Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Corporation held on Thursday 11 September 2025 at 5:15pm at HICSA

Present:	Louise Bradford, Vice Chair -South Ian Brown Pamela Dawson Louise Doyle Julia Fox Lyndsey O'Leary (from item 08) Susan Pollard (Staff Governor) Ian Ritchey Alison Shaw, Vice Chair - North James Stuart, Chair Ellen Thinnesen, Chief Executive
In Attendance:	Toni Rhodes, Deputy Chief Executive David Howells, Chief Financial Officer Sonya Anderson, Campus Principal Sunderland College (City) Mike Chapman, Campus Principal Sunderland College (Bede) Emma Cottle, Vice Principal Strategy and Engagement Vikkie Morton, Vice Principal Student Life and Stronger Communities Iain Nixon, Vice Principal Partnerships and Business Solutions Judith Quinn, Campus Principal Northumberland College (Ashington) Naomi Robson, Vice Principal Corporate Services Christine Stretesky, Head of Corporate Governance and Policy

Welcoming all to the Special Meeting at the newly opened HICSA Campus, the Chair noted the tour that preceded the meeting stating the building was a great achievement. He asked Executive Leadership to thank all who were involved in getting the building ready to welcome students. The Chair also noted this would be the last meeting for Staff Governor, Susan Pollard and thanked her for her work as Staff Governor these past six years.

Bd/25-26/06 Attendance, apologies and consent for absence and Declaration of Interests

There were apologies received from Governors Choudhary, Doyle, Jones, and Sterling. There were no interests declared.

Bd/25-26/07 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The Vice Principal Student Life and Stronger Communities (VP-SLSC) introduced the policy stating changes from the previous version are marked with yellow highlight in the policy provided in the paper. She continued sharing the following:

- She is the Strategic Designated Lead, with Ruth Magnus Deputy Strategic Lead and James Stuart Designated Lead Governor.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) has been updated and in effect from 1 September 2025 which has delayed the policy from going in front of the Board.
- Key updates for the management of safeguarding include formal recognition of the Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance as statutory, enhanced record keeping of lower-level concerns, online harm/safety and new guidance on the use of generative AI in schools and colleges.
- The scope of the policy has been changed to provide compliance with KCSIE and among other changes, include language that safeguarding responsibilities of the College extends beyond the College day and premises.

She reminded members of their need to read the new KCSIE. The Head of Corporate Governance and Policy (HCGP) stated all should have received an email providing a link to KCSIE and a request they confirm they have read it.

The Board noted the inclusion of a secondary school within the policy and asked if by including this we were creating an inadvertent duty of care over those students. The VP-SLSC stated these are students who attend college through the Skills Academy with the Policy providing clarity on the relationship, duties and responsibilities. The Board suggested the Policy be modified to clarify the purpose for which the school is named recognising it does provide information on 14-16 year olds.

The Board asked whether the requirement of the extension of safeguarding responsibilities beyond the College day will require an increase in staff work. The VP-SLSC stated this would not as it is already something we do.

In response to a question from the Board, the VP-SLSC stated the College receives thousands of safeguarding records each year for incoming students. This is done via a secure, electronic system. The Board asked in relation to the recording of low level concerns, what is the scale of data handling. The VP-SLSC stated these relate to members of staff and is low.

The Board **approved** the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for 2025-26.

Bd/25-26/08 Strategic Goals: Plan 1 – Changemaking Curriculum and Plan 2- Changemaking Investment

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/25-26/09 Stronger Communities Framework

The VP-SLSC introduced the Stronger Communities Framework (Framework) noting this is a strategic initiative designed to address the significant socio-economic challenges facing the region. The Framework underpins the College's Strategic Plan and the Board of Corporation's Place-Based

Strategy, setting out a commitment to build inclusive, resilient and connected communities where education acts as a catalyst for social change. She continued highlighting the Framework focuses on four strategic objectives:

- widen economic participation
- strengthen local networks
- unlock system inequalities
- foster inclusive communities

with intended outcomes to include reduction in NEET, improved wellbeing and economic progression. The framework links to the Strategic Plan around growth objectives and is aligned to the UNSDGs. A steering group will be formed comprised of key partners to shape and drive the Framework and the work. Risks were identified include staff capacity, data integration with partners and failure to achieve measurable impact with each having identified activity to manage or mitigate.

She asked governors for input ahead of working with partners to further develop the Framework.

The Board expressed how welcome this piece of work is, the ethos behind it and what it is attempting to achieve. Looking to working with partners, the Board asked how that will be achieved. The VP-SLSC stated that local authorities have been working with the College in the development of the Framework to date, with the CE sharing a formal written response to be forthcoming from Sunderland City Council and the hope others will be willing to put their name on it.

The Board noting the need for the College to show leadership in this space, asked about the co-creation or collaboration with partners and how they can truly help shape it. The VP-SLSC confirmed this is a dynamic document that is meant to change over time through engagement and collaboration with partners through the lens of their strategic priorities. The CE noted the challenge the College faces being ahead of some of our partners in this work and the need for collaboration and the risk of that slowing the progression of important work. Upon reflection it was decided to remove some of the more commercial aspects of the Framework with the aim of making conversations around partnership more reciprocal.

The Board asked for more information at some point on the planning and evaluation work to be performed to understand whether the people we are working with are engaged. The CE shared the College will be chairing the Sunderland Adult Skills Board which is a co-creation project the College is leading. Additional, regional projects will be brought to the Board at a later meeting.

The Board **endorsed** the ethos of the framework and instructed staff to conduct further work with external stakeholders. The Board requested a specific Lunch and Learn session to help them better understand our communities and their needs. The DCE shared OfSTED’s new inspection framework will treat inclusion equal to safeguarding and will review College and community demographics and how the College is supporting and working with current and future students.

The Chair asked the Board to consider how this work will be tracked and monitored. The Board acknowledged this work sits nicely within the remit of the Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee but should be review by the Board annually when receiving the strategic goal reports.

Bd/25-26/10 Legal Documents

The CFO shared there were a number of documents related to the Ashington New Build and HICSA that require the Corporate Seal or governor signature. Starting with the Collateral Warranties for

Ashington, the CFO shared the College is being asked to sign the Collateral Warranties Agreement for the new build to allow it to work directly with the builder for rectification of any defects. He shared the warranties have been reviewed by the College's legal counsel who advised the College that while they were not part of the negotiations of the agreements, they found them to be acceptable.

Moving to the documents related to HICSA, the CFO reminded the Board it previously agreed the Agreement for Lease in July 2022 which provided the general terms of the lease. He noted, the Lease presented does not contain terms substantially different to those presented in the Agreement of Lease. Sharing the rent payable on the facility the CFO asked the Board to approve signing.

The CFO shared an additional document needed to be authorised for signature related to the canopy in the front of HICSA that hangs over the public footpath. The CFO shared the College's solicitors have reviewed the document and advise signing.

The Board **agreed** to the signing of Warranty Documents associated with Wansbeck and Lease and Canopy Licence associated with HICSA

Bd/25-26/11 Any Other Business

There was no other business raised.

Bd/25-26/12 Date, time, and venue of next meeting

The Chair shared the next meeting is scheduled for 14 October 2025, starting at 6:00pm with the venue to be confirmed.

Bd/25-26/13 Meeting Wrap-up

The Chair offered the opportunity to share feedback on tonight's meeting with him and the HCGP.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 18:30.

These minutes were approved by the Board at its meeting on 14 October 2025 pursuant to minute Bd/25-26/17.