined the meeting at 5.54pm.

Corporation agreed to accept the Audit and Risk Committee's endorsement and recommendation to approve the Risk Management Strategy 2026 to 2031.

26/71 Review of Cost of Living Pay Award Process and Proposed Revised Approach (Paper I6)

This item is recorded confidentially under confidential minute 26/71a.

Nigel Harrett and Allen Eccles left the meeting at 6.16pm.

26/72 Governors' Additional Responsibilities – HE Partnerships (Paper J1)

Members reviewed Paper J1, which detailed a recommendation from the Search & Governance Committee, following the request made by the Board in March, to consider the establishment of a Link Governor for HE Partnerships.

Members noted that the Committee had considered the increasing regulatory expectations relating to governance and oversight of HE partnerships, as outlined in previous reports and reinforced by the update provided earlier in the meeting. It was confirmed that a role description, consistent with those for other Link Governor roles, had been prepared and circulated separately to governors following an omission from the report, which made clear that the position would provide strategic oversight rather than becoming involved in operational matters.

Members approved the establishment of a Higher Education Partnerships Link Governor role for an initial period of two years, following which the ongoing requirement for the role would be reviewed.

26/73 Arrangements for Routine Governance Business (Paper J2)

Members considered Paper J2, which detailed a recommendation from the Search & Governance Committee to replace the current starred agenda process with a consent agenda, in response to feedback received in the External Governance Review.

Members noted that whilst the practical impact on meetings would be largely unchanged, a consent agenda reflected sector best practice by requiring routine and non-contentious items to be explicitly approved together, providing a clearer audit trail than starred items which simply assumed agreement. It was also noted that members had previously supported retaining an efficient process for routine business, provided opportunities for challenge remained and the approach was not overused.

Members reviewed the examples of the types of business that would be suitable for inclusion in a consent agenda, which were consistent with the Corporation's current practice. It was noted that governors' views on the appropriateness of consent agenda items would continue to be sought through meeting evaluations.

Members approved the adoption of a consent agenda approach for routine and non-contentious business.

26/74 Safeguarding Governor Update (Paper K1)

Members reviewed Paper K1, the termly update from Chris Patterson following his meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

In addition to the content of his report, Chris highlighted the College's new approach to risk management discussed earlier in the meeting and suggested that, given the Corporation's very low risk appetite for safeguarding, this would be explicitly reflected within the Risk Appetite Framework. Chris also reiterated that the Internal Audit Plan for 2026/27 included further assurance work relating to safeguarding. Chris emphasised that these developments provided additional assurance that the College's safeguarding arrangements remained robust and effective.

Corporation agreed to receive the report and take assurance that appropriate arrangements are in place for safeguarding and that the College is meeting its statutory duties and continuing to maintain its culture of safeguarding.

26/75 SEND Governor (Paper K2)

Members received Paper K, the update of the SEND Governor and noted the position for learners with SEND as at June 2026.

26/76 Annual Report on Sustainability (Paper L)

Members received Paper L, the Annual Report on Sustainability, which updated on sustainability activities and environmental performance for the 2025/26 academic year.

Corporation agreed to note the contents of the report and confirm its support for the proposed strategic direction regarding future sustainability priorities, including consideration of the associated risks and mitigation measures.

26/77 Capital Projects Update (Paper M1)

Members received Paper M1, which updated on progress on the College's major capital projects. Members noted progress on the Construction Centre of Excellence – Learning Space 2 and the Sports and Music Building Redevelopment project.

26/78 Reserves Policy (Paper M2)

Members received Paper M2, which presented the Reserves Policy for formal approval by Corporation following endorsement from the Finance and Resources Committee.

Corporation agreed to:

1. **Accept the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee and approve the Reserves Policy.**
2. **Approve that the minimum free reserves target remains at 10% of annual turnover.**
3. **Note the arrangements for annual monitoring and reporting of compliance with the policy through the College's financial governance framework.**

26/79 Curriculum Update Reports (FE, Apprenticeships and HE) (Paper N)

Members reviewed Paper N, the Curriculum Update reports discussed at the recent meeting of the Education Quality Curriculum and Students Committee.

Members noted the contents of the Curriculum Update reports for FE, Apprenticeships and HE.

26/80 Strategic Monitoring

- **2025/26 Strategic KPI update – Curriculum (Paper O1)**
- **2025/26 Strategic KPI update – Corporate Services (Paper O2)**

Members received Papers O1 and O2, which updated on performance against the College's Key Performance Indicators.

Corporation agreed to:

- receive the Curriculum report;
- scrutinise progress against the 2025/26 Curriculum and Quality Strategic KPIs;
- note the positive progress being made across Further Education, Apprenticeships and Higher Education provision, alongside the targeted recovery activity in place to secure year-end achievement outcomes.
- note the progress made against the Corporate Services Strategic KPIs as at 31 March 2026;
- acknowledge the strong overall performance across Finance, Estates, ICT and most HR measures; and
- confirm that appropriate assurance has been received, subject to continued monitoring of the health and safety actions arising from SKPIHR5.

26/81 Reappointment of Corporation Member (Paper P1)

Members received Paper P1 and accepted the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee to **reappoint Chris Patterson as a Corporation member for a further 4-year term expiring on 30 September 2030.**

26/82 Co-option of Corporation Member (Paper P2)

Members received Paper P2 and accepted the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee to **approve the co-option of Allen Eccles to the Finance and Resources Committee for a period of six months from 15 September 2026.**

26/83 Corporation and Committee meeting dates and Schedules of Business 2026/27 (Paper Q)

Members approved the meeting dates and Proposed Schedules of Business for 2026/27, noting that additional items may be added during the year as required.

26/84 Use of the Corporation Seal (Paper R)

Members received Paper R and noted the application of the College Seal to the following documents:

- Variation of Funding Agreement – Economic Inactivity Trailblazer – Aspiring to Make Change
- Design and build contract for refurbishment and extension of the Sports Building

which were signed by the Chair and Principal on behalf of Corporation and recorded in the Corporation Register of Seals.

26/85 Any other urgent business

The Chair reflected on the breadth and significance of the strategic discussions held throughout the meeting and thanked attendees for their contribution.

On behalf of the Corporation, the Chair congratulated the Principal, Andy Broadbent, on being named Business Leader of the Year at the North East Chamber of Commerce Business Awards 2026, recognising this as a significant achievement for both him and the College.

26/86 Date of next meeting: 24 September 2026