



Report and Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 July 2024

CONTENTS

	Page No
Reference and Administrative Details	3
Strategic Report	4
Governance Statement	15
Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance	23
Statement of Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation	24
Independent Auditor's Report to the Board of Governors of Riverside College Halton	25
Reporting Accountant's Report on Regularity	28
Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	30
Statement of Changes in Reserves	31
Balance Sheet	32
Statement of Cash Flows	33
Notes to the Accounts	34

Reference and Administrative Details

Board of Governors

A full list of Governors is given on pages 16 and 17 of these financial statements.

Catherine Shaw acted as Clerk to the Corporation throughout the period.

Key Management Personnel

Key Management Personnel are defined as members of the Senior Management Team and were represented by the following in 2023/24:

Mary Murphy	Principal; Accounting Officer
Thalia Bell	Deputy Principal Curriculum
Julie Holland	Deputy Principal Finance and Resources
Ben Barton	Assistant Principal
Leeann Bellfield	Assistant Principal
Alan Brown	Assistant Principal Quality

Financial statement and regularity auditors:

Beever and Struthers
Statutory Auditors
One Express
1 George Leigh Street
Manchester
M4 5DL

Principal and registered office:

Riverside College Halton
Kingsway Campus
Kingsway
Widnes
Cheshire WA8 7QQ

Bankers:

Barclays
Corporate Banking Centre
7th Floor, 1 Marsden Street
Manchester M2 1HW

Solicitors:

Burnetts
Victoria House
Wavell Drive
Rosehill
Carlisle
Cumbria CA1 2ST

Strategic Report

Nature, Objectives and Strategies:

The Board of Governors present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2024.

Legal Status

The Corporation was established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 for the purpose of conducting Riverside College Halton (hereafter referred to as the College). The College is an exempt charity for the purposes of Part 3 of the Charities Act 2011.

Vision and Values

Governors reviewed the College's vision and values during 2023/24 which are currently as follows:

Our Vision

Through the excellence of the education we provide, we will enhance and transform lives.

We strive to be sector-leading in everything we do.

Our Values

1. Teaching and learning are our priorities, and the needs and safety of our students always come first.
2. As members of the College, we are partners in the success of the organisation, and we are all accountable for our outcomes.
3. High standards are at the heart of all that we do. In our pursuit of excellence, we recognise that individually and collectively we can always improve.
4. Within our college community we treat each other with respect, trust, openness, care and consideration. We celebrate student and staff success.
5. We are an inclusive college where we promote and protect equality and diversity.
6. We work in partnership with employers and other stakeholders so that we can make a positive contribution to local, regional and national economic development as skills needs.

The College has met or exceeded all its funding targets, remains financially robust and has invested over £11m in teaching and learning and pay awards this year. Achievement rates and high grades for all students remain high and the consistent quality of provision is confirmed in the findings of the most recent Ofsted report. The College has increased turnover by 48% since 2018/19 and more than 70% of the College's provision is for young people (16-19). The College is held, reputationally, in high regard with stakeholders and particularly with local schools.

The College supported the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and continues to work with employers and key stakeholders to shape future curriculum to meet local skills needs. The new Hydrogen Training Centre opened in February and will support the skills needs of the region. Staff and student health and wellbeing is a priority for the College. Staff morale is high, and the college community is thriving, thus enabling strategic plans to be implemented with enthusiasm. In November 2022 colleges were reclassified to the to the central government sector. This means that colleges must now meet the requirements in HM Treasury's document 'Managing Public Money'.

In June 2024, the College received an **OUTSTANDING** Ofsted report and the College's finances are currently graded **OUTSTANDING** under the ESFA's grading criteria.

Strategic Report (*continued*)

Public Benefit

The College is an exempt charity under Part 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and is regulated by the Secretary of State for Education. The members of the Governing Body, who are trustees of the charity, are disclosed on pages 16 and 17.

In setting and reviewing the College's strategic objectives, the Governing Body has had due regard for the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, particularly, upon its supplementary guidance on the advancement of education. The guidance sets out the requirement that all organisations wishing to be recognised as charities must demonstrate, explicitly, that their aims are for the public benefit.

In delivering its mission, the College provides the following identifiable public benefits through the advancement of education to approximately 6000 students, including 110 students with high needs:

- High-quality teaching.
- Widening participation and tackling social exclusion.
- Excellent employment record for students.
- Strong student support systems.
- Links with employers, industry and commerce.
- Active participation in community projects.
- Links with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

Implementation of Strategic Plan

In 2023/24, the College prepared a strategic plan. The Plan consists of three chapters covering all areas of College delivery, including property and finance. The chapters are:

- Chapter One: Vision, Values and Strategic Aims
- Chapter Two: 2.1 Internal/External Environment
2.2 The Policy and Funding Environment
- Chapter Three: Monitoring Performance 2024/25

The governing body monitors the performance of the College against this plan using a series of key performance indicators for each chapter displayed in a dashboard. The plans are reviewed and updated each year. The College's continuing strategic aims, in the context of a changing government, qualification reform, the implementation of the plethora of Bills Skills and Green and White Papers and the pressing need to address climate change, are:

1. To achieve high **quality** outcomes for our students by prioritising teaching learning and progression.
2. To continue to improve levels of **efficiency** and remain in outstanding financial health.
3. To maximise opportunities for **growth**, aligned to meet sector skills needs.

The College is on target for achieving these aims.

Financial Objectives

The College's financial strategic goals are:

- To maintain financial stability through effective cost control and creating funds to grow.
- To invest in and modernise our centres to meet local and regional priorities and address the needs of green technology and the low carbon economy with a focus on Hydrogen.

A series of performance indicators have been agreed to monitor the successful implementation of the goals. Detailed monitoring is undertaken by the Finance and Resources Committee, with regular reports to the full governing body.

Strategic Report (continued)

Performance Indicators

The key performance indicators used by the College are:

- Achievement rates – compared against national averages.
- Value Added – compared against national averages.
- Delivery of funding targets – compared with contract.
- Financial Health – as calculated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) planning tool.

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Actual 2023/24	National Average
Curriculum indicators:			
16-18 Achievement rate	85.1%	84.6%	82.6%
19+ Achievement rate	89.5%	92.0%	89.1%
Overall Achievement rate	86.9%	87.1%	84.9%
Apprenticeship Overall Achievement	67.0%	69.6%	48.5%
HE (TEF Metrics) Student Satisfaction	94.0%	93.8%	
Ofsted Overall Effectiveness	1	1	
Financial indicators:			
Cash days in hand	221	232	110
EBITDA as % income	13.06%	13.32%	8.2%
Borrowing as % income	0.16%	0.00%	12.52%
Current Ratio	2.31	2.36	2.10
Staff Costs (excl. pension charges)/income	61.99%	57.97%	66.39%
ESFA Annual Health Group	Outstanding	Outstanding	

The College is required to complete the annual Finance Record for the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The College is assessed by the ESFA as having an 'Outstanding' financial health grading. The current rating of 'Outstanding' is considered an acceptable outcome.

Financial Position

Financial Results

The College's underlying operating surplus is £4,337,904 (2022/23: £3,958,147).

The College has total reserves of £34,762,370 and cash balances of £26,208,815. The College wishes to continue to accumulate reserves and cash balances to create working capital to adequately maintain the estate and allow for some investment in the development of priority areas.

Tangible fixed asset additions during the year amounted to £3,697,064 This was made up of equipment purchases of £1,069,280 to enhance curriculum and ILT delivery, £869,154 to address the refurbishment of the College estate and £1,758,630 on the new building projects on the Cronton and Kingsway sites. The College is progressing with a phased and affordable approach to create attractive learning environments which are pivotal to the success of the College. The College currently has several building projects in progress on both the Kingsway and Cronton Centres amounting to £15m. These will be part funded by Further Education Capital Funding streams.

The College has significant reliance on the education sector funding bodies for its principal funding sources, largely from recurrent grants. In 2023/24 the funding bodies provided 83.0% of the College's total income.

The 2023/24 College budget was set to include contingencies to cover rising inflation, a pay award which was mindful of the cost-of living crisis and reductions in apprenticeships, Higher Education, and commercial fee income, as these were thought to be the most at risk. However, the reductions in income did not materialise, and the budget was revised at mid-year to include additions to these income streams.

Strategic Report *(continued)*

Financial Position *(continued)*

Financial Results *(continued)*

An increase in 16-18 funding rates in-year was also welcomed and has also contributed to the favourable variance on operating surplus. This budget also included an estimate for an actuarial increase in pension costs which hasn't materialised. This had a positive bearing on the reported operating surplus.

Treasury Policies and Objectives

Treasury management is the management of the College's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks. The College has no plans to increase borrowings.

The College has a separate treasury management policy in place, which is appended to the Financial Regulations. All borrowing requires the authorisation of the Board and must comply with the requirements of the funding agreement and HM Treasury's document 'Managing Public Money'.

Cash Flows

The College had an operating cash inflow £18,562,810 (2022/23 outflow: £9,277,508). Inflows of cash include £10m returning from short term deposit and a further £7m from the Further Education Capital Transformation Fund (FETCF), currently held in restricted cash. Cash outflows include £3.7m on capital investment (associated grant income of £2.9m) and £0.2m to repay the outstanding loan. The college is now debt-free.

Liquidity

The size of the College's total borrowing and its approach to interest rates have been calculated to ensure a reasonable cushion between the total cost of servicing debt and operating cash-flow. During the year this margin was comfortably exceeded.

Reserves

The College had no formal Reserves Policy during 2023/24 but drew one up after year-end to guide financial decision making in future. The Policy gives guidance on the minimum level of cash working capital and unrestricted reserves balances to ensure the College can meet any short-term obligation but also ensure long-term sustainability. The Reserves Policy is not the only means of assessing going concern but contributes to this. The College keeps cash and reserves to ensure that it can meet unexpected costs, deal with income shortfalls resulting from enrolment reductions or government funding changes and meet the future costs of improving the buildings and reducing carbon emissions.

The College recognises the importance of generating reserves in maintaining financial stability, whilst ensuring that adequate resources are provided to meet the College's core business aims and mitigate the future unexpected financial impacts. The College currently holds no restricted reserves. As at the balance sheet date, after accounting for a pension actuarial loss of £688,315 the College held reserves of £34,762,370 (2022/23: £30,424,466).

It is the College's intention to increase reserves over the life of the Strategic Plan, by generating annual operating surpluses.

Going Concern

The College is currently debt free and all future property plans are to be funded from a mixture of available funding body grants and college reserves.

Strategic Report *(continued)*

Financial Position *(continued)*

Going Concern *(continued)*

Accordingly, the College has a reasonable expectation that it has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and for at least 12 months from the date of signature of these Financial Statements; for this reason, it will continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparation of its Financial Statements.

Details of the Basis of Preparation can be found in Note 1 on page 34.

Current and Future Development and Performance

Student Numbers

In 2023/24 the College has overachieved its target of £25,138,000 in funding-body main allocation funding (2022/23: £25,347,000). The College enrolled approximately 6,000 students. The College's student population includes 3,571 16–18-year-old students, 502 apprentices, 300 higher education students and 1,650 adult learners.

