MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION BOARD
HELD IN THE BOARD ROOM ON
TUESDAY 11th MARCH 2025 AT 5.30 PM

Governors	Type	Initials	Attendance	Apologies
David Allsop	Independent (Chair)	DA	X	-
Chris Todd	Principal and CEO	CT	X	-
Carl Bozeate	Independent	CB	X	-
Guy Brown	Independent	GB	X	-
Sarah Jones	Independent	SJ	X	-
Matthew Taylor	Independent	MT	X	-
Mark Short	Independent	MS	X	-
David McHugh	Independent	DM	X	-
Stuart Corbridge	Independent	SC	X	-
Andrew Hayday	Independent	AH	X	-
Helen Brennan	Staff Governor	HB	X	-
Nicola Dixon	Staff Governor	ND	-	X
Bill Fullen	Independent	BF	X	-
Monika Nangia	Independent	MN	-	X
Joanne Race	Independent	JR	X	-

Attendees	Type	Initials	Attendance	Apologies
Susan Errington	Deputy Principal	SE	X	-
Tina Hannant	Vice Principal – Finance & Resources	TH	X	-
Michael Johnson	Assistant Principal – Student Services (covering the Head of EPYP role	MJ	X	-

Observers	Type	Initials	Attendance	Apologies
Marina Gaze	AoC – External Board Reviewer	MG	X	-

Clerk	Type	Initials	Attendance	Apologies
Elaine Gaines	Head of Governance	EG	X	

1. **Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the academic year. A warm welcome was extended to Marina Gaze who was in attendance to observe the meeting as part of the External Board Review and introductions were made.

Apologies were received from ND and MG. DA declared an interest in agenda item 3.2a (Appraisal of the Corporation Chair).

The Board agreed that the meeting was quorate.

Governor Safeguarding Lead - DA reported that BF has volunteered for the Lead Safeguarding Governor role. No objections were received.
The Board **approved** the appointment of Mr Bill Fullen to the Lead Safeguarding Governor role.

2. Safeguarding & Prevent Update

2.1. MJ introduced his report. The report provided an overview of the progress made against the Safeguarding Action Plan and the Board Assurance Framework (BAF) for Safeguarding. Since its introduction in February 2024, the BAF has clarified the Board's legal duties regarding Safeguarding. The College's Safeguarding policies and procedures are effective, with high ratings for controls and assurance.

The purpose of the report was to provide assurance to the Board of the College's Safeguarding activities, presenting key performance data and updates on the progress of the Safeguarding Action Plan for this year. It aimed to ensure ongoing oversight of Safeguarding measures and evaluated the effectiveness of actions taken to enhance learner safety and wellbeing.

Internal Audit - In January 2025, the College's Internal Auditors reviewed the College's Safeguarding systems and procedures for compliance with legislation and appropriate measures are in place for learners. The review aimed to provide additional assurance to the Board via the Audit & Risk Committee. The outcome was highly positive, with strong assurance on the College's Safeguarding provision for both children and adults at risk. Several areas of good practice were highlighted, with only one low-grade recommendation: ensuring agency staff provide their current DBS number prior to arrival. This requirement has been incorporated into the BAF and implemented.

Action Plan Progress – Good progress has been made regarding the Safeguarding Board Assurance Action Plan. The table on page 4 of the report presented a progress summary.

Since the time of writing the report, a Lead Governor for Safeguarding has been appointed, and an introductory meeting will take place later this month.

The report also included an update for Governors on Strengths, Safeguarding Governance and Oversight, Training, Online Safety Act, Management Restructure and Wellbeing & Behaviour. A summary of Reportable Incidences was provided at Appendix 4.

MJ invited questions/comments from Governors.

BF referred to Appendix 4 of the report, highlighting incidents related to potential suicides and mental health concerns. He asked about the support provided to staff handling such situations. In response MJ stated that staff receive counselling and have access to a safe, confidential environment where they can discuss their experiences.

BF referred to the Term 1 figure for General Mental Health issues, noting that it was nearly equal to the total for the entire 2023-24 year. He asked whether the percentage remained consistent without any significant spikes. MJ confirmed that the Term 1 learners included in the report remain on programme and are progressing well. Numbers have significantly reduced in Term 2.

