

*Items 18 of these minutes are deemed to be CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of Instrument 14(4) and 16(2) as they contain business sensitive information. These minutes are not available for public circulation and are held separately by the Clerk to the Corporation.*

## MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION BOARD MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2025

Present:

### Governors:

Angela Briggs	Emma Kirk
Rebecca Chamley	Helena Nyanzu
Sue Craggs	Segun Odumoye
Dan Fell	John Rees
Sam Hewson	Lee Walker
Jug Johal	Mike Welsh

The quorum for the meeting was eight members. The meeting was quorate throughout.

### In attendance:

Sharon Harmon	Clerk to the Corporation
Barrie Shipley	Chief Operating Officer, Finance and Infrastructure
Rachel Maguire	Chief Operating Officer, People and Information
Danny Fenwick	Deputy Principal

The meeting took place in Room G36, UCNL, and started at 5.30 pm.

Item	Minutes	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Oldham (Governor), Preetha Kumar (Governor), Philippa Poland (Governor), Lizzie Brown (HE Student Governor), Peter Grant (Governor), Helen Kirby-Hawkins (Governor).	
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	Members should declare any personal or financial obligation, allegiance or loyalty which would in any way affect decisions in relation to the subjects under discussion.	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the Corporation Board meetings held on 15 October 2025 and any matters arising</b>	
	The minutes of the Corporation Board meetings held on 15 October 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.	
	There were no matters arising from the last meeting.	

#### **4 Feedback from Committee Meetings**

Members received the Committee Chairs' feedback reports from the meetings of the FEPQ Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the HEPQ Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the Audit and Risk Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025, and the Finance and Resources Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025.

#### **5 CEO Update Report**

The CEO presented a report providing an update on key developments arising from the Government's Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper published in October 2025, the Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report published in November 2025, and outlining implications for DNCG.

Members noted and discussed pathway and qualification reforms. Members considered the opportunities and implications of the reforms. Members discussed the future of V Levels. Members discussed funding implications and risk related to reforms. Members discussed the consultation on the devolved budget. Members agreed that the strategic planning in response to the reforms is vital over next few years. Members discussed curriculum planning and the direction of travel.

Members discussed the introduction of new English and mathematics options for post-16 resits and agreed this was a step in the right direction. Members noted and discussed the introduction of the four pathways model. Members agreed the introduction and support for the Lifelong Learning Entitlement will provide new and more flexible options for students to access higher level and technical learning and skills without the need to undertake full programmes. Members considered and discussed the implications of reforms for SEND learners.

Members thanked the CEO for the comprehensive updated and agreed that DNCG is well positioned and ready to respond to qualification reforms, evolving employer skills needs and alignment with strategic partners.

#### **6 Strategic Plan Progress Report**

The CEO presented the Strategic Plan progress report outlining the key outcomes from a recent review by the leadership team of the strategic plan implementation over the academic years 2023/24 and 2024/25. The CEO outlined the journey of the Strategic Plan and presented slides setting out progress against each pillar of the strategic plan, strategic projects and proposed strategic priorities going forward.

Members noted and discussed the contents of the report and the key strategic projects which will drive efficient and effective delivery of College objectives across a number of group functions. Members discussed strategic objectives looking ahead and planning for growth. Members discussed the strategic review and planning cycle. Members supported plans to undertake a comprehensive strategic curriculum review and to consider some early-stage proposals for future major projects, intended to position the College as a market leader in key and expanding sectors of the economy. Members noted that the Strategic Plan would be discussed in full detail at the Governors Development Day on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **7 Performance Update**

The Deputy Principal presented a curriculum performance update report. Members noted and discussed the contents of the report covering student numbers,

withdrawals, attendance and learners at risk of non-achievement across provision. Members noted that curriculum performance and quality reports had been presented and discussed in detail at both the FEPQ committee meeting and the HEPQ committee meeting.