Student Achievements

Students continue to prosper at the College. Achievement rates remain high and are improving for all provision types. Whilst it is too early to make predictions about the achievement rates for 2023/24, there is no reason not to expect the upward trends of the last few years to continue.

Curriculum Developments

In 2023/24 the main curriculum and College achievements were:

- Outstanding outcomes from Ofsted Inspection (summer term 2024) including the quality of education.
- High and improving achievement rates for all provision types: 16-18, adults, HE and apprenticeships.
- Outstanding teaching, learning and assessment evidenced by feedback from inspection and the outstanding outcomes for learners.
- Outstanding Higher Education provision evidenced by exceptional percentage of first and upper first-class degrees and National Student Survey (NSS) results.
- Selection for the Expert Provider of Apprenticeships pilot.

The College continues to develop its curriculum and offers courses in all fifteen subject sector areas. The most significant areas of the College's work are A-Levels, Preparation for Life and Work, Engineering and Construction, Visual and Performing Arts, Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy, Health and Social Care and Business. A particular strength is in making students ready for the next stage in their lives, whether this is employment or higher education. At regional level, the College will continue to collaborate with the Association of Liverpool City Region Colleges (AoLCRC) and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) to deliver the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the Long-Term Skills Plan, including Freeport and the Skills Investment Zone opportunities.

In 2023/24 provision has been offered at the Kingsway site, the Cronton site and CRMz, a specialist learning environment.

The College is currently implementing a phased approach to property development following an in-depth appraisal of accommodation on all existing sites. This has resulted in improved accommodation and facilities on all sites.

Since 2017 the College has invested over £30m in teaching and learning facilities including the Health, Well-being, and Sports Centre at Cronton and the Hydrogen Centre at Riverside.

Strategic Report *(continued)*

Current and Future Development and Performance *(continued)*

Curriculum Developments *(continued)*

In 2024/25 the College plans to invest £19m in improving the Kingsway facade, constructing a Green Technology Centre at Kingsway and creating a new Music Hub and teaching block at Cronton.

Apprenticeships are offered in over 26 standards. There are over 500 learners accessing apprenticeships, working with over 500 employers, most recently Science, Technologies, Facilities Council (STFC) Daresbury, and Warrington and Halton NHS Trusts.

The College continues to work closely with local universities to develop and deliver a range of foundation degrees and higher education provision delivered on employers' premises.

The College continues to expand its higher education offer and has introduced Media Make-up, Engineering, IT, Education and Health and Social Care at levels 4, 5 and 6.

Payment Performance

The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, requires colleges, in the absence of agreement to the contrary, to make payments to suppliers within 30 days of either the provision of goods or services or the date on which the invoice was received. The target set by the Treasury for payment to suppliers within 30 days is 95 percent. During the accounting period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024, the College paid 92 percent of its invoices (>5,700) within 30 days. The College incurred no interest charges in respect of late payment for this period.

Events after the end of the reporting period

There were no post-balance sheet events which affect the basis of the calculation of the financial statements.

Future Developments

The College governors approved a financial plan and cash-flow in July 2024 which sets out objectives for the period to July 2027. The College aims to maintain its health rating of outstanding and achieve surpluses in each year. The plan includes estimates of the impact of rising costs on college finances with reductions in 'at risk' income and increases in costs to ensure the estate remains in good or better condition. All agreed capital expenditure remains in the plan and cash-flow, including the capital projects for which the College has been given grant funding. Flexibility has been built into the plan so that the College is able to respond to rapid and demanding changes, such as decreasing numbers of students or rising capital costs.

The College has planned income of £28,671,000 for 2024/25 from mainstream activity. This represents growth in 16-18 student numbers over 2023/24 and, because funding is lagged, will increase student numbers in 2025/26. With improvements to facilities and classroom capacity, there is no reason to suggest that this increase will not be sustained over the next three years.

The College's aim is to increase its contribution by introducing a number of efficiency measures across the College sites, including improved timetabling, class sizes, staff utilisation and procurement measures. The College would like to reduce dependency on mainstream activity and is seeking opportunities, particularly in the areas where the College currently performs well, such as Higher Education and full cost work.

Resources

The College has various resources that it can deploy in pursuit of its strategic objectives. Tangible resources include the College sites at Kingsway and Cronton.

Strategic Report *(continued)*

Current and Future Development and Performance *(continued)*

Resources *(continued)*

Financial

At the balance sheet date, the College has £34.8m of net assets (including £0m defined benefit pension liability) and is debt free.

People

The College employs 416 people (expressed as full-time equivalents), of whom 288 are teaching staff.

Reputation

The College has a good reputation locally and nationally. The College was graded outstanding by Ofsted following their visit in April 2024 and recently achieved a 93.8% student satisfaction rating for its HE delivery. Maintaining a quality brand is essential for the College's success in attracting students and improving external relationships.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The College has well developed strategies for managing risk and strives to embed risk management in all that it does. Risk management processes are designed to protect its assets, reputation, and financial stability. The governing body has overall responsibility for risk management and its approach to managing risks and internal controls is explained in the Statement on Corporate Governance.

Based on the strategic plan, the Risk Management Group undertakes a comprehensive review of the risks to which the College is exposed. It identifies systems and procedures, including specific preventable actions which should mitigate any potential impact on the College. The internal controls are then implemented, and the subsequent year's appraisal will review their effectiveness and progress against risk mitigating actions. In addition to the annual review, at each meeting, the Risk Management Group also considers any risks which may arise as a result of the College undertaking work in a new area or from changes to the external environment.

A key risk and sub risk-register are maintained at college level which are reviewed at each meeting of the Audit Committee and the Board. The risk registers identify the key risks, the likelihood of those risks occurring, their potential impact on the College and the actions being taken to reduce and mitigate the risks. Risks are prioritised using a consistent scoring system and rag-rating. This is supported by a risk management training programme to raise awareness of risk throughout the College.

Outlined below is a description of the principal risk factors that may affect the College. Not all the factors are within the College's control. Other factors besides those listed below may also adversely affect the College. Clearly over-arching these risks are the additional effects that the changing political landscape and qualification reform will have on the operations of the College. There are concerns about the volatility of recruitment, catch-up learning, fee income and extra costs. Contingencies have been built into planning processes to ensure the College has the flexibility to respond to rapid changes in Skills needs. Colleges are vital to this recovery.

1. Government Funding

The College has considerable reliance on continued Government funding. In 2023/24 approximately 80% of the College's revenue was ultimately publicly funded and this level of requirement is expected to continue in 2024/25. There can be no assurance that government policy or practice will remain the same or that public funding will continue at the same levels or on the same terms. The College is aware of several issues which may impact on College structure and future funding, including apprenticeship reforms and the introduction of T levels.

Strategic Report (*continued*)

Current and Future Development and Performance (*continued*)

Principal Risks and Uncertainties (*continued*)

1. Government funding (*continued*)

These risks are mitigated in a number of ways:

- Preparing prudent financial plans for future years which include current best estimates of any reductions in funding.
- By ensuring the College is rigorous in delivering high quality education and training.
- Considerable focus and investment is placed on maintaining and managing key relationships with the various funding bodies.
- Actively seeking to diversify the College's income streams to reduce the dependence on core funding.
- Ensuring the College is focused on those priority sectors which will continue to benefit from public funding.

2. Failure to achieve planned retention, pass and achievement rates.

The College has demonstrated improvements in learner's performance in recent years and has set challenging targets for increasing achievement rates over the next three years. Its ability to achieve these targets will be directly affected by the quality of teaching and learning and the availability of adequate resources.

This risk is mitigated in a number of ways:

- By ensuring that key performance indicators are rigorously set and monitored.
- Ensuring that action plans are addressed both efficiently and effectively.
- By ensuring that there are adequate resources within the College to effect changes to accommodation and equipment in line with curriculum need.

3. Maintain adequate funding of pension liabilities

The value of assets in the scheme may be significantly affected by the impact governmental policies on investment values and will be closely monitored throughout the coming year.

To mitigate these risks the Financial Statements, report the share of the Local Government Pension scheme on the College's balance sheet in line with the requirements of FRS102. This risk is mitigated by an agreed plan for the recovery of any deficit with the Cheshire Pension Fund.

Stakeholder Relationships

In line with other colleges and with universities, the College has many stakeholders. These include:

- Students (past, current, and future)
- Education sector funding bodies: Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Office for Students (OfS)
- Ofsted
- Local Authority: Halton Borough Council
- Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA)
- Staff and their trade unions: National Education Union (NEU), University and College Union (UCU) and Unison

Strategic Report *(continued)*

Stakeholder Relationships *(continued)*

- Partner schools: Halton - Wade Deacon High School, Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic High School, Ormiston Chadwick Academy, Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy, Sandymoor Ormiston Academy, The Heath School, The Grange Academy, St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School, The Bridge School, Chesnut Lodge School, The Cavendish High Academy, Ashley High School. Out of borough – Halewood Academy (Wade Deacon Trust)
- Partner universities: Staffordshire University, Liverpool University and Liverpool John Moore's University
- Local employers: Scottish Power, Merseyside Police, Howdens, Plus Dane, National Health Service, Bell Group and Bloor Homes
- The wider College community
- Association of Liverpool City Region Colleges (AoLCRC): Wirral Metropolitan College, Southport College, City of Liverpool College, Hugh Baird College, Carmel College, and SK College Group

The College recognises the importance of these relationships and engages in regular communication with them through the College internet and intranet sites and by meetings.

Equality & Diversity

The College is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all learners and staff. The College respects and values positively differences between individuals. The College's Equality & Diversity Policy (and accompanying Codes of Practice) sets out how it will work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation, promote equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations between those people who have a protected characteristic and those who have not. The implementation of this Policy is sufficiently resourced and is monitored on a regular basis by management and governors.

Disability Statement

The College seeks to achieve the objectives set down in the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Special Education Needs and Disability Acts 2001 and 2005.

- a) As part of its accommodation strategy the College regularly undertakes access audits.
- b) The College has an Additional Learning Support Co-ordinator, who provides information, advice and arranges support where necessary for students with disabilities.
- c) There is a list of specialist equipment, such as radio aids, which the College can make available for use by students and a range of assistive technology is available through the Additional Learning Support office.
- d) Outline guidance on admissions is described in the College's Equality and Diversity Policy. Appeals against a decision not to offer a place are dealt with under the complaints policy.
- e) The College has made a significant investment in the appointment of specialist lecturers to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are a number of student support assistants who can provide a variety of support for learning. There is a continuing programme of staff development to ensure the provision of a high level of appropriate support for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- f) Specialist programmes are described in college prospectuses, and achievements and destinations are recorded and published in the standard College format.

Strategic Report (continued)

Disability Statement (continued)

- g) Counselling and welfare services are described in the College Student Guide, which is issued to students at induction, together with leaflets on the complaints and disciplinary procedures.

Trade Union Facility Time

The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 require the College to publish information on facility time arrangements for trade union officials at the College.

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024	Full-time equivalent employee number
2	1

Percentage of time spent on facility time.

