

**Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Corporation held on
Tuesday 30 June 2026 at 6:00pm in the Immersive Space at Bede Campus Sunderland
and via Teams Conferencing**

Present: Louise Bradford, Vice Chair (arrived at the commencement of Agenda Item 113)
Ian Brown
Nick Collins
Pamela Dawson
Jessany Dumble, Staff Governor
Lyndsey O'Leary (via Teams, arriving during Item 113)
Modaser Choudhary (arrived at the commencement of Agenda Item 113)
Simon Marshall
Toni Rhodes, Chief Executive
Ian Ritchey (via Teams)
Alison Shaw, Chair
Richard Sterry
Chris Walker
Darren Sterling (via Teams)
James Stuart (via Teams)

In Attendance: David Howells, Chief Financial Officer
Sonya Anderson, Campus Principal Sunderland College (City and HICSA)
Mike Chapman, Campus Principal Sunderland College (Bede)
Judith Quinn, Campus Principal Northumberland College (Ashington)
Iain Nixon, Group Executive Principal, Regional Skills
Naomi Robson, Vice Principal Corporate Services
Emma Cottle, Vice Principal Marketing Strategy and Communications
Vikkie Morton, Campus Principal Hartlepool Sixth Form College
Jane Varey, Head of Corporate Governance and Policy
Bradley Myerscough, Student Support Officer on secondment to Corporate Governance Team
Jan Juillerat, Advance HE

Bd/25-26/109 Chair's Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting introducing Jan Juillerat of Advance HE who will present the External Board Review findings, and Bradley Myerscough who is on secondment to the Corporate Governance Team to develop a Governors' Portal and automate the Policy renewal processes of the College.

The Chair then reminded all Governors that in addition to meetings, any updates are emailed to them by either the Chair or the Head of Corporate Governance and Policy. It is particularly important to ensure meeting dates are in diaries especially for the face-to-face Board meetings. There is an aim for full attendance in person, especially at strategy events.

The Chair referred to her conversations with the Board about how we run our meetings and events; feedback to date indicated agreement on the importance of in-person meetings to foster strong relationships and a positive Board culture, whilst recognising the part the virtual environment had to play in modern governance. She asked that Governors continue to provide feedback and comment. There was a reminder of the online etiquette of raising (electronic) hands if a question arises rather than using the chat function.

The Chair reported that the Chief Executive had now completed her first six months and offered her congratulations, whilst also confirming to Board that the 6 months review had occurred, as required. The report will go the Governance and Remuneration Committees for their formal review.

The format of agenda packs (Board papers) was mentioned with the currently trialled version welcomed by some Governors (due to the ease of viewing individual documents) but not universally. Feedback is welcomed and should be directed to the Chair for a final decision to be presented to the Governance Committee.

The Chair then returned to introducing Jan Juillerat and thanked her for the work completed on the External Review. The process undertaken has been helpful, enjoyable and instructive, and the College intends to work hard to deliver on the recommendations. A response will be provided via the Governance Committee in September/October. There was a view that the report did reflect the transitional six months with a new triumvirate, strengthening of governance via meeting papers and logs, and the new strategy.

Bd/25-26/110 Apologies and consent for absence, attendance and declarations of interest

There were apologies for absence from Governors Doyle, Fox, Jones, Lilley, Ferreccio and from Lee Lister, Group Executive Principal for National Skills 16-19.

The Attendance Report was noted.

Declarations of interest were carried over from previous Board and Committee meetings for Governor Marshall; Governor Sterry and Governor O'Leary in regard to their Employers' interest/potential interest in specific agenda items.

Bd/25-26/111 Chief Executive's Report and Reflections

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/25-26/112 Minutes of previous meeting held on 12 May 2026 and Matters Arising

The Board agreed the non-confidential minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2026.

The Board agreed the confidential minutes presented as an accurate record of the meeting held on 12 May 2026 with these minutes being maintained separately.

There were no matters arising.

The Action Log was noted as being a current operational issue for the Head of Corporate Governance and Policy to resolve in full and report to the Governance Committee in September 2026. The HCGP reported that all actions were now logged on the new format (Excel) and that there was still some work to sign off tasks with the aim of completion of actions by the next academic year commencing.

ACTION: The HCGP to present the action logs to the Governance Committee at the Autumn meeting.

Governors Choudhary (6:14pm) and Bradford (6:16pm) arrived at the meeting. Governor O'Leary joined online (6.18pm).

Bd/25-26/113 External Board Review

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Jan Juillerat left the meeting at 6:23pm.

Bd/25-26/114 Inclusion Strategy

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/25-26/115 Impact Review and Report on the EPNE Strategic Plan

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/25-26/116 Financial Strategy

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/25-26/117 Curriculum Plan Summary

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/25-26/118 Accountability Agreement

The Group Executive Principal for Regional Skills (GEP-RS) presented the Accountability Agreement to the Board. This represents the College's delivery in the year ahead for areas funded by the DfE and where applicable, the Mayoral Strategic Authority Integrated Settlement Funding. This year's statement focusses on addressing key LSIP priority areas in Construction and Advanced Manufacturing utilising the new builds at Sunderland and Northumberland that provide new, state-of-the-art, innovative facilities. Six priorities identified are:

1. Sector skills need linked to economic growth with a specific focus on advanced manufacturing, clean energy, construction, housing, and health and care;
2. Foundation skills linked to economic activity;
3. Inclusion;
4. Community placed-based delivery;
5. Higher education;
6. FE sector leadership and collaboration.

