FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE of the Governing Body

Minutes of the Committee held on Tuesday 25th November 2025, 6.00pm
at Stanmore College and on MS Teams

Present:
Mr Paul Goodman (PG) – Chair of Committee (Chair)
Ms Sukhneil Athwal (SA) – Vice Chair of Committee
Mrs Annette Cast (AC) – Principal

In Attendance:
Ms Anjana Jonathan (AJ) – Director of Finance
Ms Lorna Elliott (LE) – Executive Director of Corporate Services
Ms Sayma Shah (SS) – HR Manager
Ms Justine Gooch (JG) – Director of MIS, IT & Admissions
Mr Ian Atkinson (IA) – Capital Build Project Manager
Ms Kayee Chan (KC) – Director of Governance

Apologies:
Mr Evangelos Kyveris (EK) – Governor
Mr Michael Douglas (MD) – Head of Estates

RESOLUTION
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2025

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1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

1.1 Apologies were noted from Evangelos Kyveris and Michael Douglas.

Sukhneil Athwal was introduced to all as a newly appointed governor. The Chair invited introductions, and all present briefly outlined their roles within the College.

2. Ratification of Chair and Vice Chair

2.1 It was confirmed that Paul Goodman was Chair of the Committee and Sukhneil Athwal as Vice Chair of the Committee as approved by the October Board. The Committee unanimously ratified both appointments.

3. Terms of Reference

3.1 The Director of Governance (DoG) confirmed that the Committee's Terms of Reference was drafted to reflect the revised governance structure, newly formed as the Finance and Resources Committee and was approved at the July Board meeting. The Terms of Reference was further revised to reflect the wider remit of the Committee of its oversight of College resources, with additional emphasis on its HR responsibilities.

The Committee noted the updated Terms of Reference and accepted them without further amendment, which had been approved by the Governance, Search and Remuneration Committee and noted by the Board at its October meeting this year.

4. Conflicts of Interest and Declarations

4.1 There were no conflicts of interest and declarations raised.

5. Confirmation of Quorum

5.1 The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (17 June 2025)

6.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record.

6.2 Action Points Review
Committee Restructure – had now been completed and implemented by the DoG.
Legal Services Review (5.) – tendering for legal services was in progress, a further update would be provided in due course.

7. Matters Arising Not on the Agenda

7.1 No items raised.

8. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

8.1 KPIs – MIS/Admissions Update

8.1.1 The Director of MIS, IT and Admissions presented the KPI report, focusing on October's data. Applications for 16–18 programmes were significantly up compared to the same point the previous year, with an increase of 107 applications. Adult applications were also slightly higher. The College's enrolment for 16-18-year-olds stood at 1471, comfortably above the allocation target of 1446 and ahead of the previous year's position.

8.1.2 Adult enrolment was lower than last year, owing largely to the reduced GLA funding envelope and fewer learners carried over into the new academic year. Loan-funded adult learners were slightly down because some Level 3 courses previously loan-funded had been reclassified into "Free Courses for Jobs".

8.1.3 It was also highlighted, the importance of maintaining learners above the 580 guided learning hours threshold for maximum funding, and the Committee was assured that low-GLH numbers had fallen. Noted were some early achievement data from carried-over 19+ learners and that overall retention and achievement figures were broadly in line with the previous year.

8.1.4 Withdrawal rates had decreased from 12% to 11%, although JG emphasised that a significant portion of withdrawals related to learners who had enrolled but never attended, due to the increasing trend of dual or multiple enrolments across London providers post-COVID. AC reinforced this by noting that Harrow College had also experienced similar issues and believed Stanmore's increased recruitment may have been a contributing factor.

8.1.5 The Committee also discussed conversion rates, noting that walk-in learners continued to convert at a higher rate than those who had applied in advance. Governors emphasised the importance of strengthening earlier engagement with schools to reduce reliance on late walk-in recruits. The steps being taken were outlined, including expanded school liaison work, increased marketing visibility, and the recent appointment of a new Head of Marketing.

