

1656 PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1656.1 Attendance, Apologies, Welcome & Introductions

Present: Nick Buckland (Chair)
Paula Davies
Patience Egbo (*Except Item 1656.3 & on Teams*)
Kathryn Hardwidge
Tony Medhurst (Principal)
Cecilia Mutuma (*Except Item 1656.3 & on Teams*)
Mary Pooley
John Sills
Anatoliy Strembitskyy

In Attendance: Emily Attridge (Student Observer)
Jayne Chaplin (Clerk to the Corporation)
Andrew Clare
Angela McLean (*Except Item 1656.3 & on Teams*)
Richard Roberts (*Item 1656.3 only*)

Apologies: Nick Day, Gareth Dace, Sophia Howard Leah Markee, Charlotte Simmonds, Mia Young

All were welcomed to the meeting.

1656.2 Declaration of Interests & Confidential Items

A Declaration of Interest was received from Tony Medhurst in his capacity as a Director of CK Assessment & Training Ltd (Part 2 Agenda)

Based on the commercially sensitive nature of the matters for discussion, it then was **RESOLVED** for those Items forming Part 2 of the Agenda to be taken as confidential Items of business.

1656.3 Board Development Session – Governance Performance Review

Facilitated by the Director of Apprenticeships and Commercial Development and College nominee, the Board completed its governance performance review to inform its Annual Self-Assessment Report and governance development priorities for 2025/26.

The Director of Apprenticeships and Commercial Development was thanked for his support.

The Director of Apprenticeships and Commercial Development left the meeting

1656.4 Minutes of the Last Meeting & Matters Arising

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 July 2025 were approved as a correct record and the application of the Chair signature was authorised. Observing topics to be covered on the agenda and now concluded (Minutes 1630.3 and 1652.1d refer) it was confirmed that there were no Matters Arising on which to report.

1656.5 Chair's Update

Observing those matters covered on the agenda, the Chair confirmed that there was nothing further he wished to add.

1657 STRATEGY & POLICY

Patience Egbo, Charlotte Simmonds & Angela McLean Joined the meeting

1657.1 Principal's Report & College Accountability Statement

After noting those matters considered elsewhere on the Agenda, the Report was considered. Review included:

- a. Recent College activities, particularly noting:
 - i. The highest attendance numbers recorded for a September Open Evening highlighting the need to give consideration to the implications
 - ii. Of recent visitors the informal visit from the Further Education Commissioner and the extremely positive comments on the learning culture, "feel" from walking around and the College facilities and resources and the continued and planned investment signed off by the Board
- b. The overview of Policy and Local updates observing and reflecting on:
 - i. Challenges faced from a public sector perspective highlighted at the Cabinet Office Leadership College Event on Climate Change, Security and Resilience, notably:
 - The ways in which climate change was reshaping societies and economies and the challenges presented beyond sustainability, including national security with a rapidly changing environment in complex and unpredictable ways, highlighting exposure to persistent attacks, disruption to services and fraud from poor cyber hygiene
 - How good organisational resilience was considered less about eliminating risk and more about realistic preparations, considering the more effective approach to balance ambition with pragmatism with sound and achievable plans to facilitate rapid recovery when disruption occurred
 - Further developments, which members were advised would be provided at appropriate times, reassured that such matters were integral to the Senior Team's current thinking, discussion and preparations
 - ii. The Impact of AI on Jobs in the context of one of the themes of the College Strategic Plan, noting the information and observations from recently published research identifying the 40 jobs most at risk of AI and those not.
 - iii. The potential impact of the recently published Skills White Paper, advising members that updates would be shared via forthcoming briefings and discussion at the Board's Annual Conference.

Discussion and questioning included:

- c. V Levels in the context of the practicalities, gaps/ transition between programmes and implications for those students currently on T Levels, then reflecting on potential opportunities presented, including combining with A Levels, noting considerations in this regard to be ongoing

- d. Recent activity concerning a local Hotel at Broxbourne confirming that the College remained vigilant and all practicable steps were being taken to maintain and ensure all on site continued to feel safe and secure.

