

## Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee

<b>Date:</b>	24 November 2025	<b>Room number</b>	Via Teams
<b>Present</b>	Carole Ditty (Chair), Forhad Altafi (Vice-Chair), Natalie Davison (Principal & CEO), Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe (CK), Molly Makota (MM), Andy Forbes (AF), Jahaid Zaman (JZ),		
<b>In attendance</b>	Victoria Eastwood (Chief Governance Officer) (CGO) Hiten Savla (Deputy Principal - Finance & Resources) (DPFR)		
<b>Apologies</b>	Diana Olafsdottir (Director of HR).		
<b>Circulation</b>	Policy & Resources Committee/Corporation		

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and apologies.</b> The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Diana Olafsdottir (Director of HR).										
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> Governors were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the Agenda if appropriate. The current Chair and Vice-Chair declared an interest in agenda item 3.  <i>The Committee had agreed prior to the meeting that the Chair and Vice-Chair would not be required to withdraw for this agenda item.</i>										
<b>3.</b>	<b>Appointment of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair</b> The Committee unanimously approved the re-appointment of Carole Ditty as Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee and Forhad Altafi as Vice-Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee.  <b>Approved: The re-appointment of Carole Ditty as Chair of the Policy &amp; Resources Committee and Forhad Altafi as Vice-Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee.</b>										
<b>4.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 23 June 2025</b> The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 June 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.  <b>Approved: The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 June 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.</b>										
<b>5.</b>	<b>Matters arising</b> An update on the actions from the previous meeting was provided:  <table border="1" data-bbox="276 1556 1489 1796"> <thead> <tr> <th>Agenda Item</th> <th>Action</th> <th>Responsibility</th> <th>Timescale</th> <th>Update</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>Risk appetite to be included on the agenda for the next Corporation Strategy Event.</td> <td>CGO/DPFR</td> <td>November 2025</td> <td>Complete – included on the 2025/26 business schedule</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Update	5.	Risk appetite to be included on the agenda for the next Corporation Strategy Event.	CGO/DPFR	November 2025	Complete – included on the 2025/26 business schedule
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<b>6.</b>	<b>Approval of Committee Terms of Reference 2025/26</b> The CGO advised that the Terms of Reference remained unchanged other than the suggestion to remove the specific reference to Ofsted. This was agreed.  <b>Approved: the Policy &amp; Resources Committee Terms of Reference 2025/26 were approved.</b>										

## 7. Strategic Risks

The Deputy Principal – Finance & Resources (DPFR) highlighted the following:

- One additional risk had been added on the impact of AI – there were increased presentations at the AoC on this area and an overall raised focus
- The risk register had been updated and amended since presented to the Board - planned budget and good financial health (at period 3) – College should be aiming to hit the budget and financial position was on track therefore decreased risk
- Fraud and risk of financial control failures increased
- Failure to sustain high quality teaching and learning – risk increased whilst SAR validations were taking place
- Industrial relations risk increased as there were 32 colleges that had been served notices of an industrial dispute. The College had not been involved and staff had received the pay award well but this remained a potential risk.

JZ questioned whether students were being stretched enough if they were using AI, whether AI for marking purposes could potentially provide the accurate reporting and the mitigations in place within teaching. The DPFR replied that AI could be misused and as AI was evolving so quickly there was an overall risk that if it was not managed well, it could create future issues. Teachers needed to have the knowledge of their students and their level of work.

MM asked whether the risk was AI specific or the wider digital platform, whether there was a balance between risk and opportunity and if the actual risk was the lack of continued knowledge and use or AI itself. The DPFR responded that there was a need to ensure a balanced understanding of risk and opportunity. There were positives eg staff wellbeing, good feedback could be produced, use of AI within HR/recruitment but the key risks were linked to specific potential issues and considering Department of Education (DFE) guidelines.

The Principal/CEO advised that the DfE had published guidance for schools and colleges earlier this year on the use of AI and was quite explicit re the risks and particularly the use of student data. Staff had undertaken some training but there needed to be a clear understanding of how to manage the risks.

