DN COLLEGES GROUP | Doncaster College | University Campus Doncaster | North Lindsey College | ucnl University Campus North Lincolnshire

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 3RD DECEMBER 2025

Present

Angela Briggs	Governor
Peter Grant	Governor
Jug Johal	Governor
Emma Kirk	Staff Governor
Philippa Poland	Governor
John Rees	Governor

The quorum for the meeting was 3 external members. The meeting was quorate throughout.

In attendance

Trisha Birch	Director of Finance
Sharon Harmon	Clerk to the Corporation
Les Kirk	Director of Estates
Rachel Maguire	Chief Operating Officer, People & Information
Ben Owen	Vice Principal, Business Growth, Skills & Partnerships
Barrie Shipley	Chief Operating Officer, Finance & Infrastructure

The meeting was held on MS Teams and commenced at 5.00pm.

Item	Minute	Action
1	**Apologies**	
	Apologies for absence were received from Helen Kirby-Hawkins, Governor.	
2	**Declarations of Interest**	
	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 interests.	
3	**Election of Chair and Vice Chair**	
	Members were advised that P Grant was nominated for a two-year term of office as Chair of the committee. Members were asked to vote on P Grant's appointment as Chair of the Committee.	
	P Grant left the meeting for the voting on the appointment of the Chair.	
	Resolution: The F&R Committee elected P Grant Chair of the committee for a two-year term office.	
	P Grant rejoined the meeting, and the Clerk confirmed his appointment as Chair of the committee.	

Item	Minute	Action

Members were advised that P Poland was nominated for a two-year term of office as Vice Chair of the committee. Members were asked to vote on P Poland's appointment as Vice Chair of the Committee.

P Poland left the meeting for the voting on the appointment of the Vice Chair.

Resolution: The F&R Committee elected P Poland Vice Chair of the committee for a two-year term office.

P Poland rejoined the meeting, and the Clerk confirmed her appointment as Vice Chair of the committee.

4 Minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee Meeting held on 25th June 2025 and any matters arising

The minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 25th June 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

There were no matters arising.

5 Recruitment, Projects and Contracts – end of year report

The Vice Principal, Business Growth, Skills, and Partnerships (VPBGS&P) presented the Recruitment, Projects and Contracts report for the academic year end 2024/25. Members considered and discussed the contents of the report providing an update on recruitment of learners for 2024/25, enrolment 2025/26 applications to date, an update on projects, subcontractors, funding and further recruitment activities.

Members were assured by positive progress against recruitment targets for Education Programmes for Young People and Apprenticeships. Members noted and discussed some recruitment challenges for Adult learners and Higher Education programmes and were assured by planned activities to support further recruitment. Members noted and discussed the update on funding streams and financial impacts across provision. Members considered applications, conversion and retention and discussed local demographics. Members noted the increase in new employer engagement and the impact on recruitment. Members discussed recruitment targets and plans for the year ahead. The CEO noted that a report on curriculum planning would be discussed at the Board meeting on 10th December.

Members discussed projects and were assured by the successful completion of the operational elements of the SIF, LSIF and OfS projects. Members noted that the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) colleges and Higher Education institutions continue to meet monthly under as the South Yorkshire Skills and Employer Collaboration Board to explore collaborative working and projects. Members were assured that good progress was continuing against all ongoing projects.

Members discussed subcontracting provision and were assured that overall, in the 2024/25 academic year subcontractors performed well. Members noted that engagement with one subcontractor ceased mid-year due to funding challenges.

Item	Minute	Action

Members discussed marketing activity noting that in the 2024/25 academic year there was a significant growth in event attendance and that digital campaigns remained highly efficient. Members were assured that the start of 2025/26 academic year has seen Open Event attendance grow significantly. Members discussed the drivers for the growth in attendance. Members noted that website performance is strong and that further improvements in navigation and content are planned. Members noted that digital campaigns and outreach initiatives are ongoing to support recruitment.

Members thanked the VPBGSP for the update report.

Note: The VPBGS&P left the meeting.

6 Management Accounts to 31 October 2025

The Chief Operating Officer, Finance and Infrastructure (COOFI) and the Director of Finance presented the Management Accounts to 31 October 2025. Members noted the contents of the report providing an update on financial performance to 31st October 2025, and current forecast outturn for the 2025-26 financial year following student recruitment.