Those members who had supported the recent SAR validation Panels were thanked and after discussion, the Report was noted.

1658 PERFORMANCE, PLANNING & COMPLIANCE

1658.1 From Committees

Following review by the respective committees, reports and recommendations were presented from:

1658.1.1 Search & Governance Committee, 22/10/25

The Committee Chair provided an overview of the business considered and the Committee's recommendations, particularly:

- a. In the context of the Board's current composition, its discussions of the impact of membership changes and next steps in succession planning for forthcoming departures, including recruitment and the longer term consideration of preparing for the departure of the current Chair of the Corporation now commencing his second and final term of office. An overview of activity was provided explaining:
 - i Of two candidates, one had been considered to best meet the recruitment criteria and activity was ongoing with options being explored for interim arrangements pending a second appointment. The Committee's recommendation was presented regarding the appointment of a new Business member, highlighting the understanding demonstrated of the College and its community and the value of the professional expertise and experience to the Board and the Audit Committee, including voluntary work within the community
 - ii With interim arrangement in place, discussions regarding plans to secure a Chair for the Resources Committee
- b. Plans for the Board's Annual Conference noting that more detailed proposals would form part of the Committee's next update but confirming that link activities and learning walks in curriculum areas would remain part of the programme

After review and on the recommendation of the Search & Governance Committee, it was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the **APPOINTMENT** of Joshua Temile as Business Member for a term of office of four years and a member of the Audit Committee.

1658.1.2 Resources Committee, 22/10/25

After recognising those items appearing on the Agenda, the Committee Chair provided an overview of the business considered, particularly its review of the autumn term update on HR activity, highlighting its discussion of performance against HR Key Performance Indicators, particularly around probation compliance, which was being monitored and was improving.

Reports and the Committee's recommendations then were presented, comprising:

(a) 2024/25: Financial Year-end (draft position)

Along with the latest FRS102 Actuarial Pension Valuation and accompanying documentation, and in the context of the Group Budget approved in July 2024 of a target operating surplus of £393k for the College, it was reported that the position at the end of July 2025 confirmed a College surplus £1,321k ahead of budgeted expectation, £1,714k against a budgeted surplus of £393k. Members were advised:

- i. That the year-end Financial Statements audit had gone smoothly and was concluded with nothing of significance identified at the clearance meeting
- ii. That the positive change since last reported was attributed to additional in year growth funding, pay savings primarily related to those following delays in appointing new positions and the return on investments.
- iii. Of the Committee's observations regarding the College cash position and its return on investments and the concentration of funds placed with one institution in the context of current and increasing risks around cyber security. Recognising the risks highlighted, it was confirmed that options in this regard were to be explored
- iv. Of the movements in the College pension schemes in-line with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 highlighting the increased valuation and the underpinning assumptions and explaining how it was to be treated and presented in the accounts

Following review, and on the recommendation of the Resources Committee, it was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the approach proposed for the treatment of the FRS102 Actuarial Pension Valuation.

(b) 2025/26: Financial Year to date

i. October Snapshot

Presenting an early picture, the position for recruitment year to date was summarised and noted.

(ii) Sub-Contracting Update

Activity to date was summarised with the College Apprenticeship, AEB, Programmes of Study sub-contracted provision. Whilst noted to be on profile with no contract variations recommended, a proposed increase was considered of approximately £15,000 in the contract value for CKAT Ltd Programmes of Study following increased national funding rates published after the contract award, observing learners numbers remained unchanged with the precise, final amount to be reported at the next meeting.

On the recommendation of the Resources Committee, it was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** an in-year increase of approximately £15,000 in the CKAT Ltd contract value for Programmes of Study.

1658.1.3 Quality Standards & Business Planning (QSBP) Committee, 08/10/25

The Committee Chair provided an overview of the business considered, particularly highlighting:

- a. The introduction of Skills for Success, a College initiative designed to prepare students for the workplace and life beyond education, replacing the Skills Builder programme, responding to student feedback about its shortcomings, considered insufficiently effective, engaging or user-friendly

- b. Its discussion of the 24/25 Complaints report with future reports to include data regarding numbers of those upheld

A report was presented on 24/25 predicted outcomes:

(a) 2024/25 Predictions: Learner Outcomes

Confirming current expectations regarding learner outcomes for the year, reporting an improved position since originally reported but slightly down on 2023/24. College performance nationally however was observed to be positive, particularly highlighting performance in maths retakes and HE and the correlation between and the accuracy of predictions and actual performance.