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	0
1-50%	2
51%-99%	0
100%	0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Total cost of facility time	£9,878
Total pay bill	£19.8m
Provide the percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time, calculated as: <i>(total cost of facility time ÷ total pay bill) x 100</i>	0.05%

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours calculated as: <i>(total hours spent on paid trade union activities by relevant union officials during the relevant period ÷ total paid facility time hours) x 100</i>	16%
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Events after the reporting period

There were no events after the reporting date.

Strategic Report *(continued)*

Disclosure of information to auditors

The governors who held office at the date of approval of this report confirm that, so far as they are each aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the College's auditors are unaware. Each governor has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the College's auditors are aware of that information.

Approved by order of the Board of Governors on 9th December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil McGrath', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Neil McGrath
Chair

Governance Statement

The following statement is provided to enable readers of the annual report and accounts of the College to obtain a better understanding of its governance and legal structure. This statement covers the period from 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Governance Code

The College endeavours to conduct its business:

- In accordance with the seven principals identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership).
- In full accordance with the guidance to colleges from the Association of Colleges (AoC) in The Code of Good Governance (“the Code”).

In the opinion of the governors, the College complies with all the provisions of the Code, and it has complied throughout the year ended 31st July 2024. Whilst not having adopted the UK Corporate Governance Code 2018, the Corporation has due regard to its principles and guidance. This opinion is based upon an external review of governance reported to the Board on 8th July 2024. This external review of governance was undertaken by Chris Jones Consultancy Ltd. The Governing Body recognises that, as a body entrusted with both public and private funds, it has a particular duty to observe the highest standards of corporate governance at all times. In carrying out its responsibilities, it takes full account of The Code of Good Governance issued by AoC in 2023, which was formally adopted by the Board on 9th October 2023; prior to this date the Board complied with the previous version of the Code.

Governance Statement (continued)

The Corporation

The members who served on the Corporation during the year and up to the date of signature of this report were as listed in the table below.

Name	Date of Appointment	Term of Office	Date of Resignation	Status of Appointment	Committees Served	Attendance
Katie Anderson	01.06.2023	4 years		External	Quality & Standards (from Sept 2023)	Board: 80% Q&S: 33%
Michele Bacon	09.07.2018 04.07.2022	4 years 4 years		External	Quality & Standards (from Dec 2018 – Chair from Dec 2019); Search & Governance (from Sept 2021); Remuneration (from Sept 2021). Vice-Chair of Board from Aug 2021	Board: 100% S&G: 100% Rem: 100% Q&S: 100%
Karen Banks	10.07.2017 06.07.2021	4 years 4 years		External	Audit (from Sept 2017 – Chair from Sept 2021); Quality & Standards (from Nov 2017); Search & Governance (from Sept 2021); Remuneration (from Sept 2021). Vice-Chair of Board from Aug 2021	Board: 100% Audit: 100% S&G: 100% Rem: 50% Q&S: 66%
David Copeland	14.12.2022	2 years		Staff	Quality and Standards (from Dec 2022)	Board: 100% Q&S: 66%
Jayne Edwards	12.10.2020	4 years	31.7.24	External	Audit (from Oct 2020) and Quality & Standards (from Oct 2020)	Board: 80% Audit: 50% Q&S: 100%
	01.08.2024	1 year		Co-Opted	Audit (from Aug 2024)	
Millie Hargate	14.10.2024	1 year		Student	Quality & Standards (from Sept 2024)	N/A
Paul Leatherbarrow	01.09.2024	4 years		External	Audit (from Sept 2024)	N/A
Andrew MacManus	06.07.2020 06.06.2024	4 years 4 years		External	Finance & Resources (from Jul 2020 to Jul 2021) and Audit (from Sept 2021)	Board: 100% Audit: 100%
Neil McGrath	18.07.2011 07.07.2015 07.07.2019 06.07.2021	4 years 4 years 2 years 4 years		External	Vice-Chair of Board (from Oct 2019 to Jul 2021); Chair of Board (from Aug 2021); Audit (from Sept 2011 to Jul 2021 - Chair from Sept 2011 to Sept 2015 and from Sept 2017 to Jul 2021); Search & Governance (from Oct 2019); Remuneration (from Jul 2020); Finance & Resources (from Sept 2021).	Board: 100% S&G: 100% Rem: 100% F&R: 66%

Governance Statement (continued)

The Corporation (continued)

Name	Date of Appointment	Term of Office	Date of Resignation	Status of Appointment	Committees Served	Attendance
Tom McInerney	04.07.2016 06.07.2020 06.07.2024	4 years 4 years 4 years		External	Audit (from Sept 2016 to Jul 2021) and Quality & Standards (from Nov 2016 – Chair from Dec 2018 to Dec 2019)	Board: 80% Q&S: 100%
Mary Murphy	01.09.2013	In post		Principal	Finance & Resources (from Sept 2013) and Search & Governance (from Sept 2013)	Board: 80% S&G: 100% F&R: 100%
Rachael Owen	01.09.2023	4 years		External	Audit (from Sept 2023)	Board: 100% Audit: 80%
Stephen Parkinson	01.09.2024	1 year		Co-Opted	Quality & Standards (from Sept 2024)	N/A
Chris Sikorski	18.12.2018 15.03.2020 15.03.2020 27.03.2023	2 years 2 years 2 years 2 years		Staff	Finance & Resources (from Sept 2021)	Board: 100% F&R: 100%
Susan Smith	04.07.2016 06.07.2020 07.07.2022 08.07.2024	4 years 2 years 2 years 1 year		External	Finance & Resources (from Nov 2016 and Chair from Dec 2021) and Remuneration (from Oct 2019 and Chair from Oct 2019 to July 2024)	Board: 80% Rem: 100% F&R: 100%
Lucy White	09.10.2023	1 year	31.07.24 – term of office expired	Student	Quality & Standards (from Oct 2023)	Board: 80% Q&S: 66%
Sarah Worsley	10.10.2022 09.10.2023	1 year 2 years	31.07.2023 – term of office expired	Student	Quality & Standards (from Oct 2021 to July 2022) Quality & Standards (from Oct 2023)	Board: 100% Q&S: 66%
Stephen Young	10.10.2023	4 years		External	Finance & Resources (from Sept 2023)	Board: 100% F&R: 33%

Governance Statement *(continued)*

Governance Framework

It is the Board's responsibility to bring independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance, resources, and standards of conduct.

The Board is provided with regular and timely data on the overall financial performance of the College, together with other information such as performance against funding targets, proposed capital expenditure, quality matters and personnel-related matters such as health and safety and environmental issues. The Board meets four times a year.

The Board conducts its business through a number of committees. Each committee has terms of reference, which have been approved by the Board. These committees are Quality & Standards, Finance & Resources, Remuneration, Search & Governance and Audit. Minutes of all meetings, except those deemed to be confidential by the Board, are available on the College's website: www.riversidecollege.ac.uk or from the Clerk to the Governors at:

Riverside College Halton
Kingsway
Widnes
Cheshire WA8 7QQ

The Clerk to the Governors maintains a register of financial and personal interests of the governors. The register is available for inspection at the above address.

All governors are able to take independent professional advice in furtherance of their duties at the College's expense and have access to the Clerk to the Governors, who is responsible to the Board for ensuring compliance with all applicable procedures and regulations. The appointment, evaluation and removal of the Clerk are matters for the Board as a whole.

Formal agendas, papers and reports are supplied to governors in a timely manner prior to Board meetings. Briefings are also provided on an ad hoc basis.

The Board has a strong and independent non-executive element, and no individual or group dominates its decision-making process. The Board considers that each of its external members is independent of management and free from any business or other relationship which could materially interfere with the exercise of their independent judgement.

There is a clear division of responsibility in that the roles of the Chair and Principal/Accounting Officer are separate.

The College's Financial Regulations were amended in July 2024. All changes to procedures were approved by the Board on the recommendation of the Finance & Resources Committee.

Appointments to the Board

Any new appointments to the Board are a matter for the consideration of the Board as a whole. The Board has a Search & Governance Committee, consisting of four governors, which is responsible for the selection and nomination of any new member for the Board's consideration. The Board is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is provided as required.

Governors are appointed for a term of office not exceeding four years. Reappointments are only made after consideration by the Search and Governance Committee of issues such as individual attendance and contribution, which then makes a recommendation to the full Board.

There are a small number of individuals who have served in excess of the accepted norm of two 4-year terms of office. The Board is mindful of the need to refresh its membership but also considers the retention of such governors to be beneficial for the experience and corporate knowledge that they possess.

Governance Statement *(continued)*

Corporation Performance

The Board is engaged in a continuous review of its own effectiveness. Processes are reviewed at least annually to ensure that they meet best practice and incorporate current initiatives (e.g., the Code).

A detailed process is undertaken each year which assesses performance of individuals, the Board, committees, and the Chair against recognised criteria (including the elements of the Code of Good Governance). The outcomes of this exercise form part of the governance and training development plan for the next academic year, progress on which is monitored by the Search & Governance Committee.

A productive strategic development event took place in February 2024. The Board and Clerk to Governors continue to access the variety of training opportunities that are made available, primarily via the Education and Training Foundation and the Association of Colleges. The Board carried out a favourable self-assessment of its own performance for the year ended 31st July 2024. An external governance review was undertaken by Chris Jones Consultancy Ltd in 2023/2024 and governance was assessed to be effective. A summary of the findings from this review is available on the College's website.

The College's leadership and management (including governance) was inspected as part of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework visit in April 2024 and graded as 'Outstanding'.

Remuneration Committee

Throughout the year ending 31 July 2024, the College's Remuneration Committee comprised four governors, including the Chair of the Board.

The Committee's responsibilities are to make recommendations to the Board on the remuneration and benefits of the Principal/Accounting Officer, other senior post-holders and the Clerk to the Governors. The Board has complied with the requirements of the AoC's Senior Staff Remuneration Code for 2023/2024, and a separate report is presented to its December meeting.

Details of the remuneration of the senior post-holders for the year ended 31 July 2024 are set out in note 6 to the financial statements.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee comprised of four governors (excluding the Principal, the Chair and the staff and student governors). The Committee operates in accordance with written terms of reference approved by the Board and based on the requirements of the Education Skills Funding Agency's Post-16 Audit Code of Practice.

The Audit Committee meets as a minimum on a termly basis and provides a forum for reporting by the College's internal, regularity and financial statements auditors, who have access to the Committee for independent discussion, without the presence of college management. The Committee also receives and considers reports from the main FE funding bodies as they affect the College's business.

The College's internal auditors review the systems of internal control, risk management controls and governance processes in accordance with an agreed plan of input and report their findings to management and the Audit Committee.

Management is responsible for the implementation of agreed audit recommendations and internal audit undertakes periodic follow-up reviews to ensure that any such recommendations have been implemented.

The Audit Committee also advises the Board on the appointment of internal auditors, reporting accountants and financial statements auditors and their remuneration for both audit and non-audit work as well as reporting annually to the Board.