8.2 Financial Risk Register

8.2.1 The Director of Finance provided an overview of the financial risks aligned to the Committee's remit. She reported that the College's EBITDA target stood at 6.41%, with early management accounts indicating performance closer to 9%. However, she cautioned that this figure did not yet account for the forthcoming staff pay award or the full realisation of income, and a clearer picture would emerge mid-year.

8.2.2 Key risks discussed included the pay-to-income ratio, which the Director of Finance described as the most significant financial pressure. Staff utilisation was being monitored closely through improved management accounts, enabling earlier identification of inefficiencies. Recruitment controls were also being tightened to ensure staffing remained sustainable.

8.2.3 Cash reserves and cash days remained strong, with the College having reduced its borrowing substantially last year. DfE's assessment continued to place the College in outstanding financial health. The Chair of the Committee thanked the Director of Finance and the management accountancy team for their continued diligence.

8.3 Capital Build – Project Update

8.3.1 The Project Manager provided a detailed verbal update on the capital build programme. He reported that many earlier risks had been closed following progress on the build, and new risks had emerged as the project moved into its next phase.

8.3.2 A key milestone will be the formal confirmation of decant dates by the contractor, Bouygues on 23 December. IA explained that although the contractor already has committed dates in the programme, the College is working to build in additional buffer time to ensure the new spaces can be safely occupied over the Easter period.

8.3.3 Structural works are now largely complete, and the project has entered a phase where weather is less likely to cause delays. Temporary power and heating systems are being installed to control temperatures and moisture levels within the building.

8.3.4 The period between April and the end of the academic year was described as a "pressure point", with the College and the contractor needing to share access to areas of the site. Multiple contingency plans have been drafted, all ensuring continuity of operations. By September the College should be fully relocated into the new blocks, with demolition work commencing thereafter. The Committee welcomed the clarity and asked for continued reporting on risks relevant to its remit.

8.4 Progress on Learner Recruitment

8.4.1 The soft launch for EHCP learners prior to main enrolment had proven highly effective and well received by parents. Main GCSE-result-day enrolment was significantly busier than the previous year.

8.4.2 For adult enrolment, the introduction of controlled evening pre-sessions for small groups of 25 adults reduced the overwhelming bottlenecks experienced the previous year. Recent recruitment of "Back on Track" learners had been positive, and additional pastoral support was helping to ensure retention.

8.4.3 The College remained on track to meet both ESFA and GLA funding profiles for the year and that a meeting with the GLA was scheduled to explore potential in-year growth.

9. Estates Health and Safety

9.1 Annual Estates Report

9.1.1 The Annual Estates Report was presented outlining ongoing work across the estate to strengthen day-to-day operations, support the capital build, and maintain a safe and effective environment for learners and staff. The Estates App continued to be used to report incidents and manage operations, developments to improve its security were ongoing - a web-based interim solution remained in place to ensure continuity, and governors were assured that the long-term fix was in progress.

9.1.2 The Committee discussed references in the report to student behaviour and local community feedback. The Principal clarified that, while isolated incidents did occur and local resident feedback was generally positive, with year-on-year improvements. The Committee recognised that future reports should include quantitative data to provide clearer reporting and give a balanced picture of trends to help governors monitor any areas of concern more accurately.

9.1.3 Overall, the Committee recognised the significant operational demands placed on the Estates team during the new-build programme, and noted the steps being taken to strengthen reporting, streamline processes and embed improvements. Governors thanked the team for their continued work and asked that future reports be issued earlier to support thorough scrutiny.

9.2 Annual Health & Safety Report

9.2.1 The Health and Safety Report was presented. While a number of areas for improvement were identified in the Health and Safety Report, the Committee noted that the Estates team had already taken steps to address these and had strengthened monitoring processes. The Director highlighted that the majority of compliance checks were now up to date and that recent issues - such as the positive Legionella sample earlier in the year had been promptly rectified, with follow-up testing confirming safe levels.

9.2.2 Updates were given on asbestos management, which remained low-risk and carefully monitored, and on fire safety, where the most recent evacuation drill showed significant improvement following clearer guidance and staff refresher training. The new compliance system, iAMCompliant, was supporting more consistent tracking of training and statutory checks, and uptake among staff is improving. Fire drills had improved considerably following the introduction of simplified evacuation guidance and enhanced staff training.