The update was noted.

1658.1.4 Audit Committee, 23/09/25 (Special Meeting)

The Committee Chair summarised the business considered:

- a. To bring to a conclusion the Internal Audit plan for 2024/25
- b. Highlighting the briefing provided on College IT and the Committee's plans for similar such briefings at future meetings.

Members then were advised of a meeting scheduled with the Internal Audit Service to discuss concerns regarding its performance.

After reiterating the Committee's thanks to departing members, the update was noted.

1658.2 Statutory, Regulatory & Compliance

1658.2.1 Annual Reports – Health & Safety

The 2024/25 Health & Safety Annual Report was presented following review by the Resources Committee. Providing an overview of the arrangements, developments and activities for the year the Committee's particular discussion of the accident statistics were highlighted:

- Acknowledging and welcoming the inclusion of the "near-miss" data but as one of the Board's primary responsibilities, members were advised of its observations of the low numbers recorded and its request for focus to be maintained to facilitate consideration of emerging trends and issues for attention, confirming Management had and would maintain focus in this regard.
- Confirming after the Committee's questioning of the higher numbers recorded in English, Construction and LLDD, these were attributed to illness in those areas

The report was noted

1658.2.2 Termly Updates

(a) Health, Safety & Welfare (Safeguarding, Prevent & SEND)

In the context of the Corporation's overall responsibility for ensuring the sufficiency of the measures in place for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, the first report of the autumn term was presented.

After expressing confidence in and providing assurance about College arrangements and the monitoring of activity, an overview of recent activity and developments was provided, which represented an early picture for the year. Highlights included:

- i. Confirming the decline in safeguarding referrals to be reflective of the drop in paper records with more transferred electronically rather than under-reporting with the number of incidents recorded showing a 12% increase. Reflecting further on referrals:
 - The relationship with and support from the CMS service was thought to be positive but would be confirmed at the next meeting
 - Too early to see emerging trends, members were advised that whilst there were no issues of major concern currently, review and monitoring continued particularly around mental health reported as a trend over previous years and accounting for 45% of referrals
 - Members were advised of overreporting of welfare referrals in childcare in contrast and underreporting in construction and electrical, highlighting gender differentials with the majority of females in childcare and males in electrical and construction and a greater reticence in males in raising concerns, noting monitoring would continue to look at ways to better engage young men.
- ii. Providing an overview of the strategies and activities promoting, responding to and addressing issues regarding safeguarding, Prevent and British values

After confirming that the next report of the autumn term would include updates on subcontracting and Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND), along with updates on Child Looked After (CLA) students and criminal convictions, the report was noted.

(b) Risk Management

The updated Risk Register was presented, particularly noting the Audit Committee's discussion and subsequent developments discussed earlier on the Agenda (Minute 1658.1.2a-iii refers), to be reflected in the Register when next updated

The update was noted.

1659 OTHER BUSINESS & DATE OF NEXT MEETING

1659.1 Any Other Business: Member Departures

As the final meeting for Business members John Sills and Charlotte Simmonds, on behalf of the Corporation, the Chair offered the Board's thanks for their professional insight and invaluable contribution at meetings, paying particular tribute to John Sills for his support as Chair of the Audit Committees and during Ofsted Inspections. Members then extended their best wishes in their future endeavours.

1659.2 Dates of Next Meetings

Wednesday 17 December 2025 (inc. Christmas Celebration)

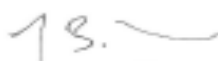
Friday 23 January 2026 (Annual Conference – at Ware)

Wednesday 25 March 2026

Wednesday 3 July 2026

With the business forming Part 1 concluded, the meeting moved to the Part 2 confidential agenda at this point

Signed:



Dated: 17 December 2025

Nick Buckland OBE, Chair of the Corporation