GB inquired whether staff had received training regarding the new protections from sexual harassment which came into force in October 2024. It was noted training was provided to Senior Leaders in October 2024. CT agreed to link with JR regarding this.

DA reported that he was pleased with the Safeguarding Internal Audit findings. It was noted the Internal Audit report will be an agenda item at the Audit & Risk Committee meeting on Tuesday (18th March 2025), providing the opportunity for further scrutiny.

MJ left the meeting at 5.40pm

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters Arising

3.1. **Minutes – Corporation**
Governors **reviewed** the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th December 2024.

The following correction was requested:

- on page 3 Finance & Receives should read Finance & Resources.

Subject to the amendment above, the Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on the 11th December 2024.

3.2. **Minutes – Search & Governance Committee**
The Search & Governance Committee Chair provided a verbal update to Governors, regarding the meeting held on the 30th January 2025, and reported the following:

Student Governor – The Chair reported one potential Student Governor has decided to withdraw from the process. The two remaining candidates were invited to observe the Quality & Standards Committee meeting, however, due to work/personal commitments neither were able to attend. The Head of Governance will update the Search & Governance Committee accordingly. Discussion took place regarding the student governor role, utilising the learner voice network was suggested.

Board Strategy Day – The Strategy Day has been rescheduled to 19th June. CT and DA have met with the External Facilitator regarding activities for the day. The Head of Governance will share the draft agenda with Governors.

The Board **received** the minutes of the Search & Governance Committee held on the 30th January 2025.

The Corporation Chair offered to leave the room whilst item 3.2a was taken, however, the Senior Independent Governor suggested that DA remained in the room for the item, the report from the Senior Independent Governor was included in the meeting pack for Governors. There were no objections, DA remained in the room whilst the item was presented.

3.2a Appraisal of the Corporation Chair – The Senior Independent Governor presented his report. The collated feedback from Governors and the Executive Team was received and endorsed by the Search & Governance Committee on 30th January 2025. The Corporation Chair received a glowing review from the College Board, with consensus that David is doing an outstanding job as Chair of the Corporation. David is described as amiable, encouraging, fair, collegial, hard-working, and committed to the effective governance and future of Derwentside College. The Executive Team especially appreciated David's calmness, availability, and willingness to offer sage advice.

David was scored by Board Members across seventeen areas relating to Strategic Perspective, Leading Effective Governance, Communicating and Influencing, Building the Team, and Values and Behaviours. In sixteen of these categories David received a modal score of 5, or Strong Agreement that he is doing a good job. David received a modal score of 4 against Communications and Behaviour, which may reflect the fact that Board Members are unsighted on some of the Chair's work in this area.

Following discussions between the Chair and the Senior Independent Governor, it was agreed that the Chair should have a standing item at the start of each Board Meeting to report on engagement activities and key sector issues.

The Senior Independent Governor endorsed the Board's incredibly positive view of DA's chairmanship.

DA thanked everyone for their positive comments and the Senior Independent Governor for his comprehensive report.

The Board **received and approved** the report from the Senior Independent Governor regarding the Performance Appraisal of the Corporation Chair.

Following the successful completion of their Probationary Period and the subsequent endorsement by the Search & Governance Committee, the Board **approved** the following Governor appointments for a four-year term :

- Mr Stuart Corbridge
- Mr Matthew Taylor
- Mr David McHugh

3.3. **Minutes – Quality & Standards Committee**

The Quality & Standards Committee Chair provided a verbal update to Governors regarding the meeting held on the 8th October 2024. The following points were noted:

Quality Strategy – The draft Quality Strategy was presented and the committee provided feedback. The Quality Strategy was subsequently approved by the Board in December 2024.

Learner Voice Strategy – The Committee approved the Learner Voice Strategy and this is embedded effectively.

Cross-College provision – The Committee discussed cross-college provision, good practice and how this can be shared and areas for improvement. The Committee approved the college Deep Dive schedule; the first Deep Dive into Engineering has taken place. There was also good discussion regarding AI.

