

Preston College

Redacted and Abridged Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 3 July 2025 at 5.30pm, Boardroom¹

Present:

Mr Jose Sedano-Martinez	Chair
Mr Simon Nixon	Principal and Chief Executive
Mr David Bond	
Ms Giulia D'Ambrosio	
Mr Neil Fletcher	Remote (Zoom)
Mr Neil Garnham	
Mrs Janet Harrison	
Mrs Tamsyn Haselden	
Ms Joanne Jones	
Mr Cal Leonard	
Mrs Sally Little	
Mr Robert Marshall-Slater	Remote (Zoom) Until Minute 18 (Part 1a)
Mrs Laura Mason	
Miss Marya Momand	Until Minute 23 (Part 1a)
Miss Amanda Morey	
Miss Hajara Ugradar	
Mrs Andrea Willimott	

Absent:

Mrs Helen Curtis
Mr Malcolm Goulding

In attendance:

Mr Mark Airey	Executive Director of Finance Until Minute 23 (Part 1a)
Mrs Marie Haworth	Vice Principal - Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support Until Minute 23 (Part 1a)
Mr Mick Noblett	Vice Principal - Curriculum Delivery and Planning – Until Minute
Mrs Clare Rayner	Director of Governance
Mr Iain Stott	Vice Principal - Resources - Until Minute 23 (Part 1a)
Ms Gill Thornton	Director of Human Resources - Until Minute 23 (Part 1a)

Part 1 (a)

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone present for their continued support for Preston College.

The Board noted that apologies had been received from Mrs Helen Curtis and Mr Malcolm Goulding.

It was noted that a quorum was present.

The Chair:

¹ Please note that any matters which the Corporation is satisfied should be dealt with on a confidential basis have been removed from these minutes.

- welcomed Miss Hajara Ugradar to her first Board meeting since her appointment as a governor;
- congratulated Miss Marya Momand, student governor, on winning the Community Impact Award at the College's Student Awards;
- explained that, due to the size of the agenda, the majority of reports would be taken as read to optimise time for questions.

The Director of Governance reported that, as stated in her email sent before of the meeting, Mrs Jen Walters had resigned from the Board at the end of May 2025. The Director of Governance read Mrs Walter's resignation letter which was also available on the Governors' Portal.

The Board recorded thanks to Mrs Walters for her contribution as a governor of Preston College.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Board noted the interest of;

- all staff present in Part 1a Agenda Item 14 - Budget Proposal 2025/26 which included a proposed staff pay award;
- Miss Amanda Morey in Agenda Item Part 1a Agenda Item 1 - Report of the Chair of Search and Governance Committee and noted that Miss Morey would leave the room for Board's discussion of her induction review;
- Mr Neil Garnham and Mrs Andrea Willimott in Part 1b Agenda Item 4 - Appointment of Vice Chairs of the Governing Body and that they would leave the room for the Board's decision on their appointment;
- staff and student governors in Part 1b Agenda Item 1 Report of the Chair of Search and Governance Committee, the proposed changes to the appointment of staff and student governors and Part 1b Agenda Item 3 Changes to Governing Documents – the proposed changes to the attendance of staff and student governors in meetings.

FOR APPROVAL

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 13 March 2025.

Resolved: The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 13 March 2025 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

4. Matters arising

The Board noted the report on progress of actions from previous meetings.

Resolved: The Board noted the report on progress of actions from previous meetings.

5. Update on Decisions Between Meetings

The Director of Governance referred members to the report: Update on Decisions Between Meetings.

The Board noted that the following Board decisions had been approved by written resolution between meetings:

- the approval of the draft Board meeting minutes from 12 December 2024 (Part 2) as a correct record;
- the extension of the term of office of Miss Joanne Jones until 4 July 2025;
- approval of the second Part of the 2024/25 staff pay award;
- the proposed change of approach to for the purchasing of College's utilities and the selection of the Energy Consortium as the supplier of the College's utilities for a minimum of three years;
- the appointment of Mrs Tamsyn Haselden as a member of the Senior Post Holder Remuneration Committee. The Board noted that Mrs Haselden and the Principal and Chief Executive had declared an interest and abstained from voting for this resolution;
- the appointment of Mrs Andrea Willimott as a member of the Senior Post Holder Remuneration Committee. The Board noted that Mrs Willimott and the Principal and Chief Executive had declared an interest and abstained from voting for this resolution;
- the approval of the purchase of Decisions Meetings Management App as the Board's new governor portal.

The Committee noted the report.

Resolved: The Board noted the Update on Decisions Between Meetings report.