9.2.3 The Committee recognised the progress made over the past year and noted the Estates team's continued work to strengthen assurance. Governors were satisfied that risks were being managed appropriately and that ongoing improvements would continue to be monitored through regular reporting.

10. Human Resources – Annual HR Report

10.1 The HR Report, explained the recruitment challenges continuing across the sector, especially in STEM, business, IT infrastructure, security roles, and specialist support roles such as SEND and LSAs. A recent SEND specialist candidate had withdrawn after accepting an offer, further illustrating sector pressure.

10.2 The HR Department's key priorities was outlined, including the near-completion of the submission for the London Mayor's Good Work Standard, strengthened sickness management processes, enhanced management training across HR processes, and improved induction for both new teachers and support staff. Attendance at university job fairs continued to support recruitment for trainee teacher pathways.

10.3 Workforce development remained a strategic priority, with more focus being placed on structured career pathways and secondment opportunities. Two recent sabbaticals had supported staff development, with one staff member securing external employment following her placement and another returning with enriched skills.

10.4 Employment contract templates were being updated following new versions issued by Irwin Mitchell for May 2025. The forthcoming Employment Rights Bill would require further policy updates, which HR was preparing to implement.

10.5 Governors thanked the Executive Director of HR and the HR Manager for their report and noted the updates and ongoing work.

11. Financial Reporting

11.1 The Director of Finance introduced the suite of financial reports, noting that they provided a comprehensive update on the College's financial position for the year to date, alongside the draft statutory financial statements prepared in line with the DfE Accounts Direction. The Committee was reminded that, while the College remained in a healthy financial position overall, a number of emerging pressures would need to be monitored closely over the coming months.

11.2 The key elements of the draft Financial Statements, highlighted that the College continued to demonstrate strong cash reserves, robust financial health indicators and sound financial controls. Governors were reminded that the statements would also be scrutinised by external auditors and the Audit Committee before final approval, but that no significant risks or unusual variances had been identified at this stage.

11.3 In relation to Management Accounts and in-year performance, the Director reported that income lines were performing broadly in line with expectations. Strong 16–18 recruitment, together with stabilising 19+ provision, was supporting overall income confidence, although Adult Education Budget income remained sensitive to learner retention and achievement profiles. It was highlighted that some income had yet to fully materialise at this early point in the financial cycle, and that clearer trends would be visible by mid-year.

11.4 On expenditure, staffing remained the College's largest cost line, and governors were informed that the pay-to-income ratio, although currently within acceptable range, would be an area to watch closely in light of national cost pressures and forthcoming pay negotiations. The Director of Finance explained that tighter workforce planning and improved vacancy controls had already strengthened day-to-day management of staffing budgets. Non-pay spend was broadly on track, with a number of areas, such as estates and ICT - being carefully phased to ensure alignment with the capital build and operational needs.

11.5 The Director of Finance provided update on the Treasury and Reserves Management, confirming that the College continued to maintain a strong cash-days position and that reserves remained healthy and in line with sector expectations. She noted that the significant reduction in borrowing last year had strengthened liquidity and reduced financial exposure. Capital Expenditure Monitoring showed that the College's planned capital spend was progressing as expected, with careful alignment to the Condition Funding priorities and the broader rebuild programme.

11.6 The Committee welcomed the continued clarity and robustness of the financial reporting and acknowledged the challenges of navigating pay pressures, inflationary trends and capital-programme dependencies. Members noted the importance of maintaining discipline in staffing planning and expenditure phasing and thanked the Director and her team for the high-quality financial oversight provided.

11. Financial Reporting

11.1 Draft Financial Statements (prepared in line with DfE Accounts Direction)

11.1.1 The Director of Finance presented the draft Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July, confirming that they had been prepared in accordance with the DfE Accounts Direction and relevant accounting standards. She highlighted that the statements showed the College to be in a stable financial position, with a positive year-end outcome and no material audit adjustments anticipated at this stage. Governors were reminded that the draft accounts would also be reviewed in detail by the Audit Committee and external auditors before being recommended to the Board for approval. The Committee noted the position and was satisfied that the draft statements reflected a true and fair view of the College's financial performance and position.

