

HARTLEPOOL COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Governors held on Thursday 4th December 2025 at 5.15pm in Conference Room 4

Members Present:	Mr S Irvine [Chair]	Mr H Hasnain
	Mr G Riches	Mrs M Roberts
	Mr N Gray	Mrs A Bolton
	Mr S Smith	Mr A Kellehear
	Ms S Flender-Bradley	Mrs J Robinson
	Mr P Dodds	

Also present:	Mr D Williams [Vice Principal]
	Mr M Casey [Vice Principal]
	Mrs K Dales [Head of Governance]
	Ms E Rodgers [Head of Finance]
	Mrs C Wright [College Higher Education lead]

1	Apologies for Absence Apologies received from E Warman, A Horne, S Robinson.
2	Declarations of Interest No new declarations of interest to report.
3	Minutes of previous meeting – 9th October 2024 The minutes of the previous meetings were approved as a true record.
4	Matter arising and action points All actions are complete.
5	Committee minutes Accepted by the Board.
6	Governor visits to the College SI congratulated the College on another brilliant Celebration of Achievement night which was well attended. GR commented that HH delivered a session at the College's Leadership Forum. HH said that it was a pleasure to meet the senior managers. NG commented that the Higher Education graduation ceremony was a good day. SF-B said that she had attended the AOC Governors summit.
7 Strategic landscape updates	
7.1	Recent developments in the sector GR introduced the paper and said that Ofsted have changed the Inspection Framework and grading and told the Board that the College will be due the next inspection mid-2027. GR took the Board through the process and criteria and said that training will be provided to staff and Governors next year. SF-B said that the AOC summit had made it clear that there will be a bigger focus on governance in future inspections. There will be a new FE Commissioner in post in January 2026, and she will have three deputies, all of whom have a finance background (one of whom is mentoring DW). GR informed the Board that the OFS produced a new funding document in July 2025 and said that he has a meeting with Teesside University tomorrow to discuss funding decreases. <i>Note – JR and NG both work for Teesside University.</i>

	GR told the Board that ten Technical Excellence Colleges have now been established in construction and there are plans to establish more in different specialisms. Depending on the details, the College may opt to bid for them. SI asked that this be included in the College's Strategy Day.
8 Strategic Aim 1: to deliver teaching, learning and assessment practice which results in outstanding outcomes for learners	
8.1	<p>College Self-Assessment report</p> <p>MC introduced the report which has been discussed in detail at Curriculum & Standards committee. The key highlights are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achievement is up 0.4% which is slightly above the national rates - Pass rate is up 1.1% - Apprenticeship achievement is 67.3% which is well above the national rates - Hartlepool is third in the country with regard to curriculum alignment - There are detailed Governors lines of enquiry covering, amongst other tutorials and English & Maths attendance. <p>The Board approved the report.</p>
8.2	<p>Higher Education Annual report</p> <p>CW introduced the report which included a summary of the key issues, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enrolments remain steady with only a small decline - Progression and completion success is 93.4% - Retention improved by 3% - As with previous years the student voice showed a negative response to Learning resources <p>HH asked what the issue was with learning resources. CW said that the College could not compete with the level of student resources at Teesside University but that Hartlepool students are able to visit and use them. However, whilst the college can facilitate trips over for full time students, this is more problematic for part time students who only attend college one day a week. JR commented that perhaps communication needs to be improved, particularly regarding on-line resources. CW agreed.</p> <p>AB asked if the decline in numbers was due to the removal of the aerospace provision. CW said that the university decided that the previously jointly delivered MEng is now wholly delivered by them. However, the College still delivers the Beng.</p> <p>The Board approved the report.</p>
8.3	<p>Quality Improvement report</p> <p>Confidential.</p>
9 Strategic Aim 2: to offer a curriculum that is aspirational and meets the needs of learners, parents, employers and stakeholders	
9.1	<p>Curriculum Strategy (White Paper and Curriculum Assessment review)</p> <p>MC took the Board through the report and commented that the College is in a good place regarding curriculum alignment and strong employer partnerships.</p> <p>He also introduced the Curriculum Assessment review and said that staff training will take place in the new year regarding the changes.</p> <p>GR said that the earliest implementation of the strategy will be August 2026, with the Curriculum Assessment review being implemented in August 2027.</p> <p>SI commented that this could be picked up at the Strategy Day.</p>

