



**Cheshire College**  
South & West

**MINUTES OF FULL CORPORATION MEETING**  
HELD ON TUESDAY 08 JULY 2025 – 14:00HRS  
CREWE CAMPUS

**Governors in attendance in person:**

Mrs Maggie Ayliffe	(MA)	Associate Governor	Crewe
Mrs Sarah Bailey	(SB)		Crewe
Mr Fintan Bradley	(FB)	Vice- Chair of Governors	Crewe
Mrs Margaret Cheshire	(MC)		Crewe
Mrs Claire Clayton	(CC)		Crewe
Mr Paul Colman	(PC)	Associate Governor	Crewe
Mrs Gemma Davies	(GD)		Crewe
Ms Lesley Davies	(LD)	Chair of Governors	Crewe
Mr Jasbir Dhesi	(JSD)	Principal/CEO	Crewe
Mr Jerry Green	(JG)		Crewe
Mr Shane Guildford	(SG)		Crewe
Mr Sean Herbert	(SHer)		Crewe
Mr John Kiely	(JK)		Crewe
Mr Davinder Lotay	(DSL)		Crewe
Mr Kenny Murray	(KM)		Crewe
Mrs Michelle Petruzzelli	(MP)		Crewe
Mr Clive Roberts	(CR)	Associate Governor	Crewe
Mt Len Tildsley	(LT)		Crewe

**In attendance:**

Mrs Michelle Huntley	(MEH)	Director of Governance	Crewe
Mr Philip Burrow	(PB)	Chief Financial Officer	Crewe
Mrs Helen Nellist	(HN)	Deputy Principal/Deputy CEO	Crewe
Mrs Ruth Szolkowska	(RS)	Vice Principal Curriculum, Quality & Innovation	Crewe

**PART A MINUTES**

Reference	
<b>FC 29/25</b>	<p><b>3-year financial forecast (CFFR)</b></p> <p>The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. Mr Philip Burrow, Chief Financial Officer, spoke to the paper and gave a detailed presentation. The College Financial Forecast Return (CFFR) is a 3yr document which is sent to the DfE annually. Yr1 is the out-turn of this current year (2024-25); Yr2 is the detailed budget for 2025-26 and Yr3 is an informed budget for 2026-27, with caveats. <b>This full minute was recorded as Part B Minute FC 29/25.</b></p> <p><b>The Board APPROVED the proposed budget for 2025-26 with the assumption that all contingencies and provisions are fully utilised in-year.</b></p> <p><b>The Board AGREED to delegate authority to the Principal to approve any late adjustments that do not have a material impact on the operating surplus; and</b></p> <p><b>The Board AGREED to authorise the Chief Financial Officer to submit the budget and financial strategy in the required format, to DfE by 31 July 2025.</b></p>