The Chair asked if there were any groups available to the College in terms of AI. The Principal/CEO replied that NCFE and JISC had working groups and the Principal/CEO of Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge College had convened a national group with senior leaders to form an AI policy. The CGO added that she attended the JISC AI professional group and JISC would be attending the Spring Corporation Strategy Event to present on AI in Governance.

AF stated that he welcomed the inclusion of AI on the risk register, noting the mitigations and threats for some staff who may feel that AI would take over and the implications for GDPR. He advised that some of the responses fell in different management areas of the college and therefore may need more differentiation to consider the sub-risks and who was responsible for each area.

The Chair commented that the vast majority of the risks on the register were rated low and low/medium and it would be beneficial to understand how the risk appetite was assessed. The DPFR advised that risk appetite featured on the agenda for the December Corporation Strategy Event and a discussion on areas where the Board were open to higher risk e.g. growth strategy and specific areas where risks could not be attached eg health and safety was required. A key focus was the medium risk around growth and new technology etc.

The Vice-Chair emphasised the need to understand how to move forward with AI as there was an AI bubble that would eventually burst and investing in AI could have greater financial risks going forward. Currently AI enhancing learning led to misinformation which was a risk. Understanding where it applies, fraudulent certifications etc from a student perspective also needed to be acknowledged as a risk.

	<p><b>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</b></p>
8.	<p><b>EDI Update</b></p> <p>The CGO provided an update from the EDI Steering Group highlighting the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EDI Steering Group Action Plan was approved</li> <li>- Allyship training</li> <li>- Menopause awareness group was well received – consideration to be given to inviting men</li> <li>- Male support and mental health group to be considered</li> <li>- LGBTQ forum for staff</li> <li>- EDI Steering Group Objectives 2025/26 agreed</li> </ul> <p>AF stated that there was a risk from the next council elections that there would be a significant political presence from parties that did not share the view re EDI. The College needed to be aware of the risk and ensure justification as to why EDI was important for the College so the basic principles were not taken for granted. CK emphasised the need to look at the risks as the Council could have an opposition and it was agreed that advice and guidance from other colleges and the AoC would be sought. The CGO added that this would be included on the EDI action plan. The Chair advised that this reinforced the need of allyship training as in a polarised society it was important to ensure these conversations were taking place.</p> <p><b>Action: CGO to seek appropriate guidance from other colleges and AoC re potential political issues in terms of EDI. To be added to EDI action plan.</b></p>
9.	<p><b>Treasury Management Policy</b></p> <p>The DPFR advised of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No significant change from previous year</li> <li>- Loan to be repaid 3 August 2027 with Barclays –aim was to either renew or approach the DFE to support the College with a government backed loan on more favourable terms</li> </ul> <p>The Chair advised that it would be beneficial to start the loan conversation early. This was agreed.</p> <p><b>Approved: The Treasury Management Policy was approved.</b></p>
10.	<p><b>Reserves Policy</b></p> <p>The DPFR reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The policy remained unchanged from last year</li> <li>- Various aspects around the different elements of reserves and to minimise any financial risks</li> <li>- Attachment re 2024/25 position – the College is in the agreed limit but the intention was to build this up</li> </ul> <p>The Chair asked if it was possible to know the College’s position compared to other colleges. The DPFR advised that the position was very college specific and dependent on a number of things eg cash holding, sale of estate etc. The College worked to a specific position and considered the level on a monthly basis.</p> <p><b>Approved: the Reserves Policy was approved.</b></p>
11.	<p><b>Financial Regulations Policy</b></p> <p>The DPFR presented the report acknowledging that, in response to feedback from the Chair, the section regarding managing public money needed to be updated.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the Committee had reviewed the policy in some detail in the previous year. AF asked how the College monitored compliance and ensured staff were aware of the regulations. The DPFR responded that budget holders were provided with a copy of the regulations. The finance team regularly</p>