11.2 Initial Financial Assessment (against DfE Framework benchmarks)

11.2.1 The Committee received the initial financial assessment against the DfE financial health framework and noted that the College continued to be assessed in the "Outstanding" financial health category. The Director of Finance drew attention to the key indicators underpinning this assessment, including strong cash days, low borrowing and an EBITDA margin currently above internal target, while reminding governors that the year-end outturn would be influenced by the outcome of pay negotiations and the timing of income recognition. Governors welcomed the continued strong financial rating and recognised the importance of maintaining this position as the College progresses through the capital build period.

11.3 Management Accounts & Year-to-Date Monitoring

11.3.1 The Director of Finance introduced the latest Management Accounts and year-to-date monitoring report. She explained that, at this relatively early point in the financial year, income lines were broadly tracking in line with expectations, supported by strong 16–18 recruitment and a steady 19+ position, with some volatility remaining around adult funding profiles. Expenditure was also broadly on track, with staffing costs within planned parameters, although the pay-to-income ratio was identified as a key metric to watch closely in the context of national pay pressures. Governors were advised that a clearer picture of in-year performance would emerge at mid-year, once more income and expenditure had crystallised. The Committee noted the report and emphasised the need for continued close monitoring of staffing costs and any emerging pressures.

11.4 Treasury & Reserves Management

11.4.1 The Director of Finance reported that the College's cash position and liquidity remained strong, with cash days ahead of the minimum internal benchmark and external loan balances significantly reduced following repayments made in the previous year. Reserves were described as healthy and appropriate for the College's size and risk profile. The Committee noted that the current treasury position provided resilience during the build programme and offered some flexibility to manage strategic priorities, while reiterating the importance of maintaining prudent oversight and avoiding over-commitment in the context of future funding uncertainty.

11.5 Capital Expenditure Monitoring

11.5.1 The Committee received an update on capital expenditure against the approved capital programme. The Director of Finance confirmed that capital spend was progressing in line with plan, with a strong alignment between the College's internal capital priorities and the wider DfE-funded rebuild. She reminded governors that the College had a defined window within which to utilise its capital allocations and confirmed that the phasing of expenditure was being carefully managed to ensure full use of eligible funds while maintaining adequate contingency. Governors noted the update and were reassured that capital investment remained controlled, strategically focused and closely tied to estate condition and curriculum needs.

11.6 Direct Delivery / Property Matters Report

11.6.1 The Director of Finance provided a brief overview of direct-delivery and property-related matters not covered under the main capital build update. This included minor works on the legacy estate, compliance-related improvements and preparatory works required to support decant and occupation of new spaces as phases complete. The Committee noted that these works were being tightly coordinated with the main project to avoid duplication and unnecessary cost. Governors were satisfied that property matters were being actively managed and that any significant issues arising would be escalated to the Committee or Board as appropriate.

12. Policies

12.1 No policies were scheduled for review or approval at this meeting.

13. Meeting Review, Learning and Reflection

13.1 The Chair of the Committee invited reflections on the meeting. Members expressed that the discussions had been thorough and constructive, though they reiterated the need for Estates papers to be circulated with greater lead time to allow for fuller scrutiny.

14. Date of Next Meeting

14.1 The next meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee will take place on Tuesday 10 March 2026.

Part I of the meeting closed at 7.30pm
The meeting then moved into Part II confidential business and non-members withdrew.

Kayee Chan, Director of Governance

Schedule of Actions

	Action	**Responsible**	**By When**	**Progress**
	11th March 2025			
5.	Legal contract to go through the tender process and advice sought	Principal/ DoG	Summer 2025	In progress
	25th November 2025			
8.2.2	Continue to monitor the pay-to-income ratio closely and report back on any emerging pressures in line with mid-year forecasts.	Dir. of Finance/ AJ	Spring 2026	
9.1.2	Ensure future Estates Reports include clearer quantitative data (e.g., incident volumes, trends and mitigations) and present a more balanced overview of estates and behaviour-related matters.	Head of Estates/ MD	Spring 2026	
11.4	Maintain oversight of the phasing of capital expenditure to ensure full utilisation of eligible capital funds within required timeframes, and report any variances to the Committee.	Dir. of Finance/ AJ		