FC 30/25	<p><b>Chief Executive's Report – Merger update</b></p> <p>Governors noted the verbal report from the Chief Executive. This full minute was recorded as <b>Part B Minute FC 30/25</b>.</p> <p><b>Mr Shane Guildford and Mr Sean Herbert joined the meeting.</b></p>
FC 31/25	<p><b>Apologies for Absence &amp; Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone; attendance was as recorded above.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Sue Harrison, Mrs Bev Barlow and Mr Mike Braun.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Mrs Gemma Davies to her first Corporation Board meeting and Gemma introduced herself briefly.</p> <p>There were no additional declarations of interest made.</p>
FC 32/25	<p><b>Chief Executive's Report</b></p> <p>Governors noted the verbal report from the Chief Executive. The report included reference to the following topics:</p> <p><b><u>Rapidly changing external environment:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lots of governmental budgetary challenges will impact FE education sector</b></li> <li>• <b>National Government strategies impacting FE.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Spending Review:</b> Government wants to ensure the pay gap does not widen further between FE and schools for the next 3yrs.</li> <li>– 16-19yr olds numbers are growing for the next 6yrs. Primary school admission numbers are falling for the next 6yrs.</li> <li>– <b>Get Britain Working:</b> Wants to reduce NEETs issue. More new benefit claimants are teenagers.</li> <li>– <b>Industrial Strategy:</b> Technical Colleges of Excellence will be established. One college will be a construction lead in the Northwest region. CCSW will be a 'spoke' college, not a 'hub' college.</li> <li>– <b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment Review:</b> Underway but not conclusive.</li> <li>– <b>Skills England:</b> Devolution is significant.</li> <li>– <b>Growth &amp; Skills Levy:</b> Replaced Apprenticeships Levy. Includes skills now. Over 22yr olds cannot do degrees at universities with this funding. Trying to get more 16-19yr olds to do apprenticeships.</li> <li>– <b>National Skills Strategy:</b> Move to collaboration between providers (colleges). Level 4 and 5 courses should be at FE establishments. This will be a challenge for universities and HE. This will drive the White Paper for Education.</li> <li>– <b>Devolution:</b> Due in Cheshire in Sept 2025. There are significant benefits when skills and funding are being devolved.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Operational factors impacting FE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Demographic bulge:</b> Previous 10yrs had seen decrease in FE demographic numbers, but there is a bulge in learner numbers into FE for the next 6yrs.</li> <li>– <b>Learner resilience and attendance:</b> Attendance has improved at CCSW, but nationally it is a challenge. Staff have noticed a lack of resilience in learners and an increasing lack of support from parents around attendance. Funding does not cover remote teaching. Increasing numbers of 18yr olds are joining the welfare system because of ill health, having never engaged with employment.</li> <li>– The increase in the use of <b>Artificial Intelligence (AI)</b> is starting to impact on the number of graduate vacancies, which will also impact youth unemployment.</li> <li>– <b>SEND:</b> The government recognises that the current Educational Health &amp; Care Plan (EHCP) system is not working but it is unsure whether they will have the authority in parliament to make the required changes following the failure to reform the welfare system.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Local Government factors impacting FE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Financial health of local authorities:</b> As they struggle with budgets there is a potential impact on the College.</li> <li>– <b>Local authority changes:</b> There has been several changes at political and/or Officer level across all three local authorities in the Cheshire &amp; Warrington region, which may</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>impact on both devolution as well as stability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Devolution positioning:</b> Lots of management time is being spent on attending meetings and addressing opportunities and challenges that devolution will bring.</li> <li>– <b>Health of Colleges in the region:</b> There has been a marked change within the last 3yrs, and more change is likely over the coming years.</li> </ul> <p><b>FE Commissioner:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Shelagh Legrave's term in office finishes in October</b>, and an announcement of a new appointment is expected soon.</li> <li>• <b>Identified low points for FE</b> were the well reported events at Weston College and Burnley College.</li> <li>• <b>Revision of FE Commissioner Benchmarks:</b> Not targets, but realistic goals rather than sector average. Important for CCSW to continue to increase its cash reserves.</li> <li>• <b>Impact of reclassification and increased risk:</b> Colleges cannot take loans including overdrafts, so there is an increased risk of financial failure, which is one of the reasons why cash days benchmark has been increased from 25 to 40 days.</li> <li>• <b>Changed measure of surplus to EBITDA.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Reflections on CCSW:</b> This part of the minute was recorded as <b>Part B minute FC 32/25</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FE sector will need to work more closely with other sectors including Health on some topics e.g. SEND.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked Dhesi for his presentation and noted that the Board recognises that CCSW is in a strong position and it is due to the leadership team and the work it does.</p>
<b>FC 33/25</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Meeting (25 March 2025), Matters Arising from previous minutes including Action Log</b></p> <p>The minutes were reviewed for accuracy and approved.</p> <p><b>It was RESOLVED to accept the Part A and the Part B minutes from 25 March 2025 and the Chair signed the minutes.</b></p> <p>The action log from the 25 March 2024 was reviewed and it was noted that <b>all actions are complete and closed.</b></p> <p><b>Action Log:</b></p> <p><b>142</b> – Merits of External Board Reviews was discussed at the Strategic Conversation meeting on 09 June 2025. The College will seek an external provider to conduct the compulsory triennial Board Effectiveness Review during 2025-26. <b>CLOSED.</b></p> <p><b>52</b> – GD has joined the Board and attended 2 committee meetings as part of her induction programme. <b>CLOSED.</b></p> <p><b>53</b> – Chairs' Committee APPROVED the Accountability Agreement and confirmation of submission will be given at the July meeting then <b>CLOSED.</b></p> <p><b>54</b> – Management Accounts for Period 7 &amp; Period 8 posted to GHub. <b>CLOSED.</b></p> <p><b>55</b> – Cooper Parry contract extended for 1 year. PB to start review process for retender in Sept 2025. <b>CLOSED.</b></p> <p><b>56</b> – Policy approval confirmed with J Horton. <b>CLOSED.</b></p> <p><b>57</b> – MEH will send out meeting invites before 31 July. <b>On target for timely completion.</b></p> <p><b>58, 59:</b> The above table includes two confidential actions (58 &amp; 59) which no longer need to be recorded as Part B actions as news of the potential merger is now in the public domain. <b>CLOSED.</b></p>
<b>FC 34/25</b>	<p><b>Confirmation of submission of Accountability Agreement</b></p> <p>The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. Mr Jasbir Dhesi, Principal &amp; CEO, made a brief verbal presentation, and the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chairs' Committee approved the Accountability Agreement in late June.</li> <li>• The College has ensured its Accountability Agreement reflects the local needs of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).</li> </ul> <p><b>The meeting NOTED that the College's Accountability Agreement was submitted by 30 June 2025, and we have had notification of receipt from the Department for</b></p>