Members considered and discussed the contents of the report. Members agreed that the report provides assurances that curriculum is performing well overall. Members were assured that the new Curriculum Accountability Framework process is enabling better accountability and scrutiny of student and staff performance.

Members were pleased to note that in November, a Joinery apprentice, Henry won first place at the 4-day Skills Build national final for World Skills, the UK's largest construction skills competition. Members congratulated Henry and the College on this considerable achievement.

## **8 Management Accounts End 31 October 2025**

The Chief Operating Officer, Finance and Infrastructure (COOFI) presented the Management Accounts update report providing an update to the 2024-25 year-end financial position post audit and an update on financial performance to 31st October 2025, and current forecast outturn for the 2025-26 financial year following student recruitment. Members were assured that the update report and management accounts was presented to the Finance Resources Committee at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025.

Members were assured by the overall strong financial position and forecast financial health rating 'Outstanding' and banking covenant compliance achieved for 2024/25. Members noted advised adjustments for impairment of land currently for sale. Members agreed with Management's opinion that the Financial Statements should be prepared on a Going Concern basis.

Members noted the advised variations to income and expenditure and the current year projections. Members noted the financial position and current re-forecast for 2025/26 -2026/27. Members noted an overall positive variance to the year-to-date performance tracking an operating surplus vs budget deficit. Members were advised on in-year and future year additional funding. Members were assured by the overall strong financial position and forecast financial health rating 'Outstanding' and banking covenant compliance achieved for 2025/26. Members noted a review of assumptions for 2026/27 results in a current forecast reduction in Financial Health to 'Good' based on current projections. Members noted that assumptions do not include any forecast additional funding following the announced additional £800m for the sector until the methodology and allocations have been released. Members were assured the College is forecasting strong financial performance for 2025/26, and even with a reduced surplus for 2026/27, the College will have significant cash reserves and banking covenant headroom.

Members were updated on staff pay award negotiations. Members considered and discussed the proposed budgeted 4% pay award for 2025/26. Members reiterated their commitment to staff to provide best pay and conditions possible within the financial viability for College finances.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the budgeted 4% pay award for 2025/26 for Trade Unions to consider and consult with their members.

## 9 Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The Corporation Board received and considered the Regulatory Self-Assessment Questionnaire (RSAQ) completed for DN Colleges Group for 2024/25. Members noted the regularity self-assessment questionnaire (RSAQ) is designed by the DfE to provide clarity of the accountability framework, key requirements and the type of evidence to provide and it supports corporations in drafting their statement of regularity, propriety and compliance. Members were advised that Corporations must provide a copy of their completed RSAQ to the reporting accountant, signed by the accounting officer and the Chair of the Corporation Board. Members noted that the RSAQ is reviewed by the Group's external auditors in line with their reporting accountant's responsibilities for reporting on regularity, whereby they will look to obtain limited assurance and to report to the Corporation and to the DfE in accordance with the requirements of the College Accounts direction 2024/25. Members were assured that the RSAQ had been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Audit and Risk Committee. Members considered and were assured by the contents of the Regulatory Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2024/25.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the Regulatory Self-Assessment Questionnaire (RSAQ) completed for DN Colleges Group for 2024/25.

## 10 Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report

The Corporation Board received and considered the Audit & Risk Committee's Annual Report for 2024/25. Members noted the Audit & Risk Committee's Annual Report is a requirement of the College Accounts Direction 2024 to 2025 and the College Financial Handbook and is designed to assist the Chief Executive and the Corporation Board with their respective responsibilities for the College's systems, controls, and risk management, which underpin the strategic objectives. Members noted the contents of the report and were assured that the College's arrangements for securing the solvency of the institution and the safeguarding of its assets remained adequate and effective during 2024/25.