	<p>monitored compliance alongside the standing agenda item for this Committee. It was noted that there were no current breaches.</p> <p><b>Approved: The Financial Regulations Policy was approved subject to the amendment to the managing public money section.</b></p>
12.	<p><b>Governor Expenses Policy</b></p> <p>The DPFR reported that the policy remained unchanged and the reference to overseas travel had been removed.</p> <p><b>Approved: the Governor Expenses Policy was approved.</b></p>
13.	<p><b>Management Accounts</b></p> <p>The DPFR presented the period 2 management accounts advising on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not always easy to get a true picture as this was the first month for student starts and there was flexibility with enrolments</li> <li>- 16-18 student numbers below allocation –full funding would be received but this would result in clawback next academic year</li> <li>- VR discussions taking place</li> <li>- Potential to improve overall budget position as the funding for 16-18 would not be spent against the staffing costs</li> <li>- Areas where overcharged had recouped some of the money</li> <li>- Work taking place to identify other potential areas of income</li> <li>- Ahead of budget and anticipate will be ahead of the forecast position</li> </ul> <p>AF stated that it had been reported at the recent Curriculum &amp; Quality Committee meeting those efforts were continuing re 16-18 enrolments and there was in-year recruitment potential. The DPFR responded that the deadline for enrolments was 5 December 2025 and the final figure could then be confirmed.</p> <p>AF queried whether the Board had made a formal decision on the decarbonisation project or whether that was still to take place. The DPFR advised that the Board had not yet been asked to make a decision but the recommendation was for the project not to go ahead as the costs were significantly greater to what was anticipated and it would not be prudent for the College to sign up to an EPA for c30-40 years.</p> <p>MM referred to the previous year’s conversations around T-level clawback and asked whether there was any indication in terms of risk for this area. The DPFR responded that the numbers were slightly down (c10-12 students) but the position was still slightly improved on the previous year. The College had taken an active decision to move T-levels in Engineering back to BTECs because of the progression routes.</p> <p>MM questioned whether, as certain BTECs were now being non funded, was the College at any risk. The DPFR replied that Engineering was the only area which had reverted back to BTEC but there should be the capacity to switch from one to the other, however, the main risk was staff awareness. V-level discussions were still to take place. The Principal/CEO advised that defunding would be a key area. Business planning was taking place prior to the Christmas break and it was noted that Health &amp; Social Care could be problematic and the transition would need to be managed.</p> <p>The Chair requested that when the decarbonisation recommendation was brought to the December Corporation Meeting, confirmation as to the position around the grant/clawback to be included. The Board had previously been advised that the £317K spend to date would not be clawed back and this required confirmation.</p> <p><b>Action: Decarbonisation project, including clarification on clawback, to be added to the December Corporation agenda.</b></p>

14.	<p><b>Year End Financial Statements including Financial Performance</b></p> <p><i>This agenda item was minuted confidentially in accordance with Instrument 17 (2) (d).</i></p>
15.	<p><b>Capital Projects including EV Workshop</b></p> <p>The DPFR reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EV workshop completed mid September</li> <li>- Additional work undertaken around college – shortage of classroom spaces, added 9 new classrooms</li> <li>- Move out of Barking Learning Centre and costs saved</li> </ul> <p>The Chair advised that she had visited the EV workshop and noted it was a very valuable addition to the College.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the current position be noted.</b></p>
16.	<p><b>Infrastructure &amp; Sustainability Update</b></p> <p>The DPFR highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decarbonisation was the big project</li> <li>- Work in place re recycling etc but conversations taking place around how sustainability could be improved eg providing a discount if brought your own mug etc;</li> <li>- Sustainability driven through curriculum</li> <li>- Infrastructure – works around renewing IT estate – renewed some of the aging equipment</li> <li>- Clear sustainability policy to be in place</li> </ul> <p>In response to a query from AF, the Principal/CEO confirmed the Infrastructure &amp; Sustainability Committee would be convening in the new year to follow the climate action road map.</p> <p>The Chair asked if the College needed to refresh strategic targets around decarbonisation or whether these were flexible. The Principal/CEO responded that the target was 5% reduction year on year in climate footprint.</p> <p>MM asked whether the College had received the Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) scope 1-3 specifically around improving carbon footprint. The Principal/CEO replied that the College had not yet received the report for 24/25 and this would be scope 1 and scope 2 only.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the current position be noted and further updates to be provided to the Committee and the Board at the appropriate times</b></p>
17.	<p><b>Health &amp; Safety Update</b></p> <p>The DPFR reported that he had met with the Health &amp; Safety Committee and provided the details around the main issues. There had been no major issues in in year or reportable RIDDOR cases and overall cases were slightly lower than the previous year.</p> <p>The Principal/CEO advised that there had been some good policy developments. The process for dealing with student medical disclosures was now in place and the policy around risk assessments ensured a rigorous process.</p> <p>The Chair referred to the issue re the falling object and stated that it would be helpful if the Committee had an understanding of trends for one academic year to the next. MM added that a percentage of the</p>

