

**Minutes of the meeting of the Northampton College Corporation  
held at 1700 hours on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025**

**Present:** Anne-Marie Kilday (AMK)(Chair), Rod Wood (RW), Paul Beers (PB), Laura Crandley (LK), Jason Lancaster (JL) (Principal and CEO), Paul Nutter (PN), Julie Teckman (JuT), Mark Robbins (MR), Kay Sellick(KS), Alexandra Owen (AO). Neus Garriock (NG), Keira White (KW)(Student) Chid Uleme (CU)(Student)

**In attendance:** John Kirk (Clerk), Joanne Philpott (JP) (Deputy Principal Curriculum Success and Quality), Rav Garcha (RG) (Interim Deputy Principal, Finance and Corporate Affairs)

<b>C.25.1.1</b>	<p><b>Welcome and Formalities</b> Anne-Marie Kilday</p> <p><b>Apologies</b> were received from Lynn Drinkald and David Bailey. The meeting was declared quorate.</p>
<b>C.25.1.2</b>	<p><b>Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda</b></p> <p>AMK noted an interest in 6.3 as MHA are External Auditors to Northampton University.</p>
<b>C.25.1.3</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b></p> <p>The Minutes from the meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.</p>
<b>C.25.1.4</b>	<p><b>Action Log</b> John Kirk</p> <p>Clarity of RAG rating – completed</p> <p>KPI on staff turnover is in progress with further discussion on framework- in progress</p> <p>NIC is now included in management accounts - completed</p>
<b>C.25.2</b>	<p><b>Governance Matters</b> John Kirk</p> <p>The item was received subject to spreadsheet functions being revised to reflect accurate meeting attendance information</p> <p><b>Action: JK to review and update calculations to reflect attendance</b></p>
<b>C.25.2.1</b>	<p><b>Corporation &amp; Committee Membership</b> John Kirk</p>

	<p>JL and others agree that the Annual Pay Review be approved by the Board, as has been the custom. It was agreed that the revised articles come to the next meeting for approval.</p> <p><b><i>It was resolved that all terms of service be amended to four year terms, with the Articles amended such that members were usually appointed to serve a term of four years, with a maximum of eight years.</i></b></p> <p><b>Action: JK to amend the Articles for final approval at the next meeting</b></p>
<p><b>C.25.2.2</b></p>	<p><b>Merger of Governance &amp; Search Committee with Remuneration Committee</b> John Kirk</p> <p>Proposal to merge Governance and Search Committee with Remuneration Committee. This was agreed to be a benefit by both reducing administration and members' time commitment.</p> <p><b>It was resolved to merge the Governance &amp; Search Committee with the Remuneration Committee, subject to an amendment to the proposed Terms of Reference, the membership should usually include all committee chairs.</b></p> <p><b>Action: JK to amend the Terms of Reference</b></p>
<p><b>C.25.2.3</b></p>	<p><b>Standing Orders</b> John Kirk</p> <p>It was agreed to defer the approval of the Appendix to Standing Orders Annual and to consider any impact from new legislation such as the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 and The Employment Rights Bill.</p> <p>It was agreed the Schedule of Delegation be amended so that the Annual Staff Pay Award be subject to approval by the Corporation.</p> <p>JK was asked to investigate pertinent impact from impending legislation. <b>Action: JK to take advice and report back to the next meeting</b></p> <p>MR questioned the Scheme of Delegation at line 40, <i>Ensure compliance with regulations</i> and whether it should be the Corporation and not the Principal that is ultimately responsible.</p> <p>JK was asked to investigate and report back to the next meeting. <b>Action: JK to take advice and report back to the next meeting</b></p>
<p><b>C.25.3</b></p>	<p><b>Standing Items</b> Anne-Marie Kilday</p> <p><b>C25.3.1 Student Voice – Verbal Update</b> Keira White</p> <p>KW Culture Day is now confirmed for 2 June with activities to include cultural dress, different flags, and different languages as a celebration of the diversity of the college.</p>