6. Principal and Chief Executive's Report

The Principal and Chief Executive presented his Principal and Chief Executive's Report and reported:

- on the continued growth in the College's student numbers which meant the College was supporting more students, making the College and classrooms more vibrant which was great for students and staff morale;
- that if the College's student numbers for 2025/26 were in line with the student numbers achieved in 2024/25, the College would achieve its contracted numbers for 2025/26. However, the College would continue its efforts to further increase student numbers and generate further funding;

- that it was currently unknown if colleges would receive in year growth during 2025/26;
- on the wider economic landscape and in particular that the government would need to address financial gaps, particularly in light of the recent vote on Welfare Reform;
- that the current funding rules provided the opportunity for colleges to exceed adult allocations by up to 10% and be paid for the extra delivery and noted the College's current performance;
- that Apprentice income was performing well, with good student numbers and strong income;
- on the College's growing reputation and that all stakeholders, including the Board, had played a part in its success;
- the successful completion of Estates projects, including the completion of the Digital Suite which staff enjoyed teaching in and students enjoyed learning in;
- that the ongoing roofing work was going well and was ahead of schedule;
- on funding and finance, including that the College would receive a government grant to cover the rise in National Insurance Contributions;
- a forecast surplus significantly in excess of the original budget would be delivered, confirming the College's "Good" financial health score and this has been achieved by exceeding income targets rather than cutting costs;
- that funding rates had improved which would support the recruitment and retention of staff and the affordability of a 4% pay award;
- the College's adult allocation had also fared better than expected and although a 6% national cut had been applied to all colleges, the methodology used to calculate the baseline before applying the reduction had worked in the College's favour. The allocation for 2025/26 would be higher than the allocation for 2024/25, although there remained doubt about whether the traditional approach of over-delivery up to 10% being paid will continue;
- the College's annual strategy conversation had taken place with the Department for Education (DfE) and a member of the Further Education Commissioner's team. The meeting had been positive, and feedback included that the College should recognise how good it was and that it was not far from outstanding and a recommendation that this should be the College's ambition;
- that the College had received Matrix re-accreditation and had received excellent feedback from the assessor;
- on ongoing efforts to support staff wellbeing, including a well-being day on Friday 4 July 2025 and the Staff Awards on Monday 8 July 2025, which Mr Neil Fletcher and Mrs Andrea Willimott would attend on behalf of the Board;

- on things that were going less well, and that in particular, improving student attendance remained an ongoing challenge. To address this the Student Attendance framework had been revised to include greater consequences of not attending College. There would be opportunities at the start of the new term to instil the importance of attendance and, as discussed at Quality and Standards Committee, the College planned to take a more robust approach to dealing with students with poor attendance, with a shift from carrot towards stick;
- that whilst there were many successful examples of T Level students and the College's performance to date, T Levels were not as popular with students as the more established qualifications;
- on the College's plan to work with local Lancashire colleges, to submit a bid to be a Technical Excellence College, which had been supported by the local MP, Mark Hendrick, and the College would find out in September if the bid had been successful;
- that the College would maintain a watching brief on the potential impact of changes in the national and local political landscape which might impact funding. The Board noted that the Reform Leader of Lancashire County Council would be the Chair of the Combined Authority, which from 2026/27 would control adult funding, and the Deputy Chair of Lancashire County Council was Chair of the Skills Advisory Board;
- that the Further Education Commissioner (FEC) had published new financial benchmarks for colleges, at Appendix A, which had been described as aspirational targets. He reported that the benchmark for cash days had increased to 40 days. However, the counter argument was that investment was more important than building reserves;
- the College had budgeted for a good staff pay award for 2025/26.

The Board discussed the report with management, in response to queries from members, the Board noted:

- that the Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Partnership Board was carrying a significant deficit and to address this, colleges might receive less financial support for students with higher needs;
- that the College celebrated its English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme and its work with asylum seekers as a College of Sanctuary in a City of Sanctuary;
- on the impact on changes in immigration on the College's numbers and the delays in reviewing applications for asylum seekers;
- that the College could accommodate the growth in student numbers within its existing estate but capacity might become an issue in the future. To date, government funding had been given to colleges for improving the condition of existing buildings. However, if expansion was required and capital funding become available, the College had the land available to expand;

- that the College had responded to growth in student numbers for motor vehicle, construction and engineering. However, sufficient teaching staff were required. In previous years, the College had carried c. 20 vacancies in these schools which had been reduced to 2-3 vacancies;
- that the College would continue to review data when curriculum planning and this could be considered in more detail when the College developed its next three year strategic plan;
- that the Board had been supportive of a pay strategy which had moved the College from 3% behind the national rate to just ahead of the national rate and this strategy had improved the calibre of applicants.

The Chair encouraged members to read Matrix Assessment Report for Preston College and to attend staff and student awards ceremonies and student performances to find out more about the work of the College. The Board noted the work of the College to recruit students.