Governance Statement *(continued)*

Audit Committee *(continued)*

The Audit Committee met four times in the year to 31st July 2024. The members of the committee and their attendance records are shown below:

Name	Meeting Attendance
Karen Banks	100%
Jayne Edwards	50%
Andrew MacManus	100%
Rachael Owen	75%

Internal Control

Scope of Responsibility

The Board is ultimately responsible for the College's system of internal control and for reviewing its effectiveness. However, such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The Board has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Principal, as Accounting Officer, for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the College's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which she is personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to her in the Funding Agreement between Riverside College and the funding bodies. These include ensuring regularity and propriety in the use of public funding and carrying out annual reviews. The Principal is also responsible for reporting to the Board any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of College policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place at Riverside College for the year ended 31 July 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The Board has reviewed the key risks to which the College is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating, and managing the College's significant risks that has been in place for the period ended 31 July 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts. This process is regularly reviewed by the Audit Committee and the Board.

The Risk and Control Framework

The system of internal control is based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures including the segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- comprehensive budgeting systems with an annual budget, which are reviewed and agreed by the Board;
- regular reviews by the Board of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined capital investment control guidelines;
- the adoption of formal project management disciplines, where appropriate.

Governance Statement *(continued)*

Internal Control *(continued)*

The Risk and Control Framework (continued)

The College has appointed an internal audit service provider, which operates in accordance with the requirements of the ESFA's Post 16 Audit Code of Practice. The work of the internal audit service is informed by an analysis of the risks to which the College is exposed, and annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. The analysis of risks and the internal audit plans are endorsed by the Board on the recommendation of the audit committee. At minimum, annually, the Head of Internal Audit (HIA) provides the Board with a report on internal audit activity in the College, includes an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's systems of risk management, controls and governance processes.

Risks Faced by the College

Through a robust risk management framework, risks are identified and measures to mitigate those risks are implemented by management. The Board monitors the effectiveness of the controls through the work of the Audit Committee which receives a detailed report on risk management at each meeting.

An analysis of the College's financial risks is prepared each year and is considered by the Board alongside the proposed budget.

Reports to governors include details of the respective risks involved and how these could be minimised. Regular updates on performance against each of the College's key objectives is received and monitored by the Board.

The key risks the Board faces are detailed in the Strategic Report. In summary these are to remain financially stable, to provide an outstanding curriculum and to ensure the College is in a strong position to be able to respond to opportunities. In achieving these aims, the Board is mindful of challenges such as (i) the national qualification reform, (ii) a newly elected Government in July 2024 and potential changes to future funding (iii) the on-going global tensions and unrest.

Control Weaknesses Identified

No control weaknesses were identified in 2023/2024.

Responsibilities under Accountability Agreements

The College receives funding from the following Government agencies – ESFA, Office for Students, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. All reconciliation targets associated with these funding sources were either met or exceeded in 2023/24. No significant areas for improvement were identified as a result of any audits of this provision.

The Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency introduced new controls for the college on 29th November 2022 on the day that the Office for National Statistics reclassified colleges as public sector organisations in the national accounts. The ESFA chief executive communicated these changes to all college accounting officers and explained plans to introduce a college financial handbook in 2024. The college has reviewed its policies, procedures and approval processes in line with the new requirements to ensure there are systems in place to identify and handle any transactions for which DfE approval is required.

Statement from the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee has advised the Board that the College has an effective framework for governance, internal control, and risk management in place. The audit committee believes the Board has effective internal controls in place.

Governance Statement *(continued)*

Statement from the Audit Committee *(continued)*

The specific areas of work undertaken by the audit committee in 2023/2024 and up to the date of the approval of the financial statements are: HR Performance Management, 16-18 Student Journey from Enquiry to Enrolment, Financial Planning and Budgetary Control, Examinations, Marketing Strategy, Key Financial Controls, Student Voice and follow up on previous internal audit recommendations. In respect of all internal audits College management and the Audit Committee received substantial assurance that the areas of the control environment tested during the respective audits were designed and operated effectively with no significant weaknesses.

Review of effectiveness

As the Accounting Officer, the Principal has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. Her review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- the work of the internal auditors;
- the work of the executive managers within the College who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework;
- comments made by the College's financial statements auditors, the reporting accountant for regularity assurance, the appointed funding auditors in their management letters and other reports.

The Accounting Officer has been advised on the implications of the result of their review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Audit Committee, which oversees the work of the internal auditor and other sources of assurance, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

The senior management team receives reports setting out key performance and risk indicators and considers possible control issues brought to their attention by early warning mechanisms, which are embedded within the departments and reinforced by risk awareness training. The senior management team and the Audit Committee also receive regular reports from internal audits and other sources of assurance, which include recommendations for improvement.

The Audit Committee's role in this area is confined to a high-level review of the arrangements for internal control. The Board's agenda includes a regular item for consideration of risk and control and receives reports thereon from the senior management team and the Audit Committee. The emphasis is on obtaining the relevant degree of assurance and not merely reporting by exception. At its October 2024 meeting, the Board carried out the annual assessment for the year ended 31st July 2024 by considering documentation from the senior management team and internal audit and taking account of events since 31st July 2024

Based on the advice of the Audit Committee and the Accounting Officer, the Board is of the opinion that the College has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control, and has fulfilled its statutory responsibility for "the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the body and the safeguarding of their assets".

Approved by order of the Board of Governors on 9th December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Neil McGrath
Chair



Mary Murphy
Principal

Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance

As accounting officer, I confirm that the corporation has had due regard to the framework of authorities governing regularity, propriety and compliance and the requirements of the college's accountability agreement, funding agreements and contracts with ESFA and DfE, and has considered its responsibility to notify ESFA of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with those authorities and terms and conditions of funding.

I confirm on behalf of the corporation that after due enquiry and to the best of my knowledge I am able to identify any material, irregular or improper use of the funds by the corporation or material non-compliance with the framework of authorities and the terms and conditions of funding under the college's accountability agreement, funding agreements and contracts with ESFA and DfE, or any other public funder. This includes the elements outlined in the "Dear accounting officer" letter of 29 November 2022 and ESFA bite-size guides.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety, funding non-compliance or non-compliance with the framework of authorities have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement these will be notified to ESFA.



Mary Murphy
Accounting Officer

Date: 9th December 2024

Statement of the Chair of Governors

On behalf of the corporation, I confirm that the Accounting Officer has discussed their statement of regularity, propriety, and compliance with the board and that I am content that it is materially accurate.



Neil McGrath
Chair of Governors

Date: 9th December 2024

Statement of Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation

The members of the corporation are required to present audited financial statements for each financial year.

Within the terms and conditions of the college's accountability agreement, funding agreements and contracts with the ESFA, DfE and any other relevant funding bodies, the corporation is required to prepare financial statements which give a true and fair view of the financial performance and position of the corporation for the relevant period. Corporations must also prepare a strategic report which includes an operating and financial review of the year. The basis for the preparation of the financial statements and strategic report are the *Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting for Further and Higher Education* and with the *ESFA's college accounts direction and the UK's Generally Accepted Accounting Practice*.

In preparing the financial statements, the corporation is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- assess whether the corporation is a going concern, noting the key supporting assumptions, qualifications or mitigating actions, as appropriate
- prepare financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to assume that the corporation will continue in operation

The corporation is also required to prepare a strategic report, in accordance with paragraphs 3.23 to 3.27 of the FE and HE SORP, that describes what it is trying to do and how it is going about it, including information about the legal and administrative status of the corporation.

The corporation is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the corporation, and which enable it to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation including the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and Charities Act 2011, and relevant accounting standards. It is responsible for taking steps that are reasonably open to it to safeguard its assets and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The corporation is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of its websites; the work carried out by the auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and, accordingly, auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the corporation are responsible for ensuring that expenditure and income are applied for the purposes intended and that the financial transactions conform to the authorities that govern them. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring that funds from the ESFA, DfE, and any other public funds, are used only in accordance with the accountability agreement, funding agreements and contracts and any other conditions, that may be prescribed from time to time by ESFA, or any other public funder, including that any transactions entered into by the corporation are within the delegated authorities set out in the "Dear accounting officer" letter of 29 November 2022 and ESFA's bite-size guides. Members of the corporation must ensure that there are appropriate financial and management controls in place in order to safeguard public and other funds and to ensure they are used properly. In addition, members of the corporation are responsible for securing economical, efficient, and effective management of the corporation's resources and expenditure, so that the benefits that should be derived from the application of public funds from the ESFA, DfE and other public bodies are not put at risk.

Approved by order of the members of the corporation on 9th December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Neil McGrath
Chair of Governors

Independent Auditor's Report to the Board of Governors of Riverside College Halton

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Riverside College Halton (the "College") for the year ended 31 July 2024 which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure, the Statement of Changes in Reserves, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements including a summary of significant accounting policies in Note 1. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the College's affairs as at 31 July 2024 and of the College's income and expenditure, gains and losses, and changes in reserves and cash flows, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with 2019 Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting for Further and Higher Education, Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and the Accounts Direction, for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 August 2019, issued by the Office for Students.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the College in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Board of Governors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the College's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Board of Governors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Report and Financial Statements other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Board of Governors is responsible for the other information contained within the Report and Financial Statements. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Office for Students' Accounts Direction

We are required to report on the following matters by the Office for Students' Accounts Direction. In our opinion, in all material respects:

- funds from whatever source administered by the College for specific purposes have been properly applied to those purposes and managed in accordance with relevant legislation;
- funds provided by the Office for Students, UK Research and Innovation (including Research England), the Education and Skills Funding Agency and Department for Education have been applied in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions; and
- the requirements of the Office for Students' Accounts Direction for the relevant year's financial statements have been met.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- proper accounting records have not been kept;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations required for our audit.

Further, we are required by the Office for Students' Accounts Direction to report to you if the results of our audit work indicate that the College's expenditure on access and participation activities for the financial year disclosed in Note 7a has been materially misstated.

- We are also required by the Office for Students' Accounts Direction to report to you where the results of our audit work indicate that the College's grant and fee income, as disclosed in Note 2 to the financial statements has been materially misstated.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Responsibilities of the Board of Governors of Riverside College Halton

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation set out on page 24, the Board of Governors is responsible for the preparation of financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Board of Governors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Board of Governors is responsible for assessing the College's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Board of Governors either intends to liquidate the College or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The objectives of our audit are to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding compliance with laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, to perform audit procedures to help identify instances of non-compliance with other laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements, and to respond appropriately to identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations identified during the audit.

In relation to fraud, the objectives of our audit are to identify and assess the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud, to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud through designing and implementing appropriate responses and to respond appropriately to fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit.

However, it is the primary responsibility of management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, to ensure that the entity's operations are conducted in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations and for the prevention and detection of fraud.

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud, the audit engagement team:

- obtained an understanding of the nature of the sector, including the legal and regulatory frameworks that the College operates in and how the College is complying with the legal and regulatory frameworks;
- inquired of management, and those charged with governance, about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, including any known actual, suspected or alleged instances of fraud; and
- discussed matters about non-compliance with laws and regulations and how fraud might occur including assessment of how and where the financial statements may be susceptible to fraud.

As a result of these procedures we consider the most significant laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the financial statements are FRS 102, Further and Higher Education SORP, the College Accounts Direction published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and Regulatory Advice 9:

Accounts Direction published by the Office for Students'. We performed audit procedures to detect non-compliances which may have a material impact on the financial statements which included reviewing financial statement disclosures.