	<p>A high need Mental Health Support Group has been established for high needs students and those with other mental health issues, expected to start next year.</p> <p>AMK asked how this would be delivered. KW said it would be a student-led group delivered as an enrichment activity, probably at lunchtime.</p> <p>The suggestions boxes process has been reviewed following the last meeting, and these are now read before each Student Parliament Meeting, and then passed to Student Ambassadors.</p> <p>CH the recent Parliament discussed a perceived lack of profile of the cooking department restaurant, which isn't widely known among students. It was decided to explore how this department might be involved in the Culture Day and was very interested.</p> <p>The Chair thanked both Students for their contributions.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
<p><b>C25.3.2</b></p>	<p><b>Staff Voice – Verbal update</b> Steve Bunker</p> <p>SB reported that the Staff Canteen is advertising the healthy food menu but feels that would benefit from better promotion to increase intake.</p> <p>Some staff would also welcome a higher visual presence by the security team, not least to combat poor driving in the car park. It was also suggested a parking permit system be introduced for students, which could be suspended or removed as a penalty for poor driving.</p> <p>JL confirmed that a number of more speed bumps are being installed to slow traffic, and the situation will continue to be monitored, and appropriate action taken.</p> <p>It was noted that all staff need to take greater responsibility for monitoring driving behaviour in the car park.</p> <p>The Report was received.</p>
<p><b>C25.3.3</b></p>	<p><b>Health &amp; Safety – Verbal update</b> Rav Garcha</p> <p>RG noted an incident where a student was injured in the car park and another RIDDOR incident reported at the previous meeting, but accident and near misses have generally reduced.</p> <p>A culture of heightened awareness of Health &amp; Safety is being encouraged and promoted throughout the college.</p> <p>NG noted that other organisations create specialist speed signage with irregular speed limits such as 9.7 or 5.3 mph as round numbers become almost invisible due to familiarity.</p> <p>SB requested further clarification on staff that have responsibility for writing risk assessments.</p>

	<p>JP agreed to address this with SB outside of the meeting.</p> <p>The Report was received.</p>
<p><b>C25.4.</b></p> <p><b>C25.4.1</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic Oversight</b></p> <p><b>Principal's Report</b> Jason Lancaster</p> <p>JL noted the changes from the previous iteration. Most areas are largely positive.</p> <p>1.2 Staff Costs look positive to reflect the staff needed to meet the strong level of applications for next year. Curriculum planning is on course to deliver some growth, with a further increase in A Level provision. However, there remain challenges with staffing levels in particular areas such as automotive.</p> <p>2.3 had previously been downgraded resulting from the Ofsted foundation learning report which found some weakness. An external review gave recommendations which are now being introduced. There has been improvement, hence the change in grading, though there is still work to be done and this will remain an area of focus.</p> <p>3.1 remains amber due to ongoing recruitment challenges. Since the Pay Review we are now in a much more competitive place, though some areas of recruitment remain a challenge, so this continues to be closely monitored.</p> <p>3.5 The Green Skills Centre and now the ILab have been opened, reflecting good progression investment in world class learning environments.</p> <p>JT asked if increased student complaints are in any particular curriculum areas.</p> <p>JL this is broadly college wide though there are some hotspots. Feedback from the College's external legal team reports a massive increase in complaints across the sector, and AMK confirmed the HE sector has also seen huge increases. This still requires greater analysis and adjustments to the processing method as too many staff are taken from other duties. There is also a noticeable increase in student expectation, and an unwillingness to accept 'just so' standards, which was seen as a positive thing.</p> <p>RW asked about English &amp; Maths condition of funding.</p> <p>JP confirmed it is still 5%, dropping to 2.5% next year, we're currently around 2.3% so well within tolerance. There will be some further changes from the curriculum assessment review later this year, but these have been delayed, with nothing imminent.</p> <p>JL noted there is some inconsistency in messages and communication from DfE which obscures the direction of travel and hinders forward curriculum planning.</p> <p>RW asked about funding for Technical Excellence Colleges for specialist construction provision.</p>

	<p>JL confirmed details are not yet complete, but an application is being prepared for approximately £10m funding, 80% capital, 20% revenue. This would build on the College's excellent reputation and growth in this sector.</p> <p>MR asked about the planning application for that land.</p> <p>JL confirmed it was still under consideration and is not being called in, which is a good sign.</p> <p>The report was received.</p>
<p><b>C25.4.2</b></p>	<p><b>KPIs Review</b> Jason Lancaster</p> <p>JL highlighted the importance of line 203 Retention. Following ILR issue previously reported, a change in the recording mechanism now shows retention is down 0.8%, dropping away more quickly than this time last year.</p> <p>Attendance remains a challenge but is comparable with last year. Further work continues to secure student attendance.</p> <p>The number of teachers in receipt of intervention to support improvements has not increased as hoped, so we will move away from simple grades and take a more holistic improvement culture for the next academic year.</p> <p>Student Satisfaction data is on course and has remained constant. The wording of the question on Feel Safe may lead to some confusion between general safety and safety at college. The wording will be reviewed for next year.</p> <p>JT asked about activities for picking up on attendance.</p> <p>JL Curriculum managers are asked to firmly challenge this and sharing best practice, with individual interventions remaining the most impactful interventions. Data includes authorised absences so needs deeper analysis to show actual in-class attendance.</p> <p>JP poor attending students are picked up and are seen by EMT, with badges suspended to force personal intervention.</p> <p>The Attendance Policy will be reviewed before the start of next year as there remains the opportunity to strengthen rigour in enforcing discipline at the beginning of the year on attendance, especially with Maths and English. Some students do not feel the need to attend these courses as much as their other courses. In some vocational courses where there has been swift action the attendance is much better.</p> <p>The headline figure is on track to where we expect to be compared with previous years, though we do need to ensure this is reflected in reality.</p> <p>JL There is no national benchmark available in this area but anecdotally we are on par with the sector. However, we keep a sharp focus on this since it is not where we want it to be.</p> <p>The Report was received.</p>