Members noted and discussed variants in income and expenditure versus budget. Members noted that the year-to-date financial performance adjusted operating surplus versus budget deficit provides a positive variance. Members noted and discussed the forecast adjustments for impairment of the land currently for sale at North Lindsey College. Members sought clarification of the figure attached to investment income. The COOFI explained the investment income figures in detail. Members sought further detail on staff pay cost savings. The COOFI explained how savings were achieved and members were assured that there was no detrimental impact on college operations. Members discussed forecast financial health for the coming years. Members were assured that banking covenant compliance and 'outstanding' financial health is expected to be achieved for the 2025/26 financial year.

The COOFI advised members that the College submitted the College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) to the DfE in the summer outlining its financial forecast for 2024/25 -2026/27. The COOFI reported that the DfE have reviewed that submission along with the supporting commentary and have agreed with the financial health grade assessments of Outstanding for both 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Members received and considered the updated financial dashboards shared by the DfE, developed for Governors and incorporates various key performance indicators and measures those against both target benchmarks and benchmarks achieved in the sector.

7 Draft Financial Statements 2024-25

The COOFI and the Director of Finance presented the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for the DN Colleges Group for the year ended 31 July 2025, the final external auditors annual finding report, and the letters of representation.

Members considered the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024/25. Members noted the draft Annual Reports and Financial Statements 2024/25 had

Item	Minute	Action

been presented to and scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Committee at their meeting on 27 November 2025 at which the auditors were in attendance. The COOFI reported that the sets of accounts for the two trading subsidiaries Kingsway Consulting and Optime Support have been fully audited. The accounts were reviewed and endorsed by the subsidiaries Boards at their respective Annual General Meetings on 27 November 2025. The COOFI confirmed that any profits generated within these organisations are gift aided back to DNCG under a deed of covenant. The COOFI explained that Doncaster College and North Lindsay College subsidiaries are not trading therefore dormant accounts. Members noted that the Group had achieved Financial Health 'Outstanding' and met all banking covenants.

Members considered the external auditors report and were assured that the external auditors had issued an unqualified audit opinion on all entities in the Group. Members noted the declarations set out within the letters of representation which will be presented to the Corporation Board for signing.

Resolution: The Finance and Resources Committee endorsed recommendation of the approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the DN Colleges Group for the year ended 31 July 2025 to the Corporation Board.

Note: *The Director of Finance left the meeting.*

8 Estates Update

The COOFI and the Director of Estates presented an Estates update report providing an update on the progress of existing capital works, potential future works and a general Estates department update.

Members noted and discussed works completed at the Doncaster College campus and the North Lindsey College campus since the last report to the committee. Members congratulated the Estates team, and all involved, on the successful completion of Phase 1 of the North Lindsey College redevelopment and the smooth move into the new build. Members noted and discussed the positive impact of the installation of access barriers at the Doncaster College campus. Members noted and discussed progress with current ongoing Estates projects. Members noted and discussed progress with Phase 2 of the North Lindsey College redevelopment. Members discussed delays to the planned building demolition due to asbestos removal needing DfE approval. Members noted the project is due for completion in Summer 2026. Members were assured that the delay was not having an impact on the operations at North Lindsey College as the issues was self-contained.

Members noted and discussed the update on the land for sale at North Lindsey College and options available. Members discussed the future of Global House and New Beacon House and options for these buildings. Members were updated on staffing in the Estates Department.

Members thanked the COOFI and the Director of Estates for the comprehensive update report and were assured by the progress with capital works and the Estates Department operations.

Members thanked the Director of Estates and the Estates Team for all their hard work in completing significant works.

Note: *The Director of Estates left the meeting.*

Item	Minute	Action

9 Sustainability Update

The COOFI presented a Sustainability update report providing an update on the progress made by DNCG towards meeting its sustainability strategic objectives.

Members reviewed and considered the updates to the Group's Sustainability Action Plan. Members noted the number of initiatives which have been implemented since the last committee meeting. Members were assured that good progress has been made over the last couple of years against the current action plan. Members noted that estate condition surveys have been completed by the DfE and the Group is awaiting the report.

Members reviewed the draft Streamlined Energy and Carbon Report (SECR). Members noted that total gross emissions of CO2e have increased from 2023/24. Members discussed the reasons the increase noting that the increase was in part due to improved reporting and data collection. Members were assured by ongoing green initiatives.