The Board **received** the minutes of the Quality & Standards Committee held on the 8th October 2024

The Quality & Standards Committee Chair provided a verbal update to Governors regarding the meeting held on the 10th March 2025 (this meeting was rescheduled from 4th February 2025). The Committee Chair reported the Quality & Standards Committee took place on 10th March 2025 using Microsoft Teams. The following points were noted:

Regulatory Changes - The Quality & Standards Committee were informed of the significant regulatory changes taking place within the sector e.g. the Ofsted consultation regarding the new Inspection Framework and the changes regarding maths & English for Adult Apprentices. The Committee Chair stated the Quality & Standards Committee will maintain an awareness of these changes however, it is important for all Governors to also maintain an awareness of these important regulatory changes, understand their impact and the opportunities that may arise.

Learner Performance - The Committee received updates regarding learner performance, noting there are some small areas where inconsistencies are evident, and these are being addressed.

Quality Improvement Plan - The Committee received a progress update and there is a clear action plan to mitigate risks and measure outputs.

Achievement Rates - Indications demonstrate that we are on track to exceed the Apprenticeship Achievement Rate target for 2024-25 of 65%.

Learner Voice Strategy -The Learner Voice Strategy has been successfully implemented, with various activities conducted. Feedback indicates a good level of student satisfaction.

Careers Strategy – The Draft Careers Strategy was presented and feedback provided by the Committee. The Committee agreed to meet outside of the meeting in a task group to review the Careers Strategy again, this will be endorsed by the Committee and submitted to the Board for approval.

TeacherMatic Audits – The use of TeacherMatic and SharePoint is being actively encouraged. The Quality & Standards Committee Chair encouraged Governors to inquire about and promote the use of SharePoint and TeacherMatic during their curriculum visits.

The Board **received** the verbal update relating to the Quality & Standards Committee held on the 10th March 2025.

3.4. **Minutes – Finance & Resources Committee**

The Finance & Resources Committee Chair provided a verbal update to Governors regarding the meeting held on Tuesday 18th February 2025, and drew their attention to the following points:

Management Accounts – The Committee reviewed the month 5 management accounts and the month 6 management accounts incorporating the first year-end forecast were shared with the committee today. This initial forecast includes reasonable and prudent assumptions based on current knowledge and expectations and includes known cost pressures. The position will be reviewed and updated monthly and is expected to change and firm up towards the financial year-end. Current expectations are that the year-end position is likely to improve from this forecast, however there are still many uncertainties at this point in the year.

DA invited comment from TH. TH reported a prudent but reasonable approach has been taken, however, there is a level of optimism, pending the funding detail awaited from the DfE.

Cleaning Contract – The Committee approved the appointment of [Redacted – commercially sensitive] as the new cleaning provider effective from 1st May 2025.

Questions/comments were invited.

AH noted this year there seems to more 'unknown' compared to last year; he congratulated TH and her team for providing the financial information for the Committee.

The Board **received** the minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee held on the 18th February 2025.

Following the endorsement by the Finance & Receives Committee, Governors **received and approved** the following document:

- Estates Strategy

3.5. **Minutes – Audit & Risk Committee**
The Audit & Risk Committee Chair provided a verbal update regarding the meeting held on Tuesday 26th November 2024 and reported the members of the Finance & Resources Committee were in attendance to receive and consider the Annual Report and Financial Statements – 2023/24 presented by the External Auditors. Following the endorsement by the Audit & Risk Committee these documents were subsequently approved by the Corporation Board at the meeting on 10th December 2024 and signed by the Corporation Chair.

MT thanked SJ for attending the Committee to ensure it remained quorate and so the meeting could proceed as planned. The next Audit & Risk Committee will take place on Tuesday 18th March and agenda items will include the Internal Audit Reports relating to the Safeguarding Internal Audit and the Curriculum Planning Audit and the sequencing of the remaining Internal Audits for this academic year.

The Board **received** the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee held on the 26th November 2024.