The College is also subject to many other laws and regulations where the consequences of non-compliance could have a material impact on amounts or disclosures in the financial statements, including Further and Higher Education Act 1992, Charities Act 2011, taxation legislation, data protection, anti-bribery, employment, environmental and health and safety legislation. We performed audit procedures to inquire of management and those charged with governance whether the College is in compliance with these laws and regulations and inspected correspondence with licensing or regulatory authorities.

The audit engagement team identified the risk of management override of controls and revenue recognition as the areas where the financial statements were most susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. Audit procedures performed included, but were not limited to, testing manual journal entries and other adjustments and evaluating the business rationale in relation to significant, unusual transactions and transactions entered into outside the normal course of business, challenging judgments and estimates and inspecting funding agreements and allocations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at <http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Board of Governors, as a body, in accordance with the Funding Agreement published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and our engagement letter dated 10 June 2024. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Board of Governors, as a body, those matters we are engaged to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Board of Governors, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Beever and Struthers

BEEVER AND STRUTHERS

One Express

1 George Leigh Street

Manchester

M4 5DL

Date: 18/12/24

Reporting Accountant's Report on Regularity

To: The Board of Governors of Riverside College Halton and Secretary of State for Education acting through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (the ESFA)

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 10 June 2024 and further to the requirements and conditions of funding in the ESFA's grant funding agreements and contracts, or those of any other public funder, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether anything has come to our attention that would suggest, in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received by Riverside College Halton during the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 have not been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

The framework that has been applied is set out in the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice ("the Code") issued by the ESFA and in any relevant conditions of funding concerning adult education notified by a relevant funder. In line with this framework, our work has specifically not considered income received from the main funding grants generated through the Individualised Learner Record data returns, for which the ESFA or devolved authority has other assurance arrangements in place.

This report is made solely to the Board of Governors of Riverside College Halton and the ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Board of Governors of Riverside College Halton and the ESFA those matters we are required to state in a report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Board of Governors of Riverside College Halton and the ESFA for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Riverside College Halton and the reporting accountant

The Board of Governors of Riverside College Halton is responsible, under the requirements of the Further & Higher Education Act 1992, subsequent legislation and related regulations and guidance, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received are applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the Code. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Code issued by the ESFA. We performed a limited assurance engagement as defined in that framework.

The objective of a limited assurance engagement is to perform such procedures as to obtain information and explanations in order to provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express a negative conclusion on regularity.

A limited assurance engagement is more limited in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in a reasonable assurance engagement. Accordingly, we do not express a positive opinion.

Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity of the college's income and expenditure.

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- Documenting the framework of authorities which govern the activities of the Board of Governors;
- Undertaking a risk assessment based on our understanding of the general control environment and any weaknesses in internal controls identified by our audit of the financial statements;
- Reviewing the self-assessment questionnaire which supports the representations included in the Chair of Governors and Accounting Officer's statement on regularity, propriety and compliance with the framework of authorities;
- Testing a sample of transactions with related parties;

- Confirming through enquiry and sample testing that the Board of Governors has complied with its procurement policies and that these policies comply with delegated authorities; and
- Reviewing any evidence of impropriety resulting from our work and determining whether it was significant enough to be referred to in our regularity report.

This work was integrated with our audit of the financial statements and evidence was also derived from the conduct of that audit to the extent it supports the regularity conclusion.

Conclusion

In the course of our work nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Signed:

Beever and Struthers

BEEVER AND STRUTHERS
One Express
1 George Leigh Street
Manchester
M4 5DL
Date: 18/12/24

**Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure
for the year ended 31 July 2024**

	<i>Note</i>	2024 £	2023 £
Income			
Funding body grants	2	30,648,397	28,752,879
Tuition fees and education contracts	3	2,015,272	2,076,630
Other income	4	1,712,132	1,261,779
FRS102 Interest	17	280,000	70,000
Investment income	5	1,262,269	476,462
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total income		35,918,070	32,637,750
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Expenditure			
Staff costs	6	19,803,859	17,985,272
Other operating expenses	7	9,457,398	9,404,127
Depreciation	10	1,589,057	1,350,955
Interest and other finance costs	8	41,537	49,249
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total expenditure		30,891,851	28,789,603
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Surplus before other gains and losses		5,026,219	3,848,147
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Surplus before tax		5,026,219	3,848,147
Taxation	9	-	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Surplus for the year		5,026,219	3,848,147
Actuarial (loss)/gain in respect of pensions	16/17	(688,315)	110,000
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total comprehensive income for the year		4,337,904	3,958,147
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Represented by:			
Unrestricted comprehensive income		4,337,904	3,958,147
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		4,337,904	3,958,147
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

All items of income and expenditure relate to continuing activities.

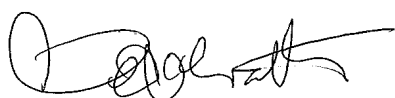
**Statement of Changes in Reserves
for the year ended 31 July 2024**

	Income and expenditure account £
Balance at 31 July 2023	30,424,466
Surplus from the income and expenditure account	5,026,219
Other comprehensive income	(688,315)
Total comprehensive income for the year	4,337,904
	=====
Balance at 31 July 2024	34,762,370
	=====
Previous Year comparative	
Balance at 1 August 2022	26,382,233
Surplus from the income and expenditure account	3,848,147
Other comprehensive income	110,000
Total comprehensive income for the year	3,958,147
Enhanced pension actuarial gain	84,086
	=====
Balance at 31 July 2023	30,424,466
	=====

Balance Sheet
as at 31 July 2024

	<i>Note</i>	2024 £	2023 £
Non-current assets			
Tangible fixed assets	10	25,287,038	23,179,031
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		25,287,038	23,179,031
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	11	1,099,604	1,014,117
Investments	12	4,000,000	14,120,235
Cash and cash equivalents	18	26,208,815	7,646,005
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		31,308,419	22,780,357
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	(14,055,972)	(9,460,964)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net current assets		17,252,447	13,319,393
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total assets less current liabilities		42,539,485	36,498,424
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	14	(7,008,780)	(5,316,037)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Provisions			
Other provisions	16	(768,335)	(757,921)
Defined benefit obligations	17	-	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total net assets		34,762,370	30,424,466
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Unrestricted reserves			
Income and expenditure account		34,762,370	30,424,466
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total unrestricted reserves		34,762,370	30,424,466
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The financial statements on pages 30 to 55 were approved and authorised for issue by the Corporation on 9th December 2024 and were signed on its behalf on that date by:



.....
Neil McGrath
Chair of Governors



.....
Mary Murphy
Accounting Officer

Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ended 31 July 2024

	<i>Note</i>	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flow from operating activities			
Surplus for the year		5,026,219	3,848,147
Adjustment for non-cash items			
Depreciation	10	1,589,057	1,350,955
Pension costs less contributions payable		(435,796)	110,000
Increase in debtors		(85,487)	(331,475)
Increase in creditors due within one year		4,745,008	3,386,083
Increase/(decrease) in creditors due after one year		1,742,742	(67,865)
Decrease in provisions		-	(49,219)
Adjustment for investing or financing activities			
Investment income	5	(1,262,269)	(476,462)
Pension interest	17	(280,000)	-
Interest payable	8	41,537	49,249
Net cash flow from operating activities		<u>11,081,011</u>	<u>7,819,413</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Investment income	5	1,262,269	476,462
New deposits	12	(4,000,000)	(14,120,235)
Withdrawal of deposits	12	14,120,235	-
Payments made to acquire fixed assets	10	(3,697,064)	(3,153,899)
		<u>7,685,440</u>	<u>(16,797,672)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities			
Interest paid	8	(3,641)	(49,249)
Repayments of amounts borrowed	15	(200,000)	(250,000)
		<u>(203,641)</u>	<u>(299,249)</u>
Increase/decrease in cash and cash equivalents in the year		<u>18,562,810</u>	<u>(9,277,508)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	18	<u>7,646,005</u>	<u>16,923,513</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	18	<u>26,208,815</u>	<u>7,646,005</u>

There is a restricted amount of £7,456,755 held within cash and cash equivalents that relates to monies received from the Further Education Capital Transformation Fund (FECTF) for capital projects currently underway.

Notes to the Accounts

(forming part of the financial statements)

1 Statement of Accounting Policies and Estimation Techniques

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the financial statements.

Basis of Preparation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2019* (the 2019 FE HE SORP), the *College Accounts Direction for 2023 to 2024* and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 – “*The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland*” (FRS 102). The College is a public benefit entity and has therefore applied the relevant public benefit requirements of FRS 102.

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgement in applying the College's accounting policies.

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

Basis of Consolidation

In accordance with FRS 102, the activities of the student union have not been consolidated because the College does not control those activities.

Going Concern

The activities of the College, together with the factors likely to affect its future development and performance are set out in the Strategic Report. The financial position of the College, its cash flow, liquidity, and borrowings are described in the Financial Statements and accompanying Notes.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which the Corporation considers to be appropriate for the following reasons.

The Corporation has prepared cash flow forecasts for a period of 30 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. After reviewing these forecasts, the Corporation is of the opinion that, taking account of severe but plausible downsides, including reducing enrolment numbers and qualification reforms, the College will have sufficient funds to meet its liabilities as they fall due over the period of 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements (the going concern assessment period).

There has been a full sensitivity analysis undertaken which models two scenarios. In each scenario funding for 16-18-year-olds remains as originally planned (without including any new recruitment growth from the 2024/25 recruitment period). This should be the most stable budget forecast to the end of 2024/25, unless the funding methodology changes, which is unlikely at this late stage. In the two scenarios, all other income streams are reduced by a further 10%, and 20% for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The worst-case scenario modelled (20% reduction in each year) assesses the College's financial health as at least good for 2025/26 and cash levels at the end of 2025/26 remain high at £13.7m. The College is debt-free.

Consequently, the Corporation is confident that the College will have sufficient funds to continue to meet its liabilities as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements and therefore have prepared the financial statements on a going concern basis.

Notes to the Accounts *(continued)*

Statement of Accounting Policies and Estimation Techniques *(continued)*

Recognition of Income

Revenue Grant Funding

Government revenue grants include funding body recurrent grants and other grants and are accounted for under the accrual model as permitted by FRS 102. Funding body recurrent grants are measured in line with best estimates for the period of what is receivable and depend on the particular income stream involved. Any under achievement for the Adult Skills Budget is adjusted for and reflected in the level of recurrent grant recognised in the income and expenditure account. The final grant income is normally determined with the conclusion of the year end reconciliation process with the funding body following the year end, and the results of any funding audits. 16-18 funding is not subject to reconciliation and is therefore not subject to contract adjustments.

The recurrent grant from the Office for Students (OfS) represents the funding allocations attributable to the current financial year and is credited direct to the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Where part of a government grant is deferred, the deferred element is recognised as deferred income within creditors and allocated between creditors due within one year and creditors due after more than one year as appropriate.

Grants (including research grants) from non-government sources are recognised in income when the College is entitled to the income and performance related conditions have been met. Income received in advance of performance related conditions being met is recognised as deferred income within creditors on the balance sheet and released to income as the conditions are met.