9.2	<p>HCFE Careers Strategy MC introduced the report and told the Board that AH had helped shape the document, particularly the development of the SMART targets.</p> <p>The Board accepted the report.</p>
9.3	<p>Teaching Practice review feedback MC said that the College has now moved away from Learning Walks and instead is undertaking Teaching Practice reviews which are akin to a mini observation. He said that they are working well and a third of staff have already been seen with all staff due to have two visits by the end of the year. He said that the visits are already improving teaching and learning as staff are referred to the Hub if development needs are identified.</p> <p>The Board accepted the report.</p>
9.4	<p>Safeguarding, SEND and Prevent Annual report and update Confidential</p>
9.5	<p>Safeguarding, SEND and Prevent Policy GR took the Board through the policy which shows tracked changes.</p> <p>The Board approved the report.</p> <p><i>CW left the meeting.</i></p>
<p>10 Strategic Aim 3: to develop a culture as a form of competitive advantage</p>	
10.1	<p>Annual EDI report GR introduced the report which highlights how different kinds of students achieve and how the College workforce is comprised.</p> <p>AB asked with regard to the gender gap whether the College was taking steps to promote better progression. GR said that the HR team are developing a leadership programme.</p> <p>The Board accepted the report.</p>
10.2	<p>Staff Question of the Day GR said that the responses are broadly similar to previous years but was pleased to see that clarity has improved. He said that by the end of 2025/26, the College will have three years' worth of data and will take time to analyse the results and develop an action plan in order to improve positive responses.</p> <p>The Board accepted the report.</p>
<p>11 Strategic Aim 4: to deploy an effective and efficient resource to support and promote exemplary provision</p>	
11.1	<p>External Audit findings <i>LR from RSM joined to meeting.</i></p> <p>LR presented the report and told the Board that a draft report had been to Audit Committee but that some changes had been made to it as work was finalised in a few areas. She said that it is a requirement that the whole Board review the report with the auditors in attendance.</p> <p>LR said that they had not undertaken an audit of Hartlepool Development Company as the College was looking to wrap it up.</p> <p>PD said that there had been a full discussion at Audit Committee and that he had no issues with the report.</p>

	<p>DW had nothing further to add but thanked LR and RSM for their work with the College.</p> <p>The Board accepted the report.</p> <p><i>LR left the meeting.</i></p>
11.2	<p>Draft consolidated reports and financial statements Confidential.</p>
11.3	<p>Draft HBDCL directors report and accounts Confidential.</p>
11.4	<p>Letter of Support from College to HBDCL DW told the Board that unlike previous years, a letter of support will not be required for the company as it will be closed down shortly.</p> <p>The Board accepted the report.</p>
11.5	<p>Audit Committee Annual report DW presented the report which has already been approved by the Audit Committee.</p> <p>PD told the board that the Audit Committee had approved the report at their meeting in November.</p> <p>The Board approved the report.</p>
11.6	<p>Autumn budget update DW gave a verbal update following the recent Autumn Budget saying that there does not appear to be much impact on the College at the moment but that the medium/long term prospects do not look rosy.</p>
11.7	<p>Current year financial performance Confidential.</p>
11.8	<p>Capital update DW told the Board that there is a lot of activity taking place and that a full report, including costs would be brought to the next meeting.</p> <p>The Board accepted the update.</p>
11.9	Confidential.
11.10	<p>Annual Health & Safety report DW presented the report telling the Board that there was one RIDDOR event last year. A new Health & Safety manager will join the College in January 2026, and the College's Health & Safety committee meets next week.</p> <p>He told the Board that some of the incidents are not a consequence of College related activities but still require dealing with in College, for example health related incidents.</p> <p>SI asked if it's possible to have some benchmarking data for comparison or even year on year comparisons. GR commented that this is something the new manager could look at.</p> <p>The Board approved the report.</p>

12 Strategic Aim 5: to develop and sustain transformational stakeholders partnerships	
12.1	Stakeholder Strategy update Confidential.
12.2	Apprenticeship expert provider update Confidential.
13 Strategic Plan Assurance and Risk	
13.1	Strategic Plan – performance against 2023/24 milestones Confidential.
13.2	Risk Register DW presented the report and told the Board that it would be undergoing a review in conjunction with the new Internal Auditors and an updated version will come to a future Board meeting The Board accepted the report.
14 Corporate Items	
14.1	Governor update KD told the Board that two Governors, LK and LC had resigned from the Board both due to work commitments. The Search Committee met just before Board and recommended the appointment of a new Governor Christine Hall. The Board approved the appointment.
14.2	Chairs appraisal SI said that for reasons of transparency the results of the Chairs appraisal questionnaire had been brought to Board. He thanked Governors for responding and said that there are some areas of learning to take forward.
14.3	Register of Interests KD said that the register had been updated following changes to HH interests.
14.4	Committee compliance with Terms of Reference KD introduced the report which had already been discussed and approved at Audit Committee. The Board approved the report.
14.5	Skills Matrix The Skills Matrix has been updated following recent new appointments. The Board accepted the report.
14.6	Proposed Board structure Confidential.
15	Use of Seal N/A.
16	Designation of confidential Items Items 8.3, 9.4, 11.2, 11.3, 11.7, 11.9, 12.1, 12.2, 13.1 and 14.6.
17	Any Other Business GR told Governors that on the final day of term (19 th December) there will be a staff awards and quiz from 10.30 and that Governors were more than welcome to attend.

18	<p>Date of next Board meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet the Governors 22nd January 4.45pm - Board Training 22nd January 5.15pm - Board meeting 12th March 5.15pm
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Chair

Action points from meeting held on 9th October 2025

	Action	Responsible	Date Due by
3	Register of Interests to be updated to record HH role	K Dales	December 2025
11.4	Costs to be added to the capital expenditure updates	M Roberts	December onwards