4. Strategy & Direction

4.1. **Corporation Chair's Report**
In order to address feedback received as part of the recent performance review of the Corporation Chair, this report set out the main activities undertaken by the Corporation Chair outside of the College meetings since being appointed to the role in December 2023.

The report provided an update for Governors regarding the priorities of the Corporation Chair including progress made in each of the priority areas.

Questions/comments were invited.

MT was interested to know if DA found preparing the report useful. DA confirmed that he did.

SC invited DA to elaborate on paragraph 7.1 and 7.2 of his report.

DA provided a verbal update to Governors regarding the meeting held last week to discuss the approach regarding the review of the Strategic Plan. The meeting was attended by the Corporation Chair, SIG and a Vice Chair (GB).

DA stated that now is an appropriate time to review the College's Strategy. Since the current Strategy was written, a new Corporation Chair has been appointed, the Board's composition has been refreshed, there has been a change in government and devolution has increased . Given these developments, it is now appropriate to reassess our Strategy to ensure alignment with the Government's priorities and identify any new opportunities to pursue.

DA outlined the 5 stages of the review process agreed at the meeting held on 5th March as follows:

Stage 1	Between now and the end of June, led by the Executive Team research and a desk review will take place
Stage 2	The Task Group will meet to agree the questions for the next stage
Stage 3	Engage with Stakeholders to gain an insight from an external perspective. This information will be used to inform the development of the Strategy.
Stage 4	Draft Strategy
Stage 5	Final Strategy presented to the Board for approval.

DA invited feedback from Governors.

AH asked if it was worth doing an analysis of the old Strategy compared to the new Strategy to see how it has diverged.

CT stated a SWOT analysis will be carried out and the views from the Senior Leadership Team obtained regarding the direction including a report.

No other questions/comments were raised.

DA invited questions regarding the Chair's report. SJ thought the report was helpful.

DA invited feedback regarding the balance between a written report and a verbal report. It was agreed a verbal report will be helpful and this will be a standing agenda item at future Board meetings to report on their engagement activities and to reflect on key issues facing the sector.

DA proposed the formation of a Chair's Group, which would convene two to three times a year to discuss key risks and opportunities facing the College and the sector in an informal setting. The Committee Chairs and SIG confirmed their willingness to participate. DA sought feedback from Governors, ensuring no one felt excluded. No objections were raised.

The Board:
- **Received and noted** the content of the report from the Corporation Chair.
- **Considered** whether the Chair should report his activity between meetings at each Board meeting either verbally or in writing.
- **Agreed** this will be a standing agenda item at future Board meetings to report on their engagement activities and to reflect on key issues facing the sector.
- **Approved** the Chair's proposal to extend the membership of the Strategic Planning Task Group to include Committee Chairs.

4.2. **Principal & CEO Report**
CT introduced his report. The report provided an update on key strategic developments and news relevant to the College. It highlighted a recent leadership restructure to address increased strain on leadership capacity due to the College's growth. The new structure reduces the number of Assistant Principals from four to two and introduces three new 'Head of' roles, expected to be fully operational by August 2025. Additionally, the report discussed the new Risk Management Policy and the development of strategic and operational risk registers, with the first draft to be presented in March.

Questions/comments were invited.

BF thought the report was excellent, and as a new Governor the content was helpful, citing the work with North-East Colleges and the impact on the region following the Devolution White paper. He invited CT to expand further regarding the work he has been doing with the local colleges and the potential for rationalisation of skills funding in relation to the devolution agenda.

CT identified that the 'Colleges for North-East England' partnership was aligned to the North-East Combined Authority Plan for Growth and new Skills Strategy. Rationalisation is possible in future, but only in the adult education funding strand. The College is a grant funded provider, which may provide an additional layer of protection, if this were to happen.

BF then asked a question regarding the recent Government announcement relating to maths and English for adult apprentices, and questioned whether in their drive for growth, the Government were getting it wrong.