Capital Grant Funding

Government capital grants are capitalised, held as deferred income, and recognised in income over the expected useful life of the asset, under the accrual model as permitted by FRS 102. Other non-governmental capital grants are recognised in income when the College is entitled to the funds subject to any performance related conditions being met. Income received in advance of performance-related conditions being met is recognised as deferred income within creditors on the balance sheet and released to income as conditions are met.

Non-recurrent grants from the funding bodies or other bodies received in respect of the acquisition of fixed assets are treated as deferred capital grants and amortised in line with depreciation over the life of the assets.

Fee Income

Income from tuition fees is stated gross of any expenditure which is not a discount and is recognised in the period for which it is received.

Income from grants, contracts and other services rendered is included to the extent of the completion of the contract or service concerned.

Investment Income

All income from short-term deposits is credited to the income and expenditure account in the period in which it is earned on a receivable basis.

Agency Arrangements

The College acts as an agent in the collection and payment of certain discretionary support funds. Related payments received from the funding bodies and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the income and expenditure of the College where the College is exposed to minimal risk or enjoys minimal economic benefit related to the transaction.

Notes to the Accounts *(continued)*

Statement of Accounting Policies and Estimation Techniques *(continued)*

Accounting for Post-employment Benefits

Post-employment benefits to employees of the College are principally provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). These are defined benefit plans, which are externally funded and contracted out of the State Second Pension.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The TPS is an unfunded scheme. Contributions to the TPS are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the College in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of valuations using a prospective benefit method.

The TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution plan and the contributions recognised as an expense in the income statement in the periods during which services are rendered by employees.

Cheshire Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The LGPS is a funded scheme. The assets of the LGPS are measured using closing fair values. LGPS liabilities are measured using the projected unit credit method and discounted at the current rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements, and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred.

Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in interest and other finance costs.

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in actuarial gains and losses.

Short Term Employment Benefits

Short term employment benefits such as salaries and compensated absences (holiday pay) are recognised as an expense in the year in which the employees render service to the College. Any unused benefits are accrued and measured as the additional amount the College expects to pay as a result of the unused entitlement.

Enhanced Pensions

The actual cost of any enhanced ongoing pension to a former member of staff is paid by a college annually. An estimate of the expected future cost of any enhancement to the ongoing pension of a former member of staff is charged in full to the College's income in the year that the member of staff retires. In subsequent years a charge is made to provisions in the balance sheet.

Notes to the Accounts *(continued)*

Statement of Accounting Policies and Estimation Techniques *(continued)*

Tangible Fixed Assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Certain items of fixed assets that had been revalued to fair value on or prior to the date of transition to the FE HE SORP, are measured on the basis of deemed cost, being the revalued amount at the date of that revaluation.

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of any fixed asset may not be recoverable. Where parts of a fixed asset have different useful lives, they are accounted for as separate items of fixed assets.

Land and Buildings

Land and buildings inherited from the Local Education Authority are stated in the balance sheet at valuation on the basis of depreciated replacement cost as the open market value for existing use is not readily obtainable. Land and buildings acquired since Incorporation are included in the balance sheet at cost.

Freehold land is not depreciated as it is considered to have an infinite useful life.

Freehold buildings are depreciated over their expected useful economic life to the College of 50 years. The College has a policy of depreciating major adaptations to buildings over the period of their useful economic life, rooves are depreciated over 25 years and adaptations, including fire escape over 10 years.

Where land and buildings are acquired with the aid of specific grants, they are capitalised and depreciated as above. The related grants are credited to a deferred capital grant account and are released to the income and expenditure account over the expected useful economic life of the related asset on a basis consistent with the depreciation policy. The deferred income is allocated between creditors due within one year and those due after more than one year.

On adoption of FRS102, the College followed the transitional provisions to retain the book value of land and buildings, which were re-valued in 1996, as deemed cost but not to adopt a policy of revaluations of these properties in the future.

Assets under Construction

Assets under construction are accounted for at cost, based on the value of architects' certificates and other direct costs, incurred to 31 July. They are not depreciated until they are brought into use.

Subsequent Expenditure on Existing Fixed Assets

Where significant expenditure is incurred on tangible fixed assets after initial purchase it is charged to the income and expenditure account in the period in which it is incurred, unless it increases the future benefits to the College, in which case it is capitalised and depreciated on the relevant basis.

Buildings owned by Third Parties

Where land and buildings are used, but the legal rights are held by a third party, they are only capitalised if the College has rights or access to ongoing future economic benefit.

These assets are then depreciated over their expected useful economic life.

Equipment

Equipment costing less than £1,000 per individual item is recognised as expenditure in the period of acquisition. All other equipment is capitalised at cost.

Equipment inherited from the Local Education Authority is included in the balance sheet at valuation.

Notes to the Accounts *(continued)*

Statement of Accounting Policies and Estimation Techniques *(continued)*

Equipment *(continued)*

Inherited equipment is depreciated on a straight-line basis over its remaining useful economic life to the College and is now fully depreciated. All other equipment is depreciated on a straight line basis over its useful economic life as follows:

Motor vehicles and general equipment	-	20% per year
Computer equipment	-	25% per year
Furniture and fittings	-	25% per year

Where equipment is acquired with the aid of specific grants, it is capitalised and depreciated in accordance with the above policy, with the related grant being credited to a deferred capital grant account and released to the income and expenditure account over the expected useful economic life of the related equipment.

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value of any fixed asset may not be recoverable. Shortfalls between the carrying value of fixed assets and their recoverable amounts are recognised as impairments. Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

Leased Assets

The College has no assets held under finance leases. Costs in respect of operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the lease term to the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

Stocks

Stocks are not valued in the balance sheet unless considered material to the operations of the College.

Debtors

Debtors with no stated interest rate and receivable within 3 months are recorded at the transaction price. Any impairment losses are recognised in the income statement in other operating expenses.

Bad Debt Provision

The provision for doubtful debts is based on the College's estimate of the expected recoverability of those debts. It is College policy to provide in full for all debtors over 3 months old, debts over 6 months old are credited but still chased for payment.

Creditors

Creditors with or without stated interest rate and payable are recorded at the transaction price. The College aim is to pay all suppliers within 30 days unless agreed terms state otherwise.

Borrowing Costs

Borrowing costs are recognised as expenditure in the period in which they are incurred.

Maintenance of Premises

The cost of routine corrective maintenance is charged to the income and expenditure account in the period it is incurred. The College has a ten-year planned maintenance programme which is reviewed on an annual basis.

Notes to the Accounts *(continued)*

Statement of Accounting Policies and Estimation Techniques *(continued)*

Foreign Currency Translation

Transactions denominated in foreign currencies are recorded using the rate of exchange ruling at the date of the transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated at the rates of exchange ruling at the end of the financial period, with all resulting exchange differences being taken to the income and expenditure account in the period in which they arise.

Taxation

The College is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the College is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by sections 478-488 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Charitable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

The College is partially exempt in respect of Value Added Tax, so that it can only recover around 1% of the VAT charged on its inputs. Irrecoverable VAT on inputs is included in the costs of such inputs and added to the cost of tangible fixed assets as appropriate, where the inputs themselves are tangible fixed assets by nature.

Deferred Taxation

Except where otherwise required by accounting standards, full provision without discounting is made for all timing differences which have arisen but not reversed at the balance sheet date.

Liquid Resources

Liquid resources include sums on short-term deposits with recognised banks and building societies and government securities.

Financial Liabilities and Equity

Financial liabilities and equity are classified according to the substance of the financial instrument's contractual obligations, rather than the financial instrument's legal form.

All loans, investments and short-term deposits held by the College are classified as basic financial instruments in accordance with FRS 102. These instruments are initially recorded at the transaction price less any transaction costs (historical cost). FRS 102 requires that basic financial instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost, however the College has calculated that the difference between the historical cost and amortised cost basis is not material and so these financial instruments are stated on the balance sheet at historical cost. Loans and investments that are payable or receivable within one year are not discounted.

Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the College has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event, and it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required to settle the obligation, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash includes cash in hand, deposits repayable on demand and overdrafts. Deposits are repayable on demand if they are in practice available within 24 hours without penalty.

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Statement of Accounting Policies and Estimation Techniques (continued)

Cash and Cash Equivalents (continued)

Cash equivalents are short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. An investment qualifies as a cash equivalent when it has maturity of 3 months or less from the date of acquisition.

Judgements in applying Accounting Policies and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

Judgements in applying accounting policies:

In preparing these financial statements, management have made the following judgements:

- Determine whether there are indicators of impairment of the College's tangible assets. Factors taken into consideration in reaching such a decision include the economic viability and expected future financial performance of the asset and where it is a component of a larger cash-generating unit, the viability and expected performance of that unit.

Other key sources of estimation uncertainty:

- Tangible fixed assets are depreciated over their useful lives taking into account residual values, where appropriate. The actual lives of the assets and residual values are assessed annually and may vary depending on a number of factors. In re-assessing asset lives, factors such as technological innovation and maintenance programmes are considered. Residual value assessments consider issues such as future market conditions, the remaining life of the asset and projected disposal values.
- The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 17, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability.
- The actuary has used a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31st March 2022 to value the pensions liability at 31st July 2024. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability. FRS 102 section 28.22 inhibits the recognition of the net defined asset only to the extent that we are able to recover the surplus through reduced contributions in the future. Management's judgement is that where the evidence from the Actuary is that the asset is not recoverable, a balance of £0 would be disclosed.

2 Funding Body Grants

	2024	2023
	£	£
Education and Skills Funding Agency/Liverpool City Region – adult	2,981,109	2,783,738
Education and Skills Funding Agency – 16-18	22,219,793	21,314,344
Specific Grants – Tuition Fund & Advanced Maths	914,710	887,460
Education and Skills Funding Agency – Apprenticeships	2,374,219	2,231,084
Education and Skills Funding Agency non-recurrent grants	1,029,443	750,088
OfS recurrent grant	226,644	172,545
OfS non-recurrent grant	26,729	21,876
Release of deferred capital grant	875,750	591,744
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	30,648,397	28,752,879
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Funding Body Grants (continued)

The table below records amounts of grant and fee income relating to level 4 courses and above only.

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grant income from the OfS	253,373	246,327
Fee income for taught awards (exclusive of VAT)	1,528,869	1,467,142
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	1,782,242	1,713,469
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

'Grant income from the OfS' means grants to the provider by the OfS for both:

- i. the provision of education by the provider and
- ii. the provision of facilities, and the carrying on of other activities, by the provider, which its governing body considers are necessary or desirable to provide or carry on for the purposes of, or in connection with, education.

This includes recurrent teaching funding (including targeted allocations, high-cost subject funding, National Collaborative Outreach Programme funding and any other recurrent teaching funding) and non-recurrent funding (including grants for capital infrastructure, challenge competitions or any other non-recurrent grant funding) to the provider from the OfS. The amount of grant income must be exclusive of any deductions for expenditure such as that spent on access and participation activities.

'Fee income for taught awards' means fee income for higher education courses for taught awards (from students directly or via the Student Loans Company or other body paying fees on behalf of the student) and includes undergraduate and taught awards.

