

Finance & Resources Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 11th March 2026 at 4:30 PM

Location: Riverside College Halton, Kingsway, Widnes, Cheshire

Present:	Neil McGrath Mary Murphy Chris Sikorski Susan Smith	External Governor, Chair** Principal Staff Governor** Co-Opted Governor
In Attendance:	Dan Adams Julie Holland Gordon Holmes Julia Withersby Catherine Shaw	Assistant Principal (Curriculum, Cronton) Deputy Principal (Finance & Resources) Assistant Principal (Finance & Estates) Assistant Principal (HR & Central Services) Head of Governance

***Remote attendance via Microsoft Teams*

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received. All members were present.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1 Approval of the Minutes (*previously circulated*)

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

3.2 Matters Arising

Resolved: The Committee noted that there were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda and no matters outstanding on the action log.

4. FINANCE AND RESOURCES UPDATE

4.1 Human Resources Update including the Pay Gap Report *(previously circulated)*

The Committee received an update on anonymised staffing matters between September 2025 and January 2026. Governors were advised that short-term sickness absence remained broadly in line with the previous year, though an increase in long-term absence was noted. It was reported that staff turnover remained low compared with sector averages, reflecting positive terms and conditions of employment. The Gender Pay Gap report showed a slight reduction in both the mean and median pay gaps, predominantly reflecting the gender profile of support staff roles and a discussion took place. Updates were also provided on pay awards, national funding pressures, any disciplinary and safeguarding-related matters, probationary arrangements, staff wellbeing initiatives and recent whole-college continuous professional development (CPD) activity.

Resolved: The Committee noted this update.

4.2 Health & Safety Annual Report *(previously circulated)*

The Committee considered the Health and Safety report covering the period from September 2025 to date. The Committee noted an increase in recorded accidents/incidents and in response to a governor's request further information was provided on this matter. A discussion ensued with a focus on the distinction between accident and incidents for reporting purposes. It was reported that one RIDDOR-reportable incident had been fully investigated, compliance dashboards were up to date and lockdown drills had been completed successfully across the Kingsway and Cronton campuses.

In response to a question raised, the Deputy Principal provided an overview of the critical incident training scenarios that had been undertaken.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

4.3 Financial Forecast Update 2025/2029 including Budget Monitoring 2025/2026 *(previously circulated)*

The Committee received an updated financial forecast showing an improved operating surplus for 2025/2026, a strong cash position above sector benchmarks, and an outstanding financial health grade throughout the planning period. The Committee discussed assumptions around growth funding, contingencies and sensitivity analysis, noting the College's continued financial resilience in adverse scenarios. Governors noted that the College was less exposed to risk due to its prudent planning in not assuming funding increases.

In response to a question raised, the Deputy Principal confirmed that short-term deposits were included within the cash balances budget heading.

Resolved: The Committee noted the contents of the report and recommended approval of the updated budgeted 2025/2026 to the Board.

4.4 Property Strategy *(previously circulated)*

The Committee received a comprehensive update on capital projects, including progress on the Cronton Music Hub and Green Technology Skills Building, associated delays and mitigation actions, and professional fees approved via Chair's Action to maintain project momentum. The committee discussed the Kingsway recladding project, longer-term visioning work, land valuations, demolition assumptions and public car parking arrangements.

In response to a question raised the Assistant Principal (Finance & Estates) advised that property valuations were to be agreed jointly by both parties' valuers using local comparators.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report.

4.5 Partnership Update *(previously circulated)*

The Committee considered performance and contract value requests for subcontracted provision. It was reported that both partners had exceeded 16-8 targets and remained within agreed subcontracting thresholds. Quality assurance activity and associated risk ratings were discussed when considering the recommendation to approve increases to contracts, as detailed in the business case.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report and recommended approval of contract variations to the Board, as follows:

- Power in Partnership increase of £54,637
- Crosby Training increase of £10,000

5. POLICIES

5.1 Environmental Sustainability Policy *(previously circulated)*

5.2 Fees Policy 2026/2027 *(previously circulated)*

5.3 Apprenticeship Fees and Charges Policy *(previously circulated)*

5.4 HE Fees and Compensation Policy 2026/2027 *(previously circulated)*

5.5 Freedom of Information Policy *(previously circulated)*

Resolved: The Committee noted the nature of any proposed changes and recommended approval of the above policies (agenda items: 5.1 to 5.5) to the Board.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

7. ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE BOARD

Resolved: The Committee approved that the following items be reported to the next Board meeting:

- Financial forecast and overall financial position

- HR / Gender Pay Gap report
- Partnership contract variations
- All policies being recommended for approval by the Committee

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was **noted** as follows:

- Finance & Resources Committee – 24th June 2026 at 4:30pm

The Chair thanked all attendees for their participation and the meeting was closed.

Signed.....Office copy signed by Neil McGrath.....

Committee Chair

Date.....15th June 2026.....