The Director of Governance undertook to add Matrix Assessment Report for Preston College report to the Governors' Portal.

A member suggested that the College could scenario plan for different potential political impacts and how the College could respond.

The Board noted the report.

Resolved: The Board noted the Principal and Chief Executive's Report.

Actions: Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to explore scenario planning.

The Director of Governance to add the Matrix Assessment Report for Preston College to the Governors' Portal.

7. Strategic Plan Progress

The Principal and Chief Executive referred members to a report on Strategic Plan Progress for 2024/25. He reported:

- that the first draft of the balanced scorecard was at Appendix A and that he welcomed feedback from members;
- that a report on the draft strategic aims to be actioned in the final year of the current Plan (2025/26) was at Appendix B for comment. The plan built on earlier versions of the deliverables tables and split out the aims relating to Finance and HR, with both functions now managed at Executive level directly by the Principal and Chief Executive;
- on plans for the development of the next three year plan with a plan for the same bottom up approach used for the development of the previous plan, taking into account feedback from all stakeholders;
- his thanks to the Board for the support, advice and guidance it had given the ELT during 2025/25, a year in which the College had achieved record student numbers.

The Board discussed the report with management and, in response to queries from members, the Board noted:

- assurance that the three year plan would include reference to how the College defined its educational character;
- that time would be made available for the Board to review the strategic aims for 2025/26 in more detail, as time was short at Board meetings.

The Board reviewed the report and approved the revised strategic aims for 2025/26.

Resolved: The Board is reviewed the report and approved the revised strategic aims for 2025/26.

Action: To allocate more time for the Board to review the strategic aims for 2025/26.

8. Report of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Board noted the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 18 June 2025 at Appendix A.

The Board noted that the Audit and Risk Committee highlighted to the Board:

- a recommendation to re-appoint Wbg as the College's internal auditors;
- that an internal audit plan for 2025/26 onwards would be developed over the summer for consideration by the Board in September 2025 and the Committee would meet over the summer to agree its recommendation to the Board. The Committee had agreed that in preparation for this meeting it would be helpful to ask if Board members would like to suggest any topics for internal audit going forward based on discussions at committee meetings during 2024/25.

In response to a query, it was noted that arrangements for Beever and Struthers to complete its interim audit work which would now take place in July.

A member suggested that in 12-18 months' time an internal audit of the new Workload Strategy might be beneficial. Mr Stott undertook to add this to the agenda of the meeting with the internal auditors. It was noted that the objectives of this internal audit would need to be carefully agreed.

The Board discussed the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee to re-appoint Wbg as the College's internal auditor on 1 August 2025.

The Board discussed the report with management and, in response to queries from members, the Board noted:

- that the proposed contract length of three years, with consideration to be given to extending the contract for a further two years in annual increments subject to satisfactory performance and the agreement of both parties,

The Chair of Audit and Risk Committee:

- outlined the Panel's deliberations;

The Board also discussed the Audit and Risk Committee's discussion on the importance of ensuring that of internal audit work activity was targeted in the right areas.

Following discussion, the Board agreed to re-appoint Wbg as the College's internal auditor from 1 August 2025 for an initial period of three years with consideration to be given to extending the contract for a further two years in annual increments, subject to satisfactory performance and the agreement of both parties.

The Board approved the Audit Plan for the College's external audit 2024/25.

Resolved: The Board noted the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 18 June 2025 and approved:

- **the re-appointment of Wbg as the College's internal auditor on 1 August 2025 for an initial period of three years with consideration to be given to extending the contract for a further two years in annual increments, subject to satisfactory performance and the agreement of both parties;**
- **the Audit Plan for the College's external audit 2024/25.**

Action: To consider the review of the Workload Strategy as a future internal audit.

9. Risk Management Register

The Board noted the Risk Management Register report and noted the Risk Register, at Appendix A, which had been considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 18 June 2025.

The Board discussed the report with management and in response to queries from members, the Board noted:

- the College's relationship with unions and an update on the current situation;
- comments from a member that some of the risk register was backward looking and whether the College should be horizon scanning to identify future risks. It was noted that this was because many of the risks identified at the start of the year and been mitigated or did not materialise as the academic year progressed and came to a close. Notwithstanding, the risks would be reviewed ahead of the new academic year;
- whether the introduction of more granular scoring rather than low, medium or high would be beneficial;
- the risk register matrix used by management would be included on the next risk register report;
- ongoing discussions at the Audit and Risk Committee on the format of the Risk Register;

- the proposal for a new risk to be added on not appointing new governors;
- the proposal for a new risk to be added on Artificial Intelligence.

The Board noted the Risk Management Register, agreed the current risks, actions completed and further actions still to be completed and approved the proposed changes to the register which included adding a risk on not appointing new governors and adding a risk on Artificial Intelligence.