**C25.4.3 Accountability Statement – Review**

Joanne Philpott

JP thanked Jane Deary for all her work on this document.

Moving ESOL provision to Lower Mount has made a significant difference and been very successful, providing an easily accessible hub in the town centre for both staff and students. There is more opportunity to deliver additional provision but there is a shortage of available rooms. There is a challenge on enrichment options for 16-18 learners as many are in care, so they are bussed to Booth Lane to ensure they have equal access to activities.

T Levels provision has been improved with more courses coming online, and A levels are successfully implemented with very strong enrolment.

The College has invested in an immersive hub, the ILab, and has made progress with AI. Governors are invited to visit the ILab centre before the next meeting, as it is very impressive and is equipping students with enhanced digital skills.

The Green Skills Centre is growing, with good involvement from local employers.

The College's apprenticeship provision continues to grow. The DfE were impressed that we remain 8 points above national benchmark at 68.5% for achievement.

The enhanced approach to curriculum development with greater involvement from local stakeholders and employers is significantly improved.

Key priorities for next year include reviewing and improving the curriculum offer in engineering and automotive, further developing Green Skills specialist training, and developing the curriculum focussed closely on local, regional and national key workforce skills and progression pathways.

AMK welcomed this very impressive document. It was suggested that EDI could be brought into sharper focus in future versions.

JL The main purpose of this document is a DfE requirement of meeting the local skills agenda, but EDI in an absolute priority for the college and will be key in the next strategic plan, as with sustainability. Work to strengthen these has already commenced.

NG welcomed the document and asked if there be greater promotion of construction and green skills which would strengthen the bid for future Technical Excellence college.

JP proposed including a case study of excellence and ambition in construction.

AMK and JL welcomed this proposal.

PB noted that in addition to the Green Skills Centre, many aspects of the green skills agenda cut across construction, such as the requirements for PV cells (solar panels) on all new build developments.

JP was asked to incorporate the logos of employers into the statement, which was agreed.

It was agreed to approve the document via email after the proposed amendments.

	<b>Action: JP to revised and re-circulate via email for approval</b>
<b>C.25.5</b> <b>C25.5.1</b>	<p><b>Finance</b> Rav Garcha</p> <p><b>Management Accounts</b> Rav Garcha</p> <p>RG reported EBITDA forecast is now £3.4M, up from £2.1M from in-years funding, after staffing efficiencies from the pay review and curriculum investment £1.5M. EBITDA will likely further increase by year end.</p> <p>The fixed asset budget on track to be spent, plus a further £250k to upgrade engineering workshop machinery which was decided after these accounts were compiled. Year-end cash reserves are expected to exceed £20M, reflecting robust financial health, with 200 cash days.</p> <p>The Insignis platform is providing better returns from deposits now with different 'A Grade' banks.</p> <p>AMK welcomed the improved returns from Insignis.</p> <p>AO thanked RG and welcomes the returns of deposits and asked if the additional spend would be focussed on key prioritised and represented a good use of the College's resources. JL confirmed this was the case. For example, engineering equipment for replacement is over fifty years old so the investment would ensure students learned on current equipment.</p> <p>The reports were received.</p>
<b>C25.5.2</b>	<p><b>Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework</b> Rav Garcha</p> <p>RG noted this is as scrutinised by Audit Committee, and the changes noted were:</p> <p>Risk 4: Accountability Statement has improved in line with developing relations with employers.</p> <p>Risk 8: Improvement is due to governance and leadership vacancies being filled, and with improved accountability by managers.</p> <p>No new red risks reported.</p> <p>Key ongoing risks include: Staffing shortages in key curriculum areas, IT infrastructure and cyber security, and economic pressures affecting student recruitment and employer engagement.</p> <p>The Board noted the upgrade and agreed on continued close monitoring of mitigations and alignments with strategic goals.</p>

