

**Minutes of the meeting of the Northampton College Corporation
held at Booth Lane Campus on 19 March 2026 at 5.00 pm**

Governors (in person)	Anne-Marie Kilday (AMK) (Chair) Rod Wood (RW) (Chair) Laura Crandley (LC) Kay Sellick (KS) Megan Roberts (MR)	Jason Lancaster (JL) (Principal and CEO) Julie Teckman (JT) Alric Pagon (AP) Kiera White (KW)
Governors (via Teams)	David Bailey (DB) Steve Bunker (SB)	Alison Hoyle (AH)
In attendance	Joanne Philipott (JP) Julian Wood (JW) Jan Hutt (JH) Sarah Nolan (SN)	Mark Owen (MO) (part of meeting) Kathryn Berrill (KB) (Director of Governance) Andrew Pomeroy (AP)
Apologies	Asif Ahmad (AA) Lynn Drinkald (LD)	Paul Beers (PB) Alex Owen (AO)

1. Routine and Governance items

1.1 Apologies for Absence

AMK welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Asif Ahmad, Lynn Drinkald, Alex Owen and Paul Beers. The meeting was declared quorate.

1.2 Declarations of interest

1.2 None.

1.3 Minutes of the meeting on 11 December 2025 and 26 February 2026

1.3.1 11 December 2025: AH raised that she had not been present at the meeting and, therefore, her name will be removed from the list of attendees. Based on the correction, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

1.3.2 26 February 2026: Agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

1.4 Outstanding Actions

1.4.1 1.7.6 Staff Governor: Governors were advised that 19 members of staff had expressed an interest and 11 formal applications were received. A shortlist will be drawn up and interviews will take place in the next month.

2. Strategy and Priorities

2.1 Student and staff voice

2.1.1 Student Voice

KR provided an update on the election for the new Student President, Vice President and Student Governors. The numbers on the Student Parliament have increased to 30, from 8 in the previous years. The Student Governors will be elected from the Student Parliament for the next year.

2.1.2 Student Governors will be speaking to the College ELT regarding concerns around staff use of AI which led to lesson content that the students considered incorrect and misleading.

- 2.1.3 **Governors noted the increase in interest in the Student Parliament and asked if it had come from across the curriculum or was specific to one area?** It was reported that, while the Parliament is still predominantly made up of A Level students, there is growing interest from other areas. The President is an A Level student, and the Vice-President is studying a vocational course. Governors were pleased to note that members of the Parliament have been drawn from all campuses, including both Lower Mounts and Daventry.
- 2.1.4 **Staff Voice**
SB had been asked to clarify the process relating to automatic staff pay increments where a member of staff is subject to a disciplinary procedure. The query raised was whether, if the member of staff is cleared, they would have to wait until the following year to receive their increment. JH confirmed that in such circumstances, the increment would be awarded and backdated. She will share the relevant policy.
- 2.1.5 SB raised a concern regarding the lack of qualified first aiders, noting that some training has expired and has not yet been renewed. JW confirmed that this has been identified as an action within the Health and Safety action plan. A review of the current list of trained first aiders, along with the rota required to ensure adequate coverage at all times, will be undertaken.
- 2.1.6 SB reported that the staff room roof at the Lower Mounts site is leaking. It was agreed that SB would ask staff to report this issue via the Estates Help Desk.
- 2.2 **CEO/Principal's Report**
- 2.2.1 The report was taken as read and JL explained the changes to the grading:
- For improving efficiency in business support, the beneficial impact of AI is being seen. There is continuing investment in training and projects across the college including collaborative working with the UoN.
 - Jo Philpott is launching a sustainability group which includes social action.
 - With regards to Stretch, Challenge and Inspiration a vulnerable students panel has been set up and the focus on inclusion is strengthening.
- 2.2.2 JL highlighted that complaints are higher than this time last year but this is reflective across the FE sector.
- 2.2.3 **Governors asked for more information on the revision of appraisals** These will be linked to the new values and strategic plan and will be launched in September.
- 2.2.4 **Governors asked how do the teaching staff feel about the CPD offer?** The Induction process was recently revised and is now a longer period. The feedback has been positive and there has been good collaboration with academic and curriculum and quality teams. There is now more reflection in teaching and learning following observations and continuous improvement is part of the culture.
- 2.3 **Strategy 2026-2031**
- 2.3.1 JL provided the background to the design of the new strategy. Consultation has now taken place with external stakeholders, Governors, staff and students. The proposed strategy has been developed based on the insights and feedback gathered through these discussions and consultations.
- 2.3.2 The intention is to set a framework against which the decisions are made for the coming 5 year period. It has been designed to remain flexible as the Further Education landscape is shifting considerably. The strategy gives key priority areas regardless of external developments.