Resolved: The Board noted the Risk Management Register, agreed the current risks, actions completed and further actions still to be completed.

The Board approved the proposed changes to the register:

- **To add a risk on not appointing new governors;**
- **To add a risk on Artificial Intelligence.**

Action: To add the risk register matrix to the next report.

10. Report of the Chair of Resources Committee

The Board noted the minutes of the Resources Committee meetings on 1 May 2025 at Appendix A and 12 June 2025 at Appendix B.

Mr Neil Garnham, Chair of Resources Committee, reported that the Committee had recommended to the Board the Digital Strategy at Appendix C, the Workload Strategy at Appendix D, Management of Attendance Policy at Appendix F and a number of other policies and reports featured separately on the Board's agenda, in particular the budget for 2025/26. He reported that the Committee had a lengthy discussion with management on the draft budget, including the proposed pay award, and had requested a cash flow forecast which had been included in the reports the Board would consider.

The Chair of the Governing Body referred to the Workload Strategy which was a big achievement for the College and was ahead of other colleges.

Mrs Gill Thornton, Director of Human Resources, reported that many colleges had strategies in place which included rules about workload whereas the College's Workload Strategy focused on changing workload culture.

The Board discussed the report with management, and in response to a query, the Board noted that the title "Workload Strategy" had come from negotiations with the unions on the pay deal and would demonstrate that the College was listening to unions. However, additional wording to communicate the purpose of the strategy could be considered, as the College had achieved by adding "Speaking Out" to the College's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

The Board approved the Digital Strategy at Appendix C, the Workload Strategy at Appendix D and the Management of Attendance Policy at Appendix F.

Resolved: The Board noted the minutes of the meeting on 1 May 2025 at Appendix A and 12 June 2025 at Appendix B, and approved:

- **Digital Strategy at Appendix C;**
- **Workload Strategy at Appendix D;**

- **Management of Attendance Policy at Appendix F.**

11. Health and Safety Policy

Mr Stott reported that minor amendments had been made to the Health and Safety Policy at Appendix A. The Board approved the Health and Safety Policy, including the General Statement of Intent.

Resolved: The Board approved the Health and Safety Policy at Appendix A, including the General Statement of Intent.

12. Trade Union Facilities Time Report 2024/25

Ms Thornton presented the Trade Union Facilities Time report. She referred members to the draft statutory report at Appendix A. The Board noted that the Trade Union Facilities Time report had been reviewed by the Resources Committee and was recommended to the Board for approval.

In response to a query, Ms Thornton reported that:

- time allowed would be shared amongst officials;
- the report included outcoming and incoming representatives which made it appear that there were more representatives in place during the academic year that was actually the case as not all seven had been in office at the same time;
- there had been an increase in the number of Health and Safety Representatives and the College's first Equality Representative had been introduced.

The Board considered the data contained in the statutory Trade Union Facility Time Report 2024/25, at Appendix A, and approved the report for publication on the government portal and College website by 31 July 2025.

Resolved: The Board considered the data contained in the statutory Trade Union Facility Time Report 2024/25, at Appendix A, and approved the report for publication on the government portal and College website by 31 July 2025.

13. Management Accounts

The Chair referred members to the Period 10 Management Accounts.

Mr Mark Airey reported:

- on how the College's position had further improved since the Resources Committee had considered the Period 9 Management Accounts;
- on income streams performance up to Period 10;
- on forecasted surplus against the budgeted surplus..

The Board noted the Period 10 Management Account.

Resolved: The Board noted the Period 10 Management Accounts.

14. Budget Proposal 2025/26

Mr Airey presented the Budget Proposal 2025/26. He reported:

- that the draft budget including proposed surplus;
- that colleges would receive additional government funding through the 16-18 funding formula to support cost pressures, including the recruitment and retention of staff. For the purposes of this budget exercise and estimated additional funding and the amount , required to increase the proposed pay award from 2.5% to 4%;
- that the Resources Committee had agreed to recommend that a proportion could be included in the non-pay line of the budget for contingency and this could be used for investment in the College or to increase surplus;
- that the Committee had agreed to recommend that the College capital budget could be increased, subject to this not impacting the College's Good financial health grade and it was confirmed that it would not;
- that the increased capital would fund the roll out of Windows 11 across the College and the approximate costs for this work;
- that the Chair of Resources had also requested a sensitivity analysis and, whilst there had not been time to produce this analysis for the Board meeting, it would be incorporated in 2025/26;
- on the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) at Appendix C which also required Board approval;
- that the Resources Committee had reviewed the budget proposal at its meeting on 12 June 2025 and recommended the Budget Proposal 2025/26 to the Board for approval;
- that due to funding models it was difficult to plan further ahead than one year in the FE sector.