In response, CT cited feedback received this week from the AoC Apprenticeships Conference in Liverpool; the Skills Minister reminded delegates the Government are pulling away from Level 7 Apprenticeships and the removal of English and maths for adult apprentices will create more apprenticeship opportunities. Figures show there to be approximately 9,000 adults in England without basic literacy and numeracy skills. From this perspective, the policy change definitely feels wrong. Positively, CT identified that some employers remain committed to their apprentices continuing to study English and maths as part of their qualification (citing NHS, councils and the childcare sector).

DA was encouraged that some employers want their apprentices to complete English and maths.

SE noted Germany require apprentices to do 400 hours and asked does this place our country behind other nations? It was noted the sector was caught off-guard by the Government announcement.

DA inquired if there has been any lobbying from Independent Training Providers. CT confirmed that there had been. He also identified that many organisations were now making English and maths teaching staff redundant.

AH asked if there had been any further funding updates since the Principal's report was written. CT reported that the 16-19 allocation Toolkit had been received today, and there may be some in-year growth for learners aged 16-19 to come.

TH stated this will not generate a huge amount of funding, approximately £58K.

CT reported no further updates have been received relating to the NI increase effective from 1st April, or any of the other strands. Detail is also awaited from North-East Combined Authority regarding potential cuts to adult education funding.

GB inquired with regard to the Leadership restructure. CT reported the closing date for applications to new roles is 24th March 2025. [Redacted – commercially sensitive]

No other questions/comments were raised.

The Board **noted** the executive summary and content of the report including identified risks.

4.3. **Strategic Monitoring and Performance**
CT introduced his report. The purpose of the report was to provide Governors with a clear view on the performance of the College in 2024-25 against the Strategic Plan, priorities, aims and our identified key performance indicators.

The college is making significant progress across its key strategic priorities, with ongoing initiatives supporting long-term development. Appendix 4.3a of the report provided a summary of progress and ongoing actions aligned with our priorities and aims. Our strategic priorities are underpinned by strategic aims closely aligned with key performance indicators (KPIs). These aims are implemented through the following key strategies, plans, and processes:

- Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
- Quality Strategy
- Accountability Agreement Action Plan
- Performance Objectives (for leaders and staff)
- Financial Plan
- Estates Strategy
- People Strategy

The introduction of a Skills Strategy (which is being developed) will further strengthen the implementation of the strategic plan, supporting our ambitions. The table on page 3 of the report provided a high-level summary of progress against the strategic priorities and aims.

Progress this year has been positive, with reasonable progress reported against seven strategic aims and significant progress against the remaining nine. A summary of achievements and next steps under the main strategic priority areas was provided in the Governor report.

<u>Risk Management and Safeguarding</u> - The new Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite statements have been rolled out, with training delivered to the Senior Leadership Team. The new Strategic Risk Register and Operational Registers are currently under development. The Board Assurance Framework for safeguarding continues to provide high levels of assurance to Governors that our legal and regulatory duties are being met.

<u>Curriculum and Quality</u> - A Skills Strategy is being developed to support the College in further aligning the curriculum offer with local, regional and national priorities. Curriculum Planning is well advanced, with further external activities underway. [Redacted – commercially sensitive]. The strategic away day in June will consider curriculum planning in the context of the above.

<u>Quality Assurance</u> - The College's approach to self-assessment and quality improvement plan is under review and will be aligned with the proposed new Ofsted framework. Our intention is to make the process more interactive, with enhanced staff and governor involvement.

<u>Engagement</u> - Employer forums continue to take place in key sector subject areas, with excellent feedback received and informing our curriculum development. Business Development Team recruitment and expansion is supporting growth and development in our employer relationships. Student Enrichment programmes are in place across all full-time areas, with a focus on trips, visits, employability and community engagement.

Financial Performance - Financial health remains rated as "Good," with both EBITDA surplus and turnover in line with expectations.

Apprenticeship Achievement - Achievement rates are performing extremely well, with the College already sitting at 54.8% overall. This is excellent and we are very confident in our ability to exceed the year-end target of 65%.

Questions/comments were invited.

DA congratulated SE for the brilliant achievement rates and asked SE to congratulate the Team on behalf of the Board.