- 2.3.3 The strategy builds on existing success, ensuring that positive achievements are maintained and further developed. It sets an ambitious statement and values reflecting the culture required to achieve our goals. The language has been deliberately written to be accessible, engaging, and relevant to a wide audience, supporting its use in day-to-day practice.
- 2.3.4 Governors commented that the Strategy Day had been a beneficial and well run session. The document is of a high standard, clearly distinctive and specifically reflective of Northampton rather than generic in nature.
- 2.3.5 The proposed strategy for 2026 – 2031 was unanimously approved by the Corporation.

3. Organisational

3.1 Safeguarding and Prevent Update

- 3.1.1 Mark Owen (MO) provided an update and summarised the work of the Safeguarding team. They continue to work on complex cases and working with more vulnerable young people and, as such, are recruiting additional staff to support.
- 3.1.2 He gave an overview of the external liaison with other stakeholders to support vulnerable students namely:
- Meeting with Milton Keynes College and Moulton College relating to those children who are at risk of being exploited.
 - Youth probation: finalised agreement around information sharing to better support those who come through youth justice system.
 - Youth exploitation team for those who are a risk of criminal and sexual exploitation. The work includes information sharing as earlier understanding of their needs results in support more quickly.
 - Northampton Contextual Safeguarding Group: additional members of the team are now attending to share the learning
- 3.1.3 Within the college, activities include:
- Delivering training on CPOMS which has enhanced the quality of referrals.
 - A working group is reviewing evacuation procedures.
 - The use of OnGuard continues to monitor laptops.
 - Two knife arches have been carried out at Booth Lane Campus. Another is planned and will be rolled out across the other campuses. There will be a drug arch at Daventry.
- 3.1.4 Following a recent death in a skatepark in Northampton, this has had an impact on students. Staff are working with external services to ensure our students feel safe within the town.

4. Curriculum and Student Experience

4.1 Curriculum and Quality

- 4.1.1 Jo Philipott (JP) provided an update confirming that the quality of education is being maintained. Initial analysis of the January series indicates many positive outcomes, while also identifying areas for further development.
- 4.1.2 The Mock ITT inspection has taken place highlighting key areas of focus for improvement.
- 4.1.3 Student applications for September are strong with waiting lists for some courses. As a result, interviews for staff for September is progressing at pace and earlier than in previous years.

- 4.1.4 The Skills Bootcamp bid is currently being prepared. Work is also ongoing in relation to funding linked to technical excellence colleges, with funding being secured and initiatives gaining traction.
- 4.1.5 **Governors asked about the influx owing to funding but is there a risk to delivery and is it manageable?** It was confirmed that accommodation realignment will create additional space. From a staffing perspective, close collaboration with Finance and HR is ensuring that staffing levels remain appropriate. Recruitment in construction remains a key priority, and a construction careers event is planned, with a particular focus on electrical installation.
- 4.1.6 **Governors asked what are the implications to staff for courses which still appear to be defunded?** Areas impacted include IT, Science and Forensic Science (which must remain as two-year programmes), as well as Health and Social Care. A 68-page Department for Education (DfE) response will be analysed and shared with Governors. The curriculum planning process has developed a coherent offer in those areas where courses were at risk of not being funded.
- 4.1.7 **Governors asked what is the target relating to apprenticeship intervention?** The strategy is to increase apprenticeship numbers, with a strong focus on ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the apprenticeship journey before it is expanded further.
- 4.1.8 **Governors asked what areas concern management the most?** It is ensuring all staff and students have access to appropriate resources, staffing, and space.
- 4.1.9 **Governors asked that with the expansion of T levels and A levels is there more demand for rooms.** Rooming remains challenging but the review of the estate has resulted in a more coherent use of space which will be in place from September.
- 4.1.10 Julian Wood outlined the funding approach. The Department for Education has launched a bid round for estates projects to support colleges in managing demographic growth over the next five years. The college is preparing bids for each available fund. Planning approval for the B Block expansion is still pending.

5. Finance

5.1 Management Accounts

- 5.1.1 Andrew Pomery (AP) presented the management accounts.
- 5.1.2 Overall, the financial health forecast remains 'outstanding'. Non-pay costs are currently above the budget profile. However, there are elements of uncertainty within the forecast, including growth funding, equipment purchases, and the timing and phasing of estates works.
- 5.1.3 Governors noted positively that non-pay costs are above the budget profile but raised the importance of avoiding underspending as funding should be spent to benefit students. Governors suggested that clear priorities should be agreed in advance so that funding can be deployed quickly when it becomes available. It was confirmed that budgets are set based on the current environment but are kept under regular review to ensure opportunities are not missed.
- 5.1.4 **Governors asked are there any trends which are only now apparent which would inform how we look at the numbers?** It was reported that costs are increasing in several areas, including software and digital services, as well as examination costs (both unit costs and volume, driven by rising student numbers). Hardware costs are also increasing as College policy is to provide all students with devices. The Adult Skills Fund is becoming more constrained, with some full-time students now drawing from this funding stream, reducing available funding per learner.