The Principal and Chief Executive commended the work of Mr Airey on the draft budget and commented that this was a solid, low risk budget as income was known alongside costs which had been discussed with directors of schools at business planning sessions.

The Chair of Resources reported that there had been a good discussion at Resources Committee on the plan for future growth at the College and the Committee would consider plans for non pay investments, capital investments and increased surplus alongside the need to manage staff recruitment and retention and that the Committee had noted that a proposal would be drafted for the next meeting of Resources Committee.

The Board discussed the budget proposal with management, in response to queries from members, the Board noted:

- the investment had been included the cash flow;
- the importance of a good DfE financial health grading and the debate around investment in students and staff or increasing surplus and that this debate would continue into 2025/26.

A member queried a figure in the Income and Expenditure line of Appendix C.

The Board approved the budget for 2025/26, including College cash capital. The Board approved the CFFR at Appendix C.

Resolved: The Board approved:

- **the budget for 2025/26, including a College cash capital investment of £400;**
- **the CFFR at Appendix C.**

15. Condition Grant Proposed Projects

The Board reviewed the Condition Grant Proposed Projects report which had been reviewed by the Resources Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2025 and recommended to the Board for approval.

The Chair of Resources reported that the Committee would receive regular capital plan update reports and any significant differences in price to those quoted in the report would be reported to the Committee.

The Board approved the proposed use of the Condition Grant and noted that the grant must be spent by March 2028.

Resolved: The Board approved the proposed use of the Condition Grant.

16. Report of the Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee

Mrs Laura Mason, Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee, reported that the Committee had agreed to draw to the attention of the Board:

- that as discussed earlier, student attendance remained below the College's KPIs target and continued to be a key challenge and ongoing priority for the College. The Committee had discussed with management the College's evolving initiatives to improve attendance. The Committee had reviewed the 'Positive Attendance Framework' which aimed to balance 'carrot and stick' approaches in 2025/26, whilst ensuring a greater consistency of practice across the College in managing poor student attendance;
- the excellent work of Mental Health First Aiders at the College and the introduction of a wellbeing room which was regularly used by students. The College had taken part in Mental Health Awareness Week in May.

The Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee reported:

- that as detailed in her report, the Committee had agreed to recommend to the Board a number of minor changes to a number of Quality and Standards related College policies;

- that the Committee had reviewed the Quality Improvement Report (QIP) and performance against KPIs and noted that 2024/25 had been an excellent year for student outcomes and retention.

The Board discussed the efforts to improve student attendance. Following discussion with management, The Board noted that:

- progress was being made with recording the incremental progress of students with had zero or low attendance whilst in school and improved performance at College. This work had been assisted as c. 60% of feeder schools provided colleges with student attendance data;
- management had agreed to divert some College resources into those students with 70-80% attendance to try and move their attendance in to the 80-90% bracket;
- that a significant margin of students had over 90% attendance;
- that at the start of the year the messaging of expectations on attendance would be clear;
- that good attendance was important as it helped to develop employment skills and prepare students for working life and that the College was supported by employers;
- there was a structured intervention programme with a number of warnings and a final written warning was issued before exclusion;
- that the College had previously used suspension of students as a neutral act. However, the College was now regularly using temporary suspension as a punishment;
- the impact of the increase in students at the College that had previously been home educated;
- that the College carried waiting lists for some courses, however, not all students would take up the place they had been offered.

The Chair of Quality and Standards Committee highlighted that attendance data had to be considered in the context of improved achievement rates, including for SEND students, and good Student Voice and Learning Walk data.

The Board considered the proposed change to the FE Admissions Policy.

The Board discussed the report with management and in response to queries from members, the Board noted:

- that the College would only accept high needs students were the College could meet their needs and that the number of high needs students was reported annually to the Board in the annual Safeguarding, Prevent and Support for Students report;
- that the College could track access and participation of difference areas and under represented groups through the Individual Learner Record;
- that the Safeguarding and Prevent link governor role description had been extended to include SEND;

- the outreach work the College's had undertaken in response to the decline in HE student numbers including:
 - HE recruitment for performing arts;
 - Lancashire colleges worked together on HE offers;
 - efforts to attract underrepresented groups;
 - promotion of higher apprenticeships.

The Board agreed to approve the proposed change to the FE Admissions Policy at Appendix A; the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy at Appendix B; the Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy at Appendix C, the Access and Participation Statement at Appendix D; the Student Protection Plan at Appendix E; the Safeguarding, Prevent and SEND link governor role description at Appendix F and Curriculum and Skills Link Governor Protocols at Appendix G.