	<p>population would also be useful eg 66% incidents shown as a % against the overall college population. This was agreed.</p> <p>MM noted that it was good to see the detail of the medical conditions and asked whether this included Personal Evacuation Plans (PEP). The Principal/CEO confirmed that the PEP plans were already in place.</p> <p><b>Action: future reports to include trends for previous and current academic year alongside clarity on the percentage against the population for comparison.</b></p>
<b>18.</b>	<p><b>Subcontracting Update including Supply Chain Fee Policy</b></p> <p>The DPFR highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key update on subcontracting delivery for 2024/25 and measures in place for 2025/26</li> <li>- Subcontracting decreased slightly and plan to decrease further this year once adult provision confirmed</li> <li>- Clean bill of health on the audit report</li> <li>- Supply Chain Fee Policy was required by the GLA and presented for approval</li> <li>- Good achievement rate for contractors</li> </ul> <p>The Chair stated it was good to see the external audit outcome and assurance and recorded congratulations to all involved.</p> <p><b>Approved: the Supply Chain Fee Policy was approved.</b></p>
<b>19.</b>	<p><b>Compliance against Financial Regulations</b></p> <p>The DPFR reported that there were a few areas that may need reminders on a regular basis to ensure consistent compliance but tighter controls were in place and there were no issues to report.</p> <p>The Chair referred to the audit statement and emphasised the need to keep on top of this.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the update be received.</b></p>
<b>20.</b>	<p><b>ONS Re-classification</b></p> <p>The DPFR advised that there were no cases to report. Dialogue had taken place with the DfE regarding the College's VR process and applications would be considered on a case-by-case basis. The CGO added that the changes to managing public money regulations had been discussed at the Remuneration Committee.</p> <p>AF advised that there had been discussion at the AoC Conference regarding college access to capital funding – this was not an immediate problem but there was little clarity on how this would work going forward. This was currently a medium-term risk but the process of accessing capital funding for colleges would need to be considered.</p> <p><b>Agreed: that the update be received.</b></p>
<b>21.</b>	<p><b>AoB –Meeting Evaluation/Priorities for Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The Chair reported that she had recently attended learning walks in Carpentry, Bricklaying and Painting and Decorating alongside learner forums. Having previously attended Monitoring and Performance (MAP) meetings in these areas she had been able to follow the learner journey and encouraged all Governors to participate to be able to better understand the College. Thanks were recorded to the teams involved and the Principal/CEO for maintaining the learner voice forums.</p>
<b>22.</b>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting – Monday 16 March 2025, 5pm</b></p>

The meeting closed at 18.35pm.

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Update</b>
8.	CGO to seek appropriate guidance from other colleges and AoC re potential political issues in terms of EDI. To be added to EDI action plan.	CGO	January 2026	Added to EDI Action Plan
13.	Decarbonisation project including clarification on clawback to be added to the December Corporation agenda.	DPFR	15 December 2025	Complete
17.	Future reports to include trends for previous and current academic year alongside clarity on the percentage against the population for comparison.	DPFR	March 2026	Complete