Members received and considered the Group's Environmental and Sustainability Policy. Members agreed the policy was robust and appropriate.

Resolution: The Finance and Resources Committee approved the Group's Environmental and Sustainability Policy.

10 HR Operational Data, Recruitment and Retention

The Chief Operating Officer, People & Information (COOPI) presented an HR annual report providing a summary of key HR Metrics for the academic year from August 2024 to July 2025. Members considered and discussed the contents of the report covering employee relations, recruitment and organisational development, engagement and wellbeing.

Members noted and discussed the metrics on investigations, disciplinary cases and grievances. Members were advised that a revised Staff Code of Conduct has been launched. Members noted the Code of Conduct has full Trade Union support. Members were assured that workforce trends show headcount recovery, reduced turnover, and improved sickness absence rates, supported by proactive wellbeing initiatives. Members noted that the target of reducing staff turnover from 22% to 20% set for 24-25 was exceeded with a significant reduction down to 15%. Members congratulated the team on achieving the significant reduction is staff turnover alongside lower sickness absence rates and were assured that wellbeing initiatives were working well.

Members noted and discussed recruitment activity. Members noted that recruitment was overall strong, but challenges remained in some hard to recruit areas. Members discussed recruitment challenges in Engineering and Construction noting that recruitment in this area remains difficult due to a limited qualified candidate pool and high competition across sectors.

Members noted and discussed development initiatives including the Future Lecturer Development Scheme and the Trade to Teach programme. Members discussed the strategic focus for 2025–2026 including expanding talent pipelines,

Item	Minute	Action

promoting non-financial benefits such as work-life balance, exploring retention incentives, and strengthening employer branding.

Members noted and discussed organisational development, engagement and wellbeing. Members noted the number of wellbeing initiatives. Members were assured that staff engagement continues to improve. Members noted that employee engagement survey results were positive, with high scores for role satisfaction, team culture, and line manager support. Members noted that the Thrive learning platform was recently launched, consolidating compliance and development training into a single, user-friendly system. Members were assured that compliance rates exceeded 97% across all mandatory modules. Members were assured that staff development funding remained aligned with strategic priorities, supported by a new Professional and Personal Development Policy.

Members agreed that the 2024–2025 HR report reflects strong progress in workforce engagement, leadership development, recruitment and retention and wellbeing initiatives.

11 Review of Committee 2024-25 and Terms of Reference

Members considered the performance of the Finance and Resources Committee in 2024/25 measured against the committee's Terms of Reference.

Members noted that the committee had met three times during the year and that all meetings were quorate. Members noted and discussed the work of the committee noting oversight of both 'outstanding' financial health and the completion of significant capital works during the year. Members agreed that the Committee had met its responsibilities set out in its Terms of Reference and that it had been effective in carrying out its remit.

Members considered any further development which could enhance the effectiveness of the committee for 2025/26. Members discussed areas of focus and priorities going forward.

Members reviewed and considered the Committee's Terms of Reference (ToRs) and agree these remain appropriate.

Resolution: The Finance & Resources Committee approved the Committee's Terms of Reference for recommendation to the Corporation Board for approval.

12 Risk Register Review

Members received the Group Risk Register. Members reviewed and discussed the strategic risks for which the committee has responsibility for oversight. Members noted updates to controls, assurances, mitigations, and planned actions around each risk. Members discussed the updates and were assured by planned actions. Members considered the residual risk score for each risk. Members were satisfied the current risk ratings were appropriate.

13 Committee Chair's Feedback to Board

Members considered the business of the meeting and recorded key items and any changes to strategic risks identified for feedback to the Corporation Board in the Committee Chair's Report. The following items were highlighted for inclusion:

- The committee endorse the 2024/25 financial statements. Assurance provided that the external auditors had issued an unqualified audit opinion on all entities in the DN Colleges Group.
- Extensive work completed by the Estates Team on the redevelopment of the North Lindsey campus and works at the Doncaster Hub.
- Significant reduction in staff turnover achieved.
- The committee reviewed and approved the new Environmental and Sustainability Policy.

14 Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business.

15 Date and Time of Next Meeting:

Members noted the next Finance & Resources Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday 16th March 2026, 5.30 pm at Doncaster College.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm

Sharon Harmon
Clerk to the Corporation

Signed: ………………………………………… (Chair) Date: …………………….

TABLE OF ACTION				
Date	**Item**	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Date Due**