Resolved: The Board approved:

- **FE Admissions Policy at Appendix A;**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy at Appendix B;**
- **Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy at Appendix C;**
- **Access and Participation Statement at Appendix D;**
- **Student Protection Plan at Appendix E;**
- **Safeguarding, Prevent and SEND link governor role description at Appendix F;**
- **Curriculum and Skills Link Governor Protocols at Appendix G.**

17. Safeguarding and Support for Students

Ms Haworth referred members to the Annual Safeguarding and Support for Students 2024/25 report and the Prevent Risk Assessment at Appendix A. Mrs Haworth reported that the number of SEND and looked after children at the College continued to grow.

The Board discussed the report with management and in response to queries from members, the Board noted:

- that of the High Needs students at the College a small proportion had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and others students might have a diagnosis but did not have an EHCP in place;
- the training and support provided to staff who supported high needs students. It was noted that all staff had received trauma informed training, mental health awareness training, SEND and safeguarding training and had access to training from Lancashire County Council and an external counselling service;
- following a query on whether the College had sufficient resources to support students with high needs and whether additional resource was required, it was noted that the College introduced smaller classroom sizes where it was beneficial to do so. It was noted that the College had allocated resources in relation to continued growth in recent years. However, the College was not a specialist school and could not meet the needs of all applicants with high needs;
- a governor commented that on learning walks she had observed how the College successfully integrated high needs student with other students;

- that the unexpected death of a child referenced in the report was not related to any incident in College.

Following a query, it was noted that there were opportunities for new governors to hear about the real life stories of students at stakeholder events which included: staff and governor lunches, meetings with groups of students and on learning walks. It was noted that governors met annually with student ambassadors and this would be extended in 2025/26 to include a wider cohort of students.

The Committee noted the report Prevent action plan at Appendix A.

The Board noted the Safeguarding, Prevent and Support for Students report.

Resolved: The Board noted the Safeguarding, Prevent and Support for Students report and the Prevent Action Plan at Appendix A.

18. Partnership and Sub-contracting

The Chair referred members to the Partnerships and Sub-contracting report which had been reviewed by the Quality and Standards Committee at its meeting on 19 June 2025 and recommended to the Board for approval.

The Board noted the report and approved the proposed sub-contracting arrangements for 2025/26.

Resolved: The Board noted the report and approved the proposed sub-contracting arrangements for 2025/26.

Mr Robert Marshall-Slater left the meeting.

19. Accountability Statement

The Chair referred members to the Preston College Accountability Statement report which had been reviewed by the Quality and Standards Committee at its meeting on 19 June 2025 and recommended to the Board for approval.

Mr Mick Noblett, Vice Principal - Curriculum and Planning, reported that the Accountability Statement reinforced the College's commitment to collaboration and stakeholder engagement and incorporated a statement relating specifically to 'Local Skills Duty'.

The Board noted progress against the approved Accountability Statement 2024/25 and approved the Accountability Statement 2025/26.

The Board noted that an extension had been agreed with the DfE and the Accountability Statement would be uploaded to the DfE website on 4 July 2025.

Resolved; The Board noted progress against the approved Accountability Statement 2024/25 and approved the Accountability Statement 2025/26.

20. Higher Education Update

Ms Haworth presented the HE Update report. The Board noted that the reference to HE attendance had been changed to excellent at the request of the Quality and Standards Committee.

The Board noted the Higher Education Update report.

Resolved: The Board noted the Higher Education Update report.

21. College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

The Board approved the introduction of the College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion pledge and agreed that the College could sign the Association of Colleges Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter.

The Board noted the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2023/24.

Resolved: The Board:

- **approved the introduction of the College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion pledge and agreed that the College's signed the Association of Colleges Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter;**
- **noted the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2023/24.**

22. Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Speaking Out

Mrs Thornton referred members to the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Speaking Out which had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee and Resources Committee at their June meetings and recommended to the Board for approval.

Mrs Thornton reported that further changes might be required to the policy if related legislation passed in the next academic year. Mrs Thornton advised that the main changes were cosmetic and the Director of Governance had reviewed the draft in her capacity as the College's Designated Assessor.

The Board approved the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Speaking Out at Appendix A.

Resolved: The Board approved the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Speaking Out at Appendix A.

23. Any other business – valediction

On behalf of the Board, the Chair recorded thanks to Miss Momand as this would be her last meeting as student governor. It was noted that Miss Momand would return to the College in September and would be eligible to stand again as student governor. The Principal and Chief Executive reported that he had paid tribute to Miss Momand's contribution to the Board at the Student Awards. Miss Momand thanked the Board.

The Chair reported that Mr Robert Marshall-Slater's term of office would end in September 2025 and he had indicated that he would not serve a second term. The Board noted that Mr Marshall-Slater had offered to stay on the Board until a new governor could be appointed if a new governor could not be appointed over in the autumn. On behalf of the Board, the Chair recorded thanks to Mr Marshall Slater for this contribution to the Board.