JR noted the potential skills gap in Information Services and asked if all staff complete cyber security training. CT confirmed that a training package is in place. CT stated phishing tests are carried out on college staff to identify weaknesses and this is supported with training. CT also reported the Head of Information Services is the Lead. The IT Manager (Andrew Jones) is the Cybersecurity Lead. He acknowledged the risk can't be removed therefore requires effective management.

DA reported the IT Manager presented the Security and Data Protection report to the Finance & Resources Committee in February and good assurance was obtained.

SJ noted the Risks in the Principal's report were a summary of the risks and asked if the whole Risk Register would be an item for the Audit & Risk Committee. It was confirmed that it was, however, it will be an item for the board at various points during the year also.

MT noted the Risks did not include Safeguarding (citing the Governor Safeguarding Lead). CT stated the appointment of a Governor Safeguarding Lead is a should rather than a must in the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) document. He also stated that the Safeguarding Board Assurance Framework provides a high level of assurance to the Board in this key area, and therefore, safeguarding was not deemed a strategic risk.

TH reported workshops also take place internally with Senior Leaders to discuss and categorise risks and this informs the overall Risk Register.

The Board **received** and the Strategic Monitoring and Performance Report and:

- **Noted** the positive progress being made towards the delivery of our strategic priorities and aims.
- **Noted** the development and presentation of the new Strategic Risk Register.

4.4. **[Redacted – commercially sensitive] Proposal**
[Redacted – commercially sensitive]

5. Curriculum Quality & Learning

5.1. **Stakeholder Engagement**
SE introduced her report. The report provided an update on the College's stakeholder engagement activity for 2024-25, including insights into both learner and employer feedback. This is the first time this type of report has been presented to the Board; SE invited feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Effective stakeholder engagement is crucial for a college's success and the achievement of its strategic objectives. Under Ofsted's new inspection framework, it is especially important, with a strong emphasis on demonstrating stakeholder involvement, particularly in curriculum design. To address this, sector-specific Industry Forums were introduced.

The College engages actively with stakeholders across five key areas: Learners/Employees, Employers, Communities, Key Stakeholders, and Strategic Stakeholders. This engagement, involving organisations like NHS Trusts, local authorities, and Jobcentre Plus, enhances the educational experience, strengthens the College's reputation, and supports income growth. Additionally, collaboration with strategic stakeholders is crucial in advancing the College's mission and aligning with regional and national priorities.

The College actively participates in various meetings, events, and forums to represent itself at all levels. To give the Board insight into the impact of these engagements, a summary of key Stakeholder Engagement Activities was provided in Appendix 1 of the report. These interactions have strengthened relationships, generated valuable feedback, and created new collaboration opportunities.

The College's stakeholder engagement activities can be grouped into three key areas:
Business Engagements - This includes a series of Industry Forums aimed at adapting the curriculum to address emerging skills gaps.
Government and Political Engagements - The College has hosted visits from MPs and senior government ministers.
Healthcare Collaboration - [Redacted – commercially sensitive].

Participation in regional competitions, such as the North East Electrical Competition, has helped raise the profile of the College and highlight the achievements of its learners. Notably, the College has won both the male and female events for the North and is now preparing for the national finals.

DA acknowledged the improvement in achievement rates for Apprenticeships and he asked SE to convey the Board's thanks to the relevant staff.

Employer Voice - Overall, external feedback and internal surveys indicate strong performance in several areas, but they also highlight opportunities for continued improvement. The College's Employer feedback rating on the apprentice service is 4 (Excellent), the highest possible, indicating strong employer satisfaction. The apprentice feedback rating is 3 (Good), based on 184 reviews, and the College is focused on encouraging more apprentices to provide feedback. Additionally, efforts are being made to analyse individual comments and implement necessary improvements.

SE paused and invited comments/questions.

SC acknowledged that sustaining this engagement over a period of time must involve a lot of work, he asked if a stakeholder map was produced at the beginning of the year.

SE reported that at the start of the year, she began fostering communications with the local MP and the North-East Mayor and worked on identifying key relationships.