	<b>Education (DfE).</b>
<b>FC 35/25</b>	<p><b>College Financial Handbook Update</b></p> <p>Mr Philip Burrow, Chief Financial Officer, spoke to the Board and the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DfE updates the College Financial Handbook annually, effective from the start of the new Academic year.</li> <li>• Compliance with the Handbook is a condition of the Accountability Agreement the College has in place with the DfE.</li> <li>• PB drew the Board's attention to paper 07 – 250708FC which details the changes the Board must note.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair said it may be beneficial for the internal auditors to run a session for governors using case studies to illustrate the changes and their impact for the Board to consider.</p>
<b>FC 36/25</b>	<p><b>Committee Chairs' Reports &amp; Recommendations</b></p> <p>The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. The Chair Approved minutes from each committee meeting are shared with all governors via the governance portal. Each Committee Chair spoke about the points governors should note and any recommendations from the committee to the Board. The full minute was recorded as <b>Part B, FC 36/25</b>.</p> <p><b>The Board APPROVED the Teaching, learning &amp; Assessment Standards Policy.</b></p> <p><b>The Board APPROVED all the recommendations from the Finance &amp; Resources Committee after noting that appropriate scrutiny was conducted by the committee.</b></p> <p><b>The Board APPROVED the Internal Audit Plan for 2025-26 and the External Audit Plan for 2024-25.</b></p> <p><b>The Board APPROVED the recommended amendments to the Instrument &amp; Articles, the Standing Orders and the Scheme of delegation.</b></p>
<b>FC 37/25</b>	<p><b>Corporation Membership Update</b></p> <p>The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><b><u>Membership</u></b></p> <p>Mr Paul Colman, Mrs Maggie Ayliffe and Mr Len Tildsley left the meeting.</p> <p>The Board noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chairs' committee reviewed the expiring term of office, noted Mr Colman's contribution and recommend the re-appointment of Mr Paul Colman for 1 year as Associate Member from 01 August 2025. Extending Mr Colman's term of office, as an Associate Member, maintains links with South Cheshire Chamber which is reciprocally beneficial.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Board voted unanimously to re-appoint Mr Paul Colman as an Associate Governor for one year from 01 August 2025.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chairs' committee reviewed the expiring term of office, noted Ms Ayliffe's contribution and recommend the re-appointment of Ms Maggie Ayliffe for 1 year as Associate Member from 01 October 2025. Ms Ayliffe is employed at Liverpool John Moores University and has extensive, current expertise within the Higher Education sector.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Board voted unanimously to re-appoint Ms Maggie Ayliffe as an Associate Governor for one year from 01 October 2025.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chairs' committee reviewed the expiring term of office, noted Mrs Barlow's contribution and recommend the re-appointment of Mrs Beverly Barlow for 1 year as Associate Member from 01 October 2025. Mrs Barlow is self-employed as a part-time Ofsted Inspector and has extensive, current curriculum and quality expertise.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Board voted unanimously to re-appoint Mrs Beverley Barlow as an Associate</b></p>

**Governor for one year from 01 October 2025.**

- The Chairs' committee reviewed the expiring term of office, noted Mr Len Tildsley's contribution and recommend the re-appointment of Mr Tildsley for a 4year term of office as an External Member from 01 October 2025. Mr Tildsley is a retired college principal and has extensive, current expertise within the Further Education sector.

**The Board voted unanimously to re-appoint Mr Len Tildsley as an External Governor for four years from 01 October 2025.**

Mr Colman, Mrs Ayliffe and Mr Tildsley re-joined the meeting, and each were congratulated on their re-appointment. The Chair thanked each of them for continuing as governors with the College.

**Action: MEH to contact Mrs Barlow to confirm her reappointment as an Associate Governor from 01 October 2025.**

- The Chairs' Committee considered the applications from Mr Andrew Tyley and Chief Superintendent Peter Crowcroft to join the Board. Both candidates bring valuable knowledge and skills to the Board and the Chairs' Committee RECOMMEND their appointment from 01 September 2025.