On behalf of the Board the Chair recorded thanks to Ms Joanne Jones for her contribution to the Board as Ms Jones would leave the Board on 4 July 2025. He reported that Ms Jones

had served on the Board since 2018 and during her tenure had served as: Chair of the Search and Governance Committee, Chair of the Resources Committee and a member of the Senior Post Holder Remuneration Committee.

The Director of Governance recorded thanks to Ms Jones for her support, particularly in her roles as Chair of the Search and Governance Committee and Chair of Resources Committee.

The Principal and Chief Executive recorded thanks to Ms Jones for her contribution and her support, particularly as Chair of Resources Committee, during the College's financial turnaround.

Ms Jones thanked the Board and management for their comments. She reported that she had really enjoyed her time serving on the Board and had learnt a lot and met lots of people and that she had been fortunate to serve on the Board during the College's trajectory of progress. She commended the Executive Leadership Team and the Board and wished the College well for the future.

On behalf of the Board the Chair thanked the Executive Leadership Team and the Director of Governance for their work during the 2024/25 academic year.

Mr Airey, Ms Haworth, Miss Momand, Mr Noble, Mr Stott and Ms Thornton left the meeting.

End of Part 1a

Preston College

Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 3 July 2025 at 5.30pm, Boardroom

Part 1b

1. Report of the Chair of the Search and Governance Committee

The Director of Governance presented the Report of the Chair of the Search and Governance Committee as the Chair of the Search and Governance Committee had joined the meeting remotely.

The Board noted that the Committee had drawn to the attention of the Board:

- its thanks to Mrs Walters for her contribution to the Committee;
- plans for a governor recruitment campaign to start in the summer for the two independent governor vacancies and that the search would focus on identifying candidates with the skills, experience or background to serve on the Quality and Standards Committee as there would be two vacancies on this Committee.

The Director of Governance referred to the Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting on 5 June 2025 at Appendix A.

The Board noted that the Search and Governance Committee had completed an induction year review for Mrs Curtis and referred to the report considered by the Committee at Appendix B. The Director of Governance reported that the Search and Governance Committee had recommended to the Board that Mrs Curtis's induction year review should be approved.

The Board approved Mrs Curtis's induction year review.

Miss Morey left the meeting.

The Board noted that the Search and Governance Committee had completed an induction year review for Miss Morey and referred to the report considered by the Committee at Appendix C. The Director of Governance reported that the Search and Governance Committee had recommended to the Board that Miss Morey's induction year review should be approved.

The Board approved Miss Morey's induction year review.

Miss Morey re-joined the meeting.

The Board:

- noted progress against the External Governance Review Action Plan at Appendix F;
- approved the changes to the Board/committee template at Appendix G;
- approved the proposed changes the Governor Induction Plan, at Appendix H.

The Director of Governance referred to a discussion at the Search and Governance Committee meeting on how to progress Board and Committee governance self-assessment for 2024/25 and the Committee's view that, given the number of new members on the Board, that questionnaires were unlikely to be as beneficial this year and a proposal that instead the Board and committees discuss key topics.

Following discussion, the Board approved the recommendation that for governance self assessments for 2024/25 the Board and committee discuss key themes/topics.

The Director of Governance referred to the discussion at the Search and Governance Committee meeting on the proposed changes to arrangements for the appointment of student governors and student governor constituencies.

The Director of Governance referred to the feedback received at the Student Council and reported that no feedback had been submitted to the student consultation on the College app.

The Board noted that the Search and Governance Committee had reviewed the Student Council feedback and data on student participation in student governor elections and agreed to recommend to the Board the proposed changes to student governor constituencies and to replace elections with interviews.

Following discussion, the Board agreed:

- to change the student governor constituencies from 16-18, FE and HE to: two student governor 16-18 with terms of up to two years and one 19+ student governor for one year and therefore removing the HE student governor and FE student governor roles;
- to replace student governor elections with interviews.

The Director of Governance referred to the discussion at the Search and Governance Committee meeting on the proposed changes to arrangements for the appointment of staff governors. The Director of Governance referred to the feedback received from the staff consultation.

The Board noted that the Search and Governance Committee had reviewed the feedback from staff and data on staff participation in staff governor elections and agreed to recommend to the Board to replace elections with interviews.

During discussion the Board:

- considered that the role of staff and student governor was not a representative role;
- noted that a change would not necessarily need to be permanent;

- noted recent correspondence from the DfE on removing the current restrictions in governing documents on student governors under 18 from voting on certain matters as this was incompatible with charity law which emphasised that staff and student governors were trustees of colleges.