The College has also identified a need to include clean energies going forward but as a contributor rather than specialising in this sector. Inclusion has been identified as a key priority, not just for the 16-19 age group but also for adult learners to ensure building of confidence and move them towards further study or employment.

AGREED: The Board approved the report.

Bd/25-26/119 Appointment of Committee Chairs

The Chair informed the Board that following the departure of Governors Jones and Fox, the new Chairs of the FRP Committee will be Governor Ritchey and that of the CQSE Committee will be Governor Dawson. Governor O'Leary will also be leaving the Board by Christmas and upon her departure, Governor Choudhary will take over as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

The new HE Oversight Group, which is not a formal Committee and will report to CQSE, will need a new Chair as Governor Dawson is now Chair of CQSE. It was proposed to the Board that the Chair will approach several Governors and make the recommendation to the Governance Committee of the replacement Chair of the HE Oversight Group.

AGREED: The Board agreed the appointments of the new Chairs.

Governor Sterry withdrew from the meeting due to his declaration of interest (7:33pm).

Bd/25-26/120 Policies

The Board considered each of the following policies:

- FE Admissions Policy
- Sustainable Travel and Subsistence Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

AGREED: The Board approved the Policies.

Bd/25-26/121 Other Confidential Papers

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Governor Sterry returned to the meeting at 7:37pm

Bd/25-26/122 Other Non-confidential Papers

The Board considered each group of papers presented by each Committee, namely:

- Audit and Risk Committee
 - Auditor Plan and Strategy
 - Re-appointment of Auditors (Internal and External)
 - Risk Update
 - Modern Slavery Statement
- CQSE Committee
 - HE Governance – Scheme of Delegation
 - Reform of Teacher Training Education – Registration
- FRP Committee
 - Financial Regulations Annual Review
- Governance Committee
 - Board Meeting Dates
 - Annual Programme of Business

The Board discussed the proposed strategy sessions within the Calendar of Meetings and the new proposal to have strategy sessions prior to a Board meeting (3-6pm). This was felt to be too long when the Board meeting continues to 8.30pm. Evenings were suggested by one Governor as more appropriate than afternoon sessions. The Programme of Business was therefore approved but the Schedule of meeting dates was not until strategy sessions could be agreed.

ACTION: Governors were requested to send any alternative dates to the Chair and/or Clerk by 14 July 2026 and any suggestions for times for strategy sessions.

ACTION: The Chair, Chief Executive and Clerk to resolve dates and times for the strategy sessions for 2026-27 prior to the commencement of the next academic year.

AGREED: The reports were agreed except the Board Meeting Dates whose approval is subject to the resolution of the strategy sessions and any further date changes proposed by Governors.

Bd/25-26/123 Committee Chair Updates

Audit & Risk Committee

Governor O’Leary (Chair) advised the Board that the re-appointment of the auditors does have a lot of input from the committee. She also advised that there is expected to be a larger update in September due to the anticipated agenda.

CQSE Committee

Governor Dawson (Vice Chair & Chair Designate) advised that the Committee had dealt with a lot of information and praised the Campus Principals for preparing more succinct updates.

FRP Committee

Governor Ritchey (Chair Designate) advised that the June meeting had had a full agenda with many items that had then been brought to this Board meeting. He thanked the CFO for all his input.

Governance Committee

Governor Shaw (Chair) indicated that the Governance Committee has a large agenda for September. At the June meeting the QIP had been closed off but will be reviewed in September. In addition action logs had been considered and is ongoing work. There is now a strong focus on Governor induction as highlighted in the External Board Review and Succession Planning: both were considered in June, especially in regard to the Chair position, and will continue to be reviewed.

AGREED: The Board noted the comments

Bd/25-26/124 Lead Governor Updates

The current role of Lead Governors and their remits is to be reviewed, via the Governance Committee, during the academic year 2026 -27.

- Lead Governor for SEND – Governor Doyle has send her apologies to the meeting but the Chair will ask for any relevant feedback outside this meeting.
- Lead Governor for Safeguarding – Governor Brown advised that there were no specific items to address with the Board but his attendance at the recent tour of the new Wansbeck Campus has highlighted the positive steps within the design of the new buildings to specifically consider safeguarding. He expressed an interest in whether the design ultimately impacts upon safeguarding data.

AGREED: The Board noted the comments

Bd/25-26/125 Minutes of Meetings

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/25-26/126 Committee Items

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

The following item was taken out of agenda order:

Bd/25-26/128 Any Other Business

The Chair formally minuted the Board's thanks to Governors Jones and Fox for their service noting that a full thanks had already been given to each at CQSE and FRP Committee meetings respectively. The Chair then thanked Governor Stuart for his service as he too is finishing on 31 July 2026.

The Executive Team members and other staff members in attendance, and Governor Dumble were asked, and left, the meeting at 7:53pm. Those remaining for item 127 were the Independent Governors, the Chief Executive and the Clerk to the Corporation.

Bd/25-26/127 New Leadership Structure

This item was deemed confidential with minutes maintained separately.

Bd/25-26/129 Date, time, and venue of the next meeting

The Board noted the arrangements for the next regularly scheduled meeting as follows:

- Thursday 15 October 2026 at 6:00pm, venue to be confirmed.

Bd/25-26/130 Meeting Wrap-up

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:16pm.

These minutes were approved at the meeting of the Board held on 15 October 2026 pursuant to minute Bd/26-27/05.