5.1.5 AP also noted potential future cost pressures arising from international factors, although the impact has not yet been fully realised and is expected to materialise over the next three to six months. JW provided assurance regarding energy costs, confirming that energy provision is secured through a framework and has been forward purchased, meaning any impact will not be immediate.

5.1.6 **Governors asked are suppliers being paid too quickly?** It was confirmed that invoices matched to purchase orders are paid within 30 days, in line with Department for Education expectations to ensure timely payments and appropriate cash flow management.

5.1.7 Governors noted the accounts

5.2 Board Assurance Framework

5.2.1 The BAF was presented to the Audit Committee on 12 March. It is expected that the health and safety risk will move into tolerance by the end of the academic year. With regards to cyber and data risk this was discussed at length at the audit committee and is likely to remain above tolerance owing the external level of threat in the environment.

5.3 Health and Safety verbal update

5.3.1 Overall, good progress is being made on the health and safety action plan. A significant health and safety programme has begun for managers within the college. The Estates Team are currently refreshing the policies and procedures.

5.3.2 JW explained that there had been a RIDDOR reportable incident involving a student in the construction workshop. As the student attended hospital it triggered a RIDDOR reporting threshold. The internal investigation has reported that the incident was substantively different from the incident that occurred the previous academic year. The College had notified the Health and Safety Executive in line with required reporting timeframes.

5.3.3 Work is underway to strengthen the recording of near misses as an early warning mechanism.

5.4 Procurement

5.4.1 Lift refurbishment

The cost exceeds the Principal's delegated authority. As suppliers are ready to proceed and lead times are significant, a decision is required to ensure installation is completed by September. The request for delegated approval was unanimously agreed by Governors.

Student devices

5.4.2 Devices are provided to all full-time students on a five-year replacement cycle. Owing to changes in the IT market and rising costs, the College has sought to accelerate procurement to mitigate anticipated price increases.

5.4.3 Three contracts were included within the tender process; however, the bids received significantly exceed the £560k outlined in the briefing paper. In light of the wider financial position, it was agreed to review configuration options, with authority delegated to JL to approve expenditure of up to £850k subject to completion of the tender evaluation process.

5.4.4 It was confirmed that the process would typically take place in June. However, suppliers have advised that delays in placing orders could result in devices not being delivered in time for September.

5.4.5 The Corporation approved the delegation.

6. Committee Reports

6.1 Audit Committee – 12 March 2026

- 6.1.1 Laura Crandley (LC) updated the Corporation on the discussions at the audit committee. With regards to cyber security, discussions with the internal auditors were that, given the nature of evolving external cyber threats, it is unlikely that the College would achieve a rating of substantial assurance. The Committee asked how it could be confident that everything reasonably possible was being done.
- 6.1.2 Governors raised an observation regarding data governance and the Board's line of sight on key issues. Management acknowledged that historically there had been silo working across parts of the organisation but noted that steps are being taken to strengthen cross-team working.
- 6.1.3 Governors had noted the increase from five delayed actions at the previous meeting to eighteen and asked for clarification but it was explained some actions were technically complete but additional training and embedding work was being undertaken before closing them formally.
- 6.1.4 The anti-fraud and whistleblowing review had been carried out. A Fraud Action Plan is currently being developed.

External Audit Tender

- 6.1.5 Two firms were shortlisted and invited to present to a panel comprising Jason Lancaster, David Bailey, Laura Crandley, Julian Wood, Andrew Pomeroy and Kathryn Berrill.
- 6.1.6 While RSM was not the lowest-cost bidder, the difference in price was not considered significant given the additional assurance provided, especially in relation to additional testing of income, which was not proposed to the same extent by the alternative bidder.
- 6.1.7 it was confirmed that RSM has been appointed as the College's external auditor since the mid-2010s, although the engagement has involved different audit partners and a different office over that time. The most recent tender exercise took place in 2021.
- 6.1.8 The Corporation approved the appointment of RSM as the College's external auditors

6.2 Quality and Standards – 9 March 2026

- 6.2.1 The minutes had been included in the papers. AMK highlighted the high quality of the documentation and confirmed that quality and standards have been covered in item 4.

6.3 Governor Visit Feedback

- 6.3.1 LC carried out a Governor visit prior to the meeting and observed lessons in Criminology, Multi Skills in construction subjects and Childcare.

7. Closing Items

7.1 Any Other Business

- 7.1.1 Overseas trip to Barcelona
JL confirmed that he liked Governors to have oversight of all overseas visits. The cost is covered by the student contribution. JL is content with the risk assessments in place and the Governors approved the trip.
- 7.1.2 AMK advised the board that she is expecting a baby in August. She will remain as chair with Rod Wood providing support during that period. The board offered their congratulations.

7.2 Date and time of next meeting

7.2.1 The dates of the next meetings are:

- Thursday 30 April 2026 5.00pm at Daventry Campus
- Thursday 25 June 2026 at 5.00 pm in the Boardroom at Booth Lane Campus

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.25 pm

Anne-Marie Kilday.

Anne-Marie Kilday
Chair of the Corporation

30 April 2026