SC inquired about the ambassadorial role expected from Governors and asked if there was anything they could do to support. In response SE cited the upcoming North-East Chamber of Commerce dinner in May; the Chair will be attending once again. DA suggested this was something that everyone could consider; he also suggested using their own LinkedIn network.

Learner Voice - Learner feedback highlights high satisfaction with teaching quality, support, the college environment, and improvements to enrichment. However, areas for improvement include inconsistencies in feedback on marked work and the level of learning support. These issues have been addressed through professional development and the recruitment of additional staff. An audit of marked work has also been conducted, and individual results will be shared with curriculum teams to drive further improvements.

Significant progress has been made in addressing previous areas for development identified through Learner Voice in 2023-24. Notably, learners now recall their ILP meetings, and they appreciate the enhanced social activities available at lunchtime.

Questions/comments were invited – none were raised.

Employer Survey - The College's employer survey received 86 responses this year, achieving a 26% return rate, an improvement from 16.5% the previous year. Feedback was positive, particularly regarding awareness of maths and English requirements, apprenticeship relevance, and employer communication. Notably, 95% of employers said they would recommend Derwentside College, exceeding the strategic target of 91%. However, two areas scored below 90%: the quality of information provided before apprenticeships begin and employer participation in apprentice reviews. To address this, a new brochure has been developed to fill information gaps, and a standardised review process is being implemented to enhance employer involvement.

Questions/comments were invited.

AH suggested including a section in the report to identify employers the College aims to connect with, allowing governors to help leverage these connections.

No other comments/questions were raised.

Governors **received and noted** the Stakeholder Engagement report.

6. Any Other Items of Urgent Business

- None.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

Board Meetings

Actions Arising

Date: 11th March 2025

Minute Ref	Action	Responsible Officer	Status & Deadline
2.1	***Safeguarding*** – Training re: protections from Sexual Harassment. CT will link with JR	Principal – March 2025	**Complete** Training has been delivered to the Wider Leadership Team and a risk assessment is under development.
3.2	***Student Governor*** – Utilising the Learner Voice network to draw up interest in the Student Governor role will be explored.	Head of Governance - May 2025	**Complete** A new plan is under development to recruit student governors.
3.2	***Board Strategy Day*** – The draft agenda will be circulated.	Head of Governance – March 2025	**Complete** Strategy day complete.
4.1	***Chair Report*** – This will be a standing agenda item for future meetings	Head of Governance - May 2025	**Complete** Included on the agenda.
4.1	***Strategic Plan Review*** - The membership of the Strategic Planning Task Group will be expanded to include Committee Chairs	Principal	**Complete** A further meeting of the Task Group took place on the 2 July 2025.
4.1	***Chairs Group*** – A Chair's Group will convene two to three times a year to discuss key risks and opportunities facing the College and the sector in an informal setting.	Corporation Chair	**Timeframe to be agreed**

Date: 10th December 2024

Minute Ref	Action	Responsible Officer	Status & Deadline
3.1	***Skills Strategy*** – A Skills Strategy will be developed and presented to the Board. A small task group would be convened to support this, made up of Quality and Standards governors.	Principal / Deputy Principal October 2025	**In progress** Work will commence over the summer.
3.2	**[Redacted – commercially sensitive]** – [Redacted – commercially sensitive] and the final proposal submitted to the Board for approval.	Principal March 2025	***Complete*** Final report presented to Board – 15 July 2025.
3.3	***Ofsted Readiness Plan*** – An inspection readiness plan will be developed with the Quality & Standards Committee and progress reported to the Board once complete.	Deputy Principal October 2025	**In progress** Quality and Standards Committee appointed to lead this work. October Q&S Committee will consider a first draft.
4.1	***Curriculum Review and Gap Analysis*** –The findings and recommendations will be presented to the Board early in the New Year.	Principal March 2025 / Away Day (June)	***Complete*** This was a focus at the Strategy Away Day.

6	***<u>Student Governor role</u>*** – Student Governors were invited to observe the Quality & Standards Committee, however due to personal/work commitments were unable to attend.	Head of Governance December 2024	***<u>Complete</u>*** Student Governor recruitment remains a focus and will feature within the Governance development plan arising from the external review.