**The Board voted unanimously to appoint Mr Peter Crowcroft as an Associate Governor for one year from 01 September 2025.**

**The Board voted unanimously to appoint Mr Andrew Tyley as an External Governor for one year from 01 September 2025.**

**Action: MEH to contact Mr Peter Crowcroft and advise him of the Board's decision to appoint him as an Associate Governor of CCSW College for an initial probationary year from 01 September 2025.**

**Action: MEH to contact Mr Andrew Tyley and advise him of the Board's decision to appoint him as an External Governor of CCSW College for an initial probationary year from 01 September 2025.**

Mr Shane Guildford and Mr Sean Herbert left the meeting.

- The Board noted that both Staff Governors' terms of office will end within the next 12months. It would be beneficial to extend the Staff Governors to serve into first year post-merger, and then to include eligible colleagues from the merged College to fill the roles in 2026-27. Both Staff Governors have indicated that they would be willing to extend their terms of office for the suggested period.

**The Board voted unanimously to extend the term of office for Mr Sean Herbert as a Non-Academic Staff Governor to end on 30 November 2026.**

**The Board voted unanimously to extend the term of office for Mr Shane Guildford as an Academic Staff Governor to end on 30 May 2027.**

Mr Shane Guildford and Mr Sean Herbert re-joined the meeting, and the Chair confirmed that the board had AGREED to extend their terms of office as discussed and agreed with each of them.

Subject to the Board's decision to re-appoint Mr Colman, Ms Ayliffe, Mrs Barlow and Mr Tildsley and to appoint Mr Crowcroft and Mr Tyley, on 01 October 2025 the Board will have the following complement: 1 Principal; 2 Staff Members; 3 Student Members, 13 External Members and 6 Associate Members. We will have the following vacancies: 3 x External Members. The Board agreed to increase the number of Associate Members to 6 in July 2025.

**Committee Chairs:**

- Mrs Lesley Davies, CBE, as Chair of Chairs' Committee
- Mr Len Tildsley as Chair of Curriculum & Quality Committee
- Mr Jerry Green as Chair of Audit & Risk Committee
- Mr Andrew Tyley as Chair of Finance & Resources Committee (Elect)
- Mr Len Tildsley as Chair of Remuneration Committee

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr Len Tildsley as Vice-Chair of Governors</li> </ul> <p><b>The Board APPROVED the appointment of Committee Chairs for the next academic year as above.</b> Vice-Chairs of committees will be elected in the committee meetings.</p>
FC 38/25	<p><b>Feedback from Governor PDRs and Chair's PDR</b></p> <p>During June the Chair of Governors and the Vice-Chair of Governors have met with 13 of 16 external governors. The remaining meetings are scheduled for next week.</p> <p>The Chair asked the Board to note that two themes which emerged from the meetings was a need to make the executive summary reports more succinct such that they draw attention to the key points governors must note and any change in risks governors should note.</p> <p>The second point was a desire to have the opportunity to keep abreast of progress with the potential merger and with key sector news. It is proposed that regular briefings by the Principal will be scheduled and dates and times shared with governors. These sessions will not be recorded and are optional for governors to attend.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair of Governors advised the Board that following their decision to use a more formal approach to review the Chair of Governors performance, the Director of Governance shared a structured 'competency framework' form for governors and the leadership team to use to review the Chair's performance. The results from this 360degree review will be shared with the Chair and a brief report will be shared with the Board in September 2025.</p> <p><b>Action: LT to give brief verbal report about Chair's 360degree review to Board in September 2025.</b></p>
FC 39/25	<p><b>Director of Governance's Report</b></p> <p>The meeting noted the paper which had been sent to all members in advance of the meeting. Mrs Michelle Huntley, Director of Governance spoke to the paper and the following points were noted:</p> <p><b>Governance Meetings Schedule 2025-26</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MEH will send out calendar invites (which will include Teams links) to all planned meetings (including work/personal calendars by agreement with individual governors) before the end of July 2025.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: MEH to issue calendar invites for 2025-26 governance meetings before 31 July 2025.</b></p> <p><b><u>Board Development Annual Report</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During 2024-25 all governors have been asked to complete two mandatory training activities: reading Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) document in September 2024 (or on joining) and completing one online module for Safeguarding &amp; Prevent.</li> <li>Governors have had access to various AoC training webinars and been encouraged to read a wide variety of reports and articles from the Association of Colleges (AoC), Ofsted and the FE Commissioners Office.</li> <li>The Board have received training about Transgender Awareness, Intergenerational Teams and participated in a workshop with Student Senate to learn about the variety of support activities provided by the College to support learners with mental health, general health and financial challenges.</li> <li>There has been focussed training for Student Governors and Audit &amp; Risk Governors</li> <li>New governors have been encouraged to attend AoC Governor Induction training.</li> <li>Training has been provided for the Audit &amp; Risk Committee by our Internal Audit provider (RSM).</li> <li>In 2025-26 it is proposed to adopt the same approach to Board development i.e., to provide opportunities throughout the academic year via a variety of activities including webinars (College and external providers including the AoC); pre-meeting training sessions led by either external or internal experts; sharing of FE Commissioner reports on colleges; sharing of FE Commissioner's termly letters.</li> <li>The Director of Governance has also compiled an extensive training programme for new, and</li> </ul>