3 Tuition Fees and Education Contracts

	2024	2023
	£	£
Adult education fees	336,282	265,923
Fees for FE loan supported courses	150,121	221,916
Fees for HE loan supported courses	1,528,869	1,588,791
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total tuition fees	2,015,272	2,076,630
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

4 Other Income

	2024	2023
	£	£
Catering and residences	18,822	14,669
Other income generating activities	1,070,608	945,472
Other grant income	516,406	243,163
Miscellaneous income	106,296	58,475
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	1,712,132	1,261,779
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Notes to the Accounts (continued)**5 Investment Income**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Other interest receivable	1,262,269	476,462
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	1,262,269	476,462
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

6 Staff Costs

The average number of persons (including key management personnel) employed by the College during the year, expressed as full-time equivalents, was:

	2024	2023
	Number	Number
Teaching staff	288	280
Non-teaching staff	128	121
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	416	401
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The average number of persons (including key management personnel) employed by the College during the year, expressed on an average headcount basis, was:

	2024	2023
	Number	Number
Teaching staff	338	331
Non-teaching staff	195	159
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	533	490
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Staff costs for the above persons were:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	14,485,411	13,540,862
Social security costs	1,418,217	1,271,228
Other pension costs	3,532,221	3,001,562
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Payroll sub total	19,435,849	17,813,652
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Contracted out staffing services	368,010	171,620
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total staff costs	19,803,859	17,985,272
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The College currently has two salary sacrifice schemes in operation these being Child Care Voucher scheme and the Cycle 2 Work scheme.

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Staff Costs (continued)

	2024 £	2023 £
Teaching departments – teaching staff	11,562,376	10,611,084
Contracted out staffing services	368,010	171,620
Teaching departments – other staff	2,721,351	2,280,045
Teaching support services	1,414,710	1,086,644
Other support services	529,351	463,726
Administration and central services	2,536,334	2,290,786
Premises	1,021,727	901,367
FRS 102 (28) Charge (note 17)	(350,000)	180,000
	<u>19,803,859</u>	<u>17,985,272</u>

Total staff costs, split by type of contract, were:

	2024 £	2023 £
Employment costs for staff on permanent contracts	18,752,763	16,959,094
Employment costs for staff on short-term and temporary contracts	683,086	854,558
Contracted out staffing services	368,010	171,620
	<u>19,803,859</u>	<u>17,985,272</u>

Key management personnel

Key management personnel are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the College and are represented by the College Senior Management Team which comprises the Principal, Deputy Principals and Assistant Principals.

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Number of key management personnel including the Accounting Officer was:	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>

Emoluments of Key Management Personnel, Accounting Officer, and other Higher Paid Staff

The number of key management personnel and other staff who received annual emoluments, excluding employer contributions to national insurance and pensions but including benefits in kind, in the following ranges was:

Salary range	2024		2023	
	Key management personnel	Other Staff	Key management personnel	Other Staff
£60,001 to £65,000	-	-	-	1
£65,001 to £70,000	-	3	-	1
£70,001 to £75,000	-	-	-	3

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Staff Costs (continued)

Emoluments of Key Management Personnel, Accounting Officer, and other Higher Paid Staff (continued)

£75,001 to £80,000	-	3	1	-
£80,001 to £85,000	1	-	-	-
£85,001 to £90,000	-	-	2	1
£90,001 to £95,000	2	-	-	-
£100,001 to £105,000	-	-	1	-
£105,001 to £110,000	1	-	1	-
£110,001 to £115,000	-	-	1	-
£115,001 to £120,000	1	-	-	-
£150,001 to £155,000	-	-	1	-
£160,001 to £165,000	1	-	-	-

Including part time workers grossed up to two full time equivalent and staff on maternity, paternity or sickness leave at their usual rate of pay, 2 members of 'Other Staff' were paid in the £65,001 to £70,000 banding in 2023/24, None in 2022/23. In the £60,001 to £65,000 band, None in 2023/24, two in 2022/23.

A consolidated pay award of 6.5% was made in-year. Two further cost pressure payments were made to all staff.

Key management personnel compensation is made up as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Basic salary	654,301	610,944
Pension contributions	165,217	145,675
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	819,518	756,619
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The above compensation includes amounts paid to the Principal and Chief Executive who is the Accounting Officer and who is also the highest paid member of staff.

Their pay and remuneration is as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Basic salary	161,154	150,909
Pension contributions	40,996	35,735
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	202,150	186,644
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The governing body adopted AoC's Senior Staff Remuneration Code in July 2020 and assesses pay in line with its principles.

The remuneration package of key management staff, including the Principal and Chief Executive, is subject to annual review by the Remuneration Committee of the governing body who justify the remuneration by using benchmarking information such as the AoC's pay survey and the ESFA's financial benchmarking information to provide objective guidance.

The Accounting Officer and Chief Executive reports to the Governing Body, which undertakes an annual review of her performance against the College's overall objectives using both qualitative and quantitative measures of performance such as Ofsted, financial health, and sustainability.

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Staff Costs (continued)

Emoluments of Key Management Personnel, Accounting Officer, and other Higher Paid Staff (continued)

Relationship of the Accounting Officer/Chief Executive pay, and remuneration expressed as a multiple

	2024	2023
Principal's basic salary as a multiple of the median of all staff	5.00	5.10
Principal and CEO's total remuneration as a multiple of the median of all staff	5.00	5.10

The pension contributions in respect of the Principal and key management personnel are in respect of employer's contributions to either the Teachers' Pension Scheme or the Local Government Pension Scheme and are paid at the same rate as for other employees.

The members of the Corporation other than the Principal and the staff members did not receive any payment from the institution in 2023/24 (2022/23 - £103 travel expenses - K Banks).

Overseas Activities

No overseas expenditure was incurred by governors, key management personnel or other higher paid staff.

7 Other Operating Expenses

	2024	2023
	£	£
Teaching departments	822,007	859,482
Teaching support services	81,728	79,963
Other support services	63,899	32,695
Administration and central services	2,088,071	1,885,570
General education	1,196,493	1,212,538
Premises costs – running costs	1,040,747	787,500
– maintenance	375,144	286,767
– rents and leases	779,080	893,432
Planned maintenance	1,905,084	2,301,923
Catering and residence operations	163,400	192,956
Sub-contracted provision	902,560	842,746
Other expenses	39,185	28,555
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	9,457,398	9,404,127
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Other Operating Expenses Include:

Auditors' Remuneration:

Financial statements audit	30,175	28,278
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Other services provided by the financial statements auditor:

Teachers Pension Scheme	1,173	1,100
Sub-contracting review	-	3,292
HTQ Audit fees	1,500	-
Internal Audit fees	14,825	14,400

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Other Operating Expenses (continued)

7a Access and participation spending

	2024 £	2023 £
Access investment	16,025	16,350
Financial support to students	19,481	22,940
Disability support	5,970	2,840
Research and evaluation (relating to access and participation)	1,944	1,688
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total access and participation expenditure	43,420	43,818
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Included within the above expenditure is £18k (2023: £18k) of staff costs that are also included in note 6 'Staff Costs'.

Access and Participation Plans ("APPs") set out how a higher education provider will improve equality of opportunity in higher education. They must be approved by the OfS if the provider wants to charge higher tuition fees. APP's have been introduced from 2019/20 and replace the old Access Agreements that were previously approved by the Office for Fair Access. The College APP articulates our ongoing commitment to improving equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from, higher education.

Our latest Plan incorporates contributions from colleagues across our College community. The College has an approved APP for 2020/21 to 2024/25 that can be accessed on the OfS website ([click here](#)).

8 Interest and other finance costs

	2024 £	2023 £
On bank loans, overdrafts and other loans:	3,641	19,839
Net interest on enhanced pension provision (note 16)	37,896	29,410
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	41,537	49,249
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

9 Taxation

The members do not believe that the College was liable for any corporation tax arising out of its activities during either year.

10 Tangible Fixed Assets

	Land and Buildings Freehold	Assets in the Course of Construction	Equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£
Cost or valuation				
At 1 August 2023	26,450,319	5,461,744	15,199,832	47,111,895
Additions	1,315,997	1,311,787	1,069,280	3,697,064
Transfer of Asset Type	5,461,744	(5,461,744)	-	-

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Tangible fixed assets (continued)

	Land and Buildings Freehold	Assets in the Course of Construction	Equipment	Total
At 31 July 2024	33,228,060	1,311,787	16,269,112	50,808,959
Depreciation				
At 1 August 2023	9,562,745	-	14,370,119	23,932,864
Charge for year	1,053,482	-	535,575	1,589,057
At 31 July 2024	10,616,227	-	14,905,694	25,521,921
Net book value at 31 July 2024	22,611,833	1,311,787	1,363,418	25,287,038
Net book value at 31 July 2023	16,887,574	5,461,744	829,713	23,179,031
Inherited	3,880,636	-	-	3,880,636
Financed by capital grant	7,811,501	1,311,787	1,099,785	10,223,073
Other	10,919,696	-	263,633	11,183,329
	22,611,833	1,311,787	1,363,418	25,287,038

Land and buildings were valued in 1994 at depreciated replacement cost by White Young, a firm of independent chartered surveyors. Other tangible fixed assets inherited from the local education authority at incorporation have been valued by the Board on a depreciated replacement cost basis with the assistance of independent professional advice.

Land and buildings with a net book value of £3,880,636 (2023: £3,995,537) have been partly financed from exchequer funds, through for example the receipt of capital grants. Should these assets be sold, the College may be liable, under the terms of the financial memorandum with the funding bodies, to surrender the proceeds.

Fixed assets include land and buildings, and equipment with a net book value of £10,223,073 (2023 £5,852,365) which have been partially funded by a grant from the funding bodies or the LEP. The Education and Skills Funding Agency does not have the power to guarantee future funding streams to colleges and cannot guarantee that this funding will continue after the current year. Provision has not, therefore, been made for anticipated future receipts.

If fixed assets had not been revalued before being deemed as cost on transition, they would have been included at the following historical cost amounts:

Cost	£'000
Aggregate depreciation based on cost	Nil
Net book value based on cost	Nil

The College has no assets held under finance leases.

Notes to the Accounts (continued)**11 Trade and other receivables**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	348,942	168,596
Prepayments and accrued income	750,662	845,521
	<u>1,099,604</u>	<u>1,014,117</u>

12 Current Investments

	2024	2023
	£	£
Short term deposits	4,000,000	14,120,235
	<u>4,000,000</u>	<u>14,120,235</u>

A deposit with a maturity date exceeding 95 days were outstanding at 31st July.

13 Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts (note 15)	-	150,000
Trade payables	656,158	297,522
Other taxation and social security	400,187	375,656
Accruals and deferred income	11,217,860	7,747,109
Holiday pay accrual	342,637	304,349
Deferred income – government capital grants	784,000	586,328
Amounts owed to the ESFA	655,130	-
	<u>14,055,972</u>	<u>9,460,964</u>

14 Creditors: Amounts Falling due After More than One Year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Bank loans (note 15)	-	50,000
Deferred income – government capital grants	7,008,780	5,266,037
	<u>7,008,780</u>	<u>5,316,037</u>

15 Maturity of Debt**Bank Loans and Overdrafts**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Bank loans and overdrafts are repayable as follows:		
In one year or less	-	150,000
Between one and two years	-	50,000
	<u>-</u>	<u>200,000</u>

The College paid off all outstanding loans during the year.