Following discussion, the Board agreed to replace staff elections with interviews for all staff governor roles. The Principal and Chief Executive and the Director of Governance undertook to review communications to the unions.

The Director of Governance reported that the changes agreed to the appointment of staff and student governors would require changes to the College's governing documents which would be covered under Part 1b – Agenda Item 3.

Resolved: The Board noted:

- **the Report of the Chair of the Search and Governance Committee;**
- **the draft Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 June 2025 at Appendix A;**
- **progress against the External Governance Review Action Plan at Appendix F.**

The Board approved:

- **the induction review for Mrs Helen Curtis at Appendix B;**
- **the induction review for Miss Amanda Morey at Appendix C;**
- **to change the student governor constituencies from 16-18, FE and HE to: two student governor 16-18 with terms of up to two years and one 19+ student governor for one year and therefore removing the HE student governor and FE student governor roles;**
- **to replace student governor elections with interviews;**
- **to replace staff governor elections with interviews;**
- **the changes to the Board/committee template at Appendix G;**
- **the Governor Induction Plan, at Appendix H;**
- **approved the arrangements for Board and committees' governance self assessments.**

2. Governance Schedule 2025/26

The Director of Governance presented her External Governance Review report. She reported that:

- she would send the two proposed dates for governor Continuing Professional Development (CPD) 14 August 2025 and 17 September 2025, to all governors to assess availability and she would then confirm the most popular date;
- the session would include in person Safeguarding and Prevent training, an opportunity for governors and the ELT to get to know each other and a review of possible deep dive themes for 2025/26 including strategic plan development;
- that she would need to review the Resources Committee dates for 2025/26 due to member availability and she would confirm as soon as possible.

In response to queries, the Director of Governance confirmed:

- that new governors were still required to complete the online Safeguarding and Prevent training if they attended the next in person CPD session;
- that, as previously agreed by the Board, governors who could not attend the in person Safeguarding and Prevent training would need to complete online Safeguarding and Prevent training.

The Board noted the draft governance schedule for 2025/26, at Appendix A.

**Resolved: The Board noted the draft governance schedule for 2025/26, at Appendix A.
Action: The Director of Governance to contact members of Resources Committee regarding the dates for 2025/26.**

3. Review of Governing Documents

The Director of Governance referred members to the report on the Review of Governing Documents and reported:

- on proposed changes to the College's Instrument and Articles, at Appendix A, and Standing Orders, at Appendix B, which had been reviewed by the Search and Governance Committee during 2024/25 and recommended to the Board for approval;
- on further proposed changes to the College's Instrument and Articles and Standing Orders following advice of the DfE since the Search and Governance Committee meeting;
- a recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee that the Board should consider an additional provision in the governing documents for when the Board was required to deal with sensitive issues and when staff and students should be asked to withdraw and that, if the Board wished to progress this recommendation, the Director of Governance would take legal advice to ensure that any revised wording remained compatible with charity law and did not allow for staff and student governors to be routinely excluded. She referred to the challenges of the existing wording in relation to staff governors and discussions regarding a staff member that held a post more senior to them;
- further changes would be required to progress the introduction of interviews for staff and student governors and that she would take legal advice on the required changes to the College's Instrument and Articles.

The Board approved the proposed changes to the College's Instrument and Articles and Standing Orders any numbering adjustment required.

The Board agreed that the Director of Governance should progress legal advice on introducing appropriate changes to the College's governing documents to better assist the Board in appropriately dealing with sensitive matters.

Resolved: The Board approved the proposed changes to the following governing documents:

- **Instrument and Articles at Appendix A;**
 - **Standing Orders at Appendix B;**
 - **Any numbering adjustments required after the changes were approved;**
- Actions: The Director of Governance should progress legal advice on introducing appropriate changes to the College's governing documents including clauses to better assist the Board in appropriately dealing with sensitive matters.**

4. Appointment of Vice Chairs

The Chair of the Governing Board referred to his report on the Appointment of Vice Chairs. The Board noted that the Board could appoint two vice chairs of the Governing Body and Mr Garnham and Mrs Willimott had volunteered.

Mr Garnham left the meeting.

The Board approved the appointment of Mr Garnham as Vice Chair of the Governing Body.

Mr Garnham re-joined the meeting.

Mrs Willimott left the meeting.

The Board approved the appointment of Mrs Willimott as Vice Chair of the Governing Body.

Mrs Willimott re-joined the meeting.

Resolved: The Board appointed:

- **Mr Garnham as a Vice Chair of the Governing Body for a term of four years.**
- **Mrs Willimott as a Vice Chair of the Governing Body for a term of four years.**

5. Date of next meeting

The Board noted that the next meeting would be take place on 17 September 2025.