## 11 Draft Financial Statements and Regularity Assurance Report 2024/25

Members received and considered the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year end 31 July 2025 for DN Colleges Group (DNCG) and its subsidiaries. Members considered the regularity assurance report, final auditors report and letters of representation. Members noted that the Report and Financial Statements had already been thoroughly reviewed and recommended for approval by both the Finance and Resources Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee. Members noted that the two trading subsidiaries Kingsway Consulting Ltd and Optime Support Ltd sets of accounts have been fully audited. There are no audit recommendations and no irregularities. The accounts were approved by the subsidiaries' Boards at their Annual General Meetings on 26 November 2025.

Members noted an unqualified audit opinion had been confirmed by the auditors and the Group remained in a sound financial position.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the Report and Financial Statements 2024/25.

**Noted:** S Hewson left the meeting.

## **12 DNCG Draft Self-Assessment Report 2024/25**

Members received and considered the draft DNCG Self-Assessment Report 2024/25. The Deputy Principal provided an overview of the self-assessment process and thanked governors for their attendance at the governance self-assessment panels. Members who had attended SAR panels expressed their confidence in the robust and rigorous review process. Members were assured that the self-assessment document has been through a rigorous process of both internal and external scrutiny,

Members were advised that the College's performance has been mapped to the still current, but outgoing, Education Inspection Framework. Members were assured that in the new calendar year the College's performance will be mapped to the incoming Ofsted inspection framework. Members noted that the College was inspected by Ofsted in January 2025 and was given an overall effectiveness grade of 'good.'

Members reviewed the Self-assessment report and discussed the strengths, areas identified for improvement or further development, and overall grades set out in the report. Members noted and discussed the impact of Level 2 achievement. Member noted the summary of the curriculum self-assessment grades that underpin the overall judgements made. Members were assured by that the overall effectiveness grade for DNCG is good.

Members were assured that the DNCG SAR 2024-25 was considered in detail by the FE Performance & Quality Committee and is recommend for approval.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the DNCG Self-Assessment Report 2024/25.

## **13 Freedom of Speech Policy**

The Board received and considered the updated Freedom of Speech Policy. The COOPI explained that the revised Freedom of Speech policy has been developed in line with new requirements which came into force in August 2025.

Members were assured that the revised policy has been considered by legal experts, and any suggestions made have been addressed. Members noted that the policy had been considered in detail at the HEPQ Committee and is recommended for approval.

Members considered the revisions to the policy and the context in which the updates were made in line with the new requirements. Members were assured that the updated document promotes safe and lawful freedom of speech.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board for approved the Freedom of Speech Policy.

## **14 Written Resolutions and Chair's Actions**

Members noted the Chair's Actions and Written Resolutions which had been approved since the last meeting of the Corporation Board on 15 October 2025.

## **15 Committee Terms of Reference**

Members were advised that the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for each of the Corporation Board's committees has been reviewed by the respective committees. Members noted that the review of the ToRs had resulted in proposed updates to the FEPQ Committee ToRs, the HEPQ Committee ToRs, the Audit and Risk Committee

ToRs, the Finance and Resources Committee ToRs and the Search, Governance and People ToRs

Members considered each of the committees' ToRs and agreed the proposed updates. Members were satisfied that committee ToRs remain appropriate. Members had no further comments on the committee ToRs.

**Resolution:** The Corporation Board approved the proposed updates to committees Terms of References for 2025-26.

**16 Minutes of Committee Meetings:**

Members received and noted the draft minutes of the meetings of the FEPQ Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025, the HEPQ Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2025, and the Audit and Risk Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

**17 Any Other Business**

There were no items of any other business.

**18 Confidential Item**

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**Note:** Staff and Student Governors left the meeting for this confidential item.

**19 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Corporation Board is scheduled for Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 5.30 pm, in the Boardroom at Doncaster College.

Members noted that there is allowance in the calendar for an extra Board meeting to be held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026, if required.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

**Sharon Harmon**  
**Clerk to the Corporation**

**Signed:** ..... (Chair)                      **Date:** .....