	<p>MR welcomed the new BAF framework.</p> <p>NG asked if Risk 9 Cyber Security is such a major risk, would it benefit from a working group.</p> <p>RG noted that compared to elsewhere, the college is much better placed on security and data protection, is working closely with numerous companies and agencies, using premium software, investigating supplier and contractor vulnerability and using daily software updates. This will remain a key area of attention.</p> <p>MW noted that the Audit Committee always closely scrutinised reports from IT, which are very robust.</p> <p>NG asked about security training of individuals, which is the weakest entry point.</p> <p>RG agreed with current high-profile retailers having succumbed to cyber-attacks, and are constantly monitoring cyber security. The IT team regularly issue test 'phishing' emails to test staff awareness and practice around cyber security.</p> <p>JL noted the Corporation portal is a good step forward for governor security.</p> <p>RG noted that there is still some more work to do on the Board Assurance Framework related to accurate scoring.</p> <p>The Report was received.</p>
<p><b>C25.5.3</b></p>	<p><b>Financial Regulations</b> Rav Garcha</p> <p>The updated <b>2025-2026 Financial Regulations</b> was presented for approval.</p> <p>Key changes included: Updated authorisation levels. Improved clarity on tendering and procurement protocols. Reference to new regulatory frameworks.</p> <p>RG reported that the Procurement Policy was now incorporated into the financial regulations, and Crescent Procurement Consortium is the contractor.</p> <p>The threshold for purchases has remained the same for many years and will now increase to £10,000.</p> <p>The new Financial Controller has also been added into the document.</p> <p>MR asked about the impact of capitalisation on the EBITDA.</p> <p>RG responded that any impact will be low.</p> <p>The Report was Approved subject to a change of tense in 7.5.4 and 7.5.5</p> <p><b>Approve</b></p>
<p><b>C25.5.4</b></p>	<p><b>Fees and Charging Policy</b></p>

	<p>Rav Garcha</p> <p>RG noted the minor changes Tuition Fees and Charging Policy 2025-2026: Standard inflationary uplift. Change from weighted to unweighted funding for co-funded students but full cost students now based on weighted funding. Also references to ESFA changed to DfE.</p> <p>NG asked about the mark-up comments on draft policy.</p> <p>RG noted these were left in so members could see what has been considered and acted upon.</p> <p>The Policy was approved.</p>
<p><b>C.25.6</b></p> <p><b>C.25.6.1</b></p>	<p><b>Committee Reports</b> Anne-Marie Kilday</p> <p><b>Quality &amp; Standards Committee Report-formal approval only</b> Anne-Marie Kilday</p> <p>These minutes were fully reported at the last Corporation meeting before the minutes were to hand.</p> <p>The Minutes were received.</p>
<p><b>C.25.6.2</b></p>	<p><b>Audit Committee Report</b> Mark Robbins</p> <p>MR reported there were some items deferred due to the changes in the management team, which has now been addressed.</p> <p>It was noted that the ILR recording issue was not identified by the activities of the internal auditors. An external company has now been engaged for a thorough review in that area.</p> <p>The new H&amp;S auditors, Risk Fluent is a very welcome appointment and offer a robust and rigorous approach.</p> <p>The Minutes were received.</p>
<p><b>C25.6.3</b></p>	<p><b>Approval of Internal Audit Services</b> Mark Robbins</p> <p>The Audit Committee RG noted the procurement process involving CPC and that MHA were easily the strongest performer at the presentations. As a result, scoring was revised to fully reflect the submissions, and MHA was the preferred service. AO asked about the number of days quoted, which appeared more expensive.</p> <p>It was agreed that though more costly, MHA showed better methodology, considerable sector experience, and clearly had a far better understanding of the college's ambitions and would provide the required substantial challenge.</p> <p>PB welcomed the performance of MHA at the selection meeting.</p>

	<p>NG asked if there are any performance conditions.</p> <p>JL to investigate.</p> <p><b>Action: JL to investigate performance conditions for MHA</b></p> <p>The appointment was approved.</p>
<b>C.25.7</b>	<p><b>Any other Business</b> Anne-Marie Kilday</p> <p>An overseas visit to Prague is proposed. The visit was approved.</p>
<b>C.25.8</b>	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b> John Kirk</p> <p>26 June 2025 5pm – 8pm in Boardroom</p> <p>For confirmation – Calendar 2025-26 attached</p>
<b>C.25.9</b>	<p><b>Principal's Update – Confidential Section</b> Jason Lancaster</p> <p>Confidential Item – Papers in the Members Only room – Staff and Students left the meeting</p> <p>Meeting Closed at 7.40pm</p>