	<p>inexperienced, governors to ensure the development of governors' greater collective understanding of the FE sector. Dates and times of modules will be shared with governors with some modules being run online and others run ahead of scheduled governance meetings.</p> <p><b><u>Annual administration completion</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board Members noted that several standard forms are completed/updated by governors once a year. These include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consent to Act &amp; Declaration of Eligibility includes reference to being a 'fit and proper' person per the requirement from the Office for Students (OfS).</li> <li>Register of Interest declarations</li> <li>Governors' Data Protection Compliance Statement</li> <li>Governors' Liability Renewal Declaration</li> </ul> </li> <li>Links to copies of the above forms will be sent to Governors to access and download from the governance portal.</li> <li>A copy of a Governor Self-Assessment of the Board Questionnaire is available in electronic form.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Action: All governors to complete annual forms and questionnaires and return to MEH by 30 July 2025.</i></b></p>
<b>FC 40/25</b>	<p><b>Key points to be noted from this meeting</b></p> <p>The Vice-Chair of Governors summarised the key points to be noted from this meeting:</p> <p>The Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noted and APPROVED the three-year financial plan which includes the out-turn for 2024-25, and the detailed budget for 2025-26.</li> <li>Noted the very detailed CEO presentations on the proposed merger and on national, regional and local matters which will affect the College in the next few years.</li> <li>APPROVED the recommendations from the Chairs' Committee for re-appointment, new appointments and extensions to individual governor's terms of office to ensure the Board retains knowledge and skills.</li> <li>Noted the progress made with the Chair's performance management process and the themes which have come out of the performance development review meetings held with all external governors.</li> <li>Noted the planned development programme for governors in 2025-26 to enable the newer Board members to develop their understanding and awareness of the sector and College-specific procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>FC 41/25</b>	<p><b>Confidential/Commercially sensitive business</b></p> <p>It was agreed that several discussions during the meeting will need to be noted as confidential information due to commercial sensitivities. Full minutes for item <b>FC 29/25, FC 30/25, FC 32/25, and FC 36/25</b> can be found in Part B minutes for this meeting.</p> <p><b><i>Action: MEH and JSD to review meeting minutes for commercially sensitive items and record separately as necessary.</i></b></p>
<b>FC 42/25</b>	<p><b>Date of future meetings and any other business</b></p> <p>The meeting noted the dates for Full Corporation meetings from September. It is planned to hold all meetings in person. MEH will send out meeting invites and will include Teams invites for all meetings although it is preferable that governors join meetings in person wherever possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuesday 16 Sept 2025, 14:00hrs, Crewe</li> <li>Tuesday 16 Dec 2025, 14:00hrs, Crewe (NB Christmas Lunch for Governors 12:00-14:00 in Academy Restaurant)</li> <li>TBA 2026, 08:30hrs Governors' Day – Ellesmere Port</li> <li>Tuesday 31 Mar 2026, 14:00hrs, Ellesmere Port (NB Lunch with Learners 13:00-14:00hrs)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuesday 07 July 2026, 14:00hrs, Crewe (NB Barbecue for Governors 17:00)</li> </ul>
<b>FC 43/25</b>	<p><b>Additional Other Business</b></p> <p>The Chair gave a Vote of Thanks to Mr Fintan Bradley who is leaving the Board in his ninth year of service. The Board noted the huge, positive contribution which Fintan has made during his term of office – leading committees, being a link governor to seven areas – both curriculum and non-curriculum and supporting the Chair of Governors by attending social and external College events.</p> <p>Mr Fintan Bradley gave a heartfelt response speech and accepted a gift from the College of a beautiful piece of artwork created by one of the College learners.</p> <p>The Chair thanked all governors for all the work they do. Our governors are involved, accountable and shoulder considerable responsibility. Their support and challenge throughout the year is very much appreciated by the leadership team.</p> <p>The meeting closed and all attendees were invited to attend a complimentary meal in the Academy Restaurant.</p>
	<b>The meeting closed at 16:53hrs</b>

Chair's signature :

Minutes produced : 11 July 2025

Chair's approval : 5 September 2025

Report made to Corporation : 16 September 2025