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

16 Provisions for liabilities and charges

Enhanced Pension Provision

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 August	757,921	891,225
Interest cost	37,896	29,410
Benefits paid	(85,796)	(78,628)
Actuarial loss/(gain)	58,314	(84,086)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
At 31 July	768,335	757,921
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The enhanced pension provision relates to the cost of staff who have already left the College's employ and commitments for reorganisation costs from which the College cannot reasonably withdraw at the balance sheet date.

The principal assumptions for this calculation are:

	2024	2023
Price inflation	2.8%	2.8%
Interest rate	4.8%	5.0%

17 Defined Benefit Obligations

The College's employees belong to two principal post-employment benefit plans: the Teachers' Pension Scheme, England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff; and the Cheshire West and Chester Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff. Both are multi-employer defined-benefit plans.

Total pension cost for the year	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
Teachers' Pension Scheme: contributions paid		2,168,349		1,903,846
Local Government Pension Scheme:				
Contributions paid	1,279,610		1,094,625	
FRS 102 (28) charge	(350,000)		180,000	
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
Charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Income		929,610		1,274,625
Enhanced pension charge to Statement of Comprehensive Income		-		-
		<hr/>		<hr/>
Total pension cost for year within staff costs		3,097,959		3,178,471
		<hr/> <hr/>		<hr/> <hr/>

The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries. The latest formal actuarial valuation of the TPS was 31 March 2020 and of the LGPS 31 March 2022.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. These regulations apply to teachers in schools, colleges, and other educational establishments. Membership is automatic for teachers and lecturers at eligible institutions. Teachers and lecturers are able to opt out of the TPS.

Notes to the Accounts *(continued)*

Defined Benefit Obligations *(continued)*

Teachers' Pension Scheme *(continued)*

The TPS is an unfunded scheme, and members contribute on a 'pay as you go' basis – these contributions, along with those made by employers, are credited to the Exchequer under arrangements governed by the above Act. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102 (28.11), the TPS is a multi-employer pension plan. The College is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan.

Accordingly, the College has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined-contribution plan. The College has set out above the information available on the plan and the implications for the College in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

The valuation of the TPS is carried out in line with regulations made under the Public Service Pension Act 2013. Valuations credit the teachers' pension account with a real rate of return assuming funds are invested in notional investments that produce that real rate of return.

The latest actuarial review of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education (the Department) in October 2023. The valuation reported total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service to the effective date of £262 billion, and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222 billion giving a notional past service deficit of £40 billion (compared to £22 billion in the 2016 valuation).

As a result of the valuation, new employer contribution rates will rise to 28.68% from April 2024 (compared to 23.68% during 2022/23).

A full copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation can be found on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website.

The pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £2,168,349 (2023: £1,903,846).

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The LGPS is a funded defined-benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate funds administered by Cheshire West and Chester Council. The total contributions made for the year ended 31 July 2024 were £1,599,421, of which employer's contributions totalled £1,279,610 and employees' contributions totalled £319,811. The agreed contribution rates for future years are 24.5% for employers and 2.75% to 10.5% for employees, dependant on salary according to a national scale.

The following information is based upon a full actuarial valuation of the funds as at 31 March 2022 updated to 31 July 2024 by Hymans Robertson.

Principal Actuarial Assumptions:	At 31 July 2024	At 31 July 2023
Rate of increase in salaries	3.45%	3.70%
Future pension increases	2.75%	3.00%
Discount rate for scheme for liabilities	5.00%	5.05%
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.75%	3.00%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums – Pre April 2008	50%	50%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums – Post April 2008	75%	75%

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Defined Benefit Obligations (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) (continued)

The current mortality assumptions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on retirement age 65 are:

	At 31 July 2024	At 31 July 2023
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	19.6	19.7
Females	23.1	20.7
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	20.6	23.1
Females	24.7	24.8

Sensitivity analysis

	At 31 July 2024	At 31 July 2023
0.1% (2023:0.1%) decrease in real discount rate	2%	2%
0.1% (2023:0.1%) increase in the salary increase rate	0%	0%
0.1% (2023:0.1%) increase in the pension increase rate (CPI)	2%	2%
1-Year increase in life expectancy	4%	4%

The College's share of the assets in the plan at the balance sheet date and the expected rates of return were:

	Long-term rate of return expected at 31 July 2024	Value at 31 July 2024	Long-term rate of return expected at 31 July 2023	Value at 31 July 2023
		£'000		£'000
Equity instruments	2.75%	18,409	3.00%	16,133
Debt instruments	2.75%	13,623	3.00%	12,436
Property	2.75%	4,418	3.00%	4,369
Cash	2.75%	368	3.00%	673
Total fair value of plan assets		<u>36,818</u>		<u>33,611</u>
Weighted average expected long term rate of return	(7.90)%		(3.80)%	
Actual return on plan assets		<u>2,661</u>		<u>(1,352)</u>

The amount included in the balance sheet in respect of the defined benefit pension plan is as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Fair value of plan assets	36,818	33,611
Present value of Scheme liabilities	(29,604)	(28,239)
Net Pension Asset	<u>7,214</u>	<u>5,372</u>
Asset not recognised (FRS102 para 28.22)	(7,214)	(5,372)
Net Pension	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Amounts included in Staff Costs		
Current service cost (net of employee contributions)	901	1,252
Total	<u><u>901</u></u>	<u><u>1,252</u></u>

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Defined Benefit Obligations (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) (continued)

Amounts included in Income	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Interest income on plan assets	1,711	1,230
Interest cost on defined benefit obligation	(1,431)	(1,160)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net interest income	280	70
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Amount recognised in other comprehensive income	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Return on pension plan assets	950	(2,582)
Experience losses arising on defined benefit obligations	(928)	(2,981)
Changes in assumptions underlying the present value of plan liabilities	1,190	5,673
Surplus not recognised	(1,842)	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Amount recognised in other comprehensive income	(630)	110
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Movement in net defined benefit liability in year	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Net defined benefit liability in scheme at 1 August	-	-
Movement in year:		
Current service cost (net of employee contributions)	(901)	(1,252)
Employer contributions	1,251	1,072
Net interest on the defined asset	280	70
Actuarial (loss)/gain	(630)	110
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net defined benefit liability at 31 July	-	-
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Asset and Liability Reconciliation	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations		
Defined benefit obligations at start of period	28,239	34,935
Current service cost	901	1,252
Interest cost	1,431	1,160
Contributions by scheme participants	313	269
Remeasurements	(262)	(8,524)
Estimated benefits paid	(1,018)	(853)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Defined benefit obligations at end of period	29,604	28,239
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Defined Benefit Obligations (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) (continued)

Changes in pension assumptions for the LGPS pension scheme are now showing the scheme to be a surplus position of £7,214k. However, for the accounts the surplus has been included to show a zero balance for the LGPS obligations, as it is anticipated that no surplus could be recovered through refunds from the plan.

Changes in fair value of plan assets

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Fair value of plan assets at start of period	33,611	34,935
Interest on plan assets	1,711	1,230
Return on plan assets	950	(2,582)
Employer contributions	1,251	1,072
Contributions by scheme participants	313	269
Estimated benefits paid	(1,018)	(853)
Other experience	-	(460)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Fair value of plan assets at end of period	36,818	33,611
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

These accounts show a past service cost of £75,000 (included in 2020/21 and rolled forward for 2023/24) in respect of the McCloud/Sergeant judgement which ruled that the transitional protection for some members of the public service schemes implemented when they were reformed constituted age discrimination. This provision is under 1% of the total scheme liability as at 31 July 2024. The calculation of adjustment to past service costs, arising from the outcome of the Court of Appeal judgement, is based on a number of key assumptions including:

- the form of remedy adopted
- how the remedy will be implemented
- which members will be affected by the remedy
- the earning assumptions
- the withdrawal assumption

The other financial and demographic assumptions adopted to calculate the past service cost are the same as those used to calculate the overall scheme liability. Adopting different assumptions or making other adjustments to reflect behavioural changes stemming from the judgement, would be expected to change the past service cost.

The College is aware of the 2023 ruling in the Virgin Media vs NTL Pension Trustee case and subsequent court ruling published in July 2024.

These ruled that certain amendments made to NTL Pension Plan were invalid because they were not accompanied by the correct actuarial confirmation.

There remains a significant uncertainty as to whether the judgements will result in additional liabilities for UK pension schemes, and it is possible that the Department of Work & Pensions will introduce legislation to allow changes to be certified retrospectively. A detailed review of historic documentation will be needed to determine whether the changes made by the Scheme were valid (assuming retrospective certification does not become an option), and such a review will take some time to complete.

As a result, the College cannot be certain of the potential implications (if any) and therefore a sufficiently reliable estimate of any effect on the obligation cannot be made.

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

18 Cash and cash equivalents

	At 1 August 2023	Cash flows	At 31 July 2024
	£	£	£
Cash and cash equivalents	7,646,005	18,562,810	26,208,815
Overdrafts	-	-	-
Total	7,646,005	18,562,810	26,208,815

19 Capital and other commitments

	2024 £	2023 £
Commitments contracted for at 31 July	-	-
Commitments authorised but not yet contracted for at 31 July	3,250,000	8,653,000

20 Lease Obligations

At 31 July the College had minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Not later than one year	144,731	-
	144,731	-

21 Contingent Liability

The College had no contingent liability as at 31 July 2024 (and none in 2022/23).

22 Related party transactions

Due to the nature of the College's operations and the composition of the board of governors being drawn from local public and private sector organisations it is inevitable that transactions may take place with organisations in which a member of the board of governors may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the College's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures.

No governor has received any remuneration or waived payments from the College during the year (2022/23: None).

Wade Deacon Trust, of which the college Principal is a trustee, had transactions for income of £7,335, (2022/23: nil). There were no balances outstanding at the year-end.

Notes to the Accounts (continued)

Related party transactions (continued)

Halton Chamber of Commerce, of which a governor is Vice-Chair, had expenditure transactions of £1,064 (2022/23: £1,725) and transactions for Income of £530, (2022/23 nil). There were no balances outstanding at the year-end.

Halton Housing Trust, of which a governor is CFO, had transactions for income of £1,213. (2022/23: nil).

Outstanding balance for income at year end was £595. (2022/23: £289).

The Cheshire Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is a post-employment benefit plan of which employees of Riverside College Halton are members. As such the scheme is defined as a related party under FRS102. Transactions between Riverside College Halton and the Cheshire LGPS are disclosed in note 17.

23 Events after the reporting period

There were no events after the reporting period.

24 Amounts disbursed as agent – Learner support funds

	2024	2023
	£	£
Learner support fund	1,114,545	998,777
Interest earned	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,114,545	998,777
Disbursed to students	1,005,731	836,956
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance unspent at 31 July	108,814	161,821
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Funding Body grants are available solely for students and, in the majority of instances, the College only acts as a paying agent. In these circumstances the grants and related disbursements have therefore been excluded from the Statement of Comprehensive Income. The full balance of unspent funds up to and including 31 July 2024 is £1,612,016 and is held in creditors.