

**Meeting of the Governing Board held on Wednesday 25 June 2025**

**Present:**

David Brown - Chair of the Board  
Gillian Bardin – Vice Chair of the Board  
Guy Thomas – Chair of Finance  
Jim Sutcliffe – Chair of Audit  
Philip Turner – Chair of HR  
Steve Wilkinson – Vice Chair of Curriculum and Standards  
David Tomlinson – Vice Chair of Audit  
Lukman Patel – Independent Governor  
Paul Henderson – Independent Governor  
Paul Ragnall – Independent Governor  
Vikki Goddard – Independent Governor  
Sharon Roscoe – Independent Governor  
Isabelle Balfour – Student Governor  
Hassan Khalil – Student Governor

**In attendance:**

Simone Lomas - Clerk  
Kate Wallace – Interim Principal  
Neil Burrows – Director of Skills, Innovation and Employer Engagement  
Nina Parkin – Assistant Principal – Adult and University Studies  
Sarah Crossley – Assistant Principal – Sixth Form Studies  
Natalie Lewis- Lamb – Compliance Officer

**Apologies for Absence:**

Fiona Lugiano – Chair of Curriculum and Standards  
David Easton – Staff Governor  
Stuart Arnfield – Finance Director  
Richard Thorley – Vice Chair of Finance

**Absent:**

Karen Buchanan – Principal

**Community Activity Engagement Presentation**

- 1 Learners represented their divisions from across the College, they all spoke about their experiences of how their learning contributed to supporting the community.
- 2 Sarah Crossley, Assistant Principal Sixth Form Studies; Simone Lomas, Head of Central Services and Clerk to the Corporation and Susan Williams, Finance Manager updated Governors on the support and experience Burnley College students receive at Burnley College.
- 3 Sarah Crossley began by explaining that the ‘all round’ support students receive aligns with the core values of the College and that the College’s offer is very much about supporting, enhancing and celebrating students’ experiences.

- 4 Simone Lomas explained to governors the process when applying for financial support and of the types of support available to them, all this is balanced with the need to be discrete in the way students access their support.
- 5 Susan Williams explained to governors the history and background to initiatives that go above and beyond to support students with the greatest needs, including with clothing, essential items and food.
- 6 David Brown thanked all the learners and staff for sharing their professional, personal and academic experiences.

#### **Declaration of Interest**

- 7 Jim Sutcliffe noted that himself and Philip Turner featured in the Search and Governance Committee minutes.

#### **Draft Minutes of the Board meeting held on 26 March 2025**

- 8 The minutes were accepted as an accurate record proposed by Jim Sutcliffe and seconded by Vikki Goddard.

#### **Matters arising from the minutes**

- 9 Please refer to Actions Tracker

#### **Strategic Planning – 30 April 2025**

- 10 David Brown detailed the items that were presented at the meeting. The meeting was hosted in the University building and began with an update on the Campus Plan and Accountability Statement.
- 11 Governors were then split into three carousels and received updates and training in relation to the Financial Ratios, Employer Engagement Strategy and the Governor's Training Plan

#### **Student Executive Board (HE) – 12 May 2025**

- 12 Nina Parkin reported that the key focus at the meeting had been the Access and Participation Plan.
- 13 The Board worked through the purpose of the Access and Participation Plan including equal opportunities, access to Higher Education and completion of courses and of the changes as part of the new plan.

- 14 Students were asked their views with respect to Burnley College University Courses (BCUC) offering an inclusive environment. Feedback was positive with some actions for Nina to consider.
- 15 Jim Sutcliffe asked whether paying for trips for students was the correct use of public money. Nina explained that she believed it was in this instance as it is about giving learners opportunities that they are not able to afford themselves and creating an inclusive experience for all learners, although understood why the question was asked.
- 16 David Brown noted that the minutes included lots of acronyms that were not always clear to understand. Nina agreed to reduce the amount of acronyms going forward.
- 17 Sharon Roscoe asked whether apprentices are invited to the meetings. Nina confirmed that both HE and FE apprentices are invited.

#### **Quality Committee – 13 May 2025**

- 18 Kate Wallace noted that the Committee had reviewed the College's Access and Participation Plan and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance.

#### **Academic Board – 14 May 2025**

- 19 Kate Wallace explained that staff had been asked to review the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (EDI); review the College's Higher Education Strategy and the new Health and Safety structure. Any actions will be presented to the first Academic Board of the new year.

#### **Search & Governance Committee – 14 May 2025**

- 20 Gillian Bardin reported that the new staff governor appointment will be made in November 2025 and that both Jim Sutcliffe and Philip Turner's Term of Office will be extended for 12 months to provide continuity at this time. The Committee had received an update of the actions from the External Review of Governance and that good progress was being made.
- 21 Sharon Roscoe referred to the initial Ofsted report that had made a recommendation to appoint a Governor from the FE Sector. Simone Lomas explained that there was one vacancy on the Board and that although the College would always appoint the best person for the role they would actively search for someone with a FE background.

#### **Human Resources Committee – 14 May 2025**

- 22 Philip Turner provided details of the meeting; that Governors had received a presentation from James Stott, Network Services Manager and Nicholas Waldron, Maths and English Lecturer on the AI applications that can assist teachers in planning and creating lessons and how efficiencies can be created by the using the applications.
- 23 Philip confirmed that the HR Committee had agreed to move the Pay Award resolution forward to the Finance Committee for consideration.

### **Student Executive Board (FE) – 15 May 2025**

- 24 Sarah Crossley updated Governors on the key developments that had been discussed at the meeting:
- Student Executive Board format
  - Celebration/Presentation/Awards Events

Izzie Balfour had previously asked for consideration to be given for the celebration events to include awards for attitudes and behaviours not just academic achievements. Sarah confirmed that the College's Awards for Excellence event would include some new awards this year that celebrated those students who had demonstrated excellence in relation to the Core Values.

- 25 The meeting was positive with some valid and useful points made by students that will be considered and fed back at the next meeting.

### **Curriculum & Standards Committee – 21 May 2025**

- 26 David Brown explained that the Committee had received an interesting presentation on the New Ofsted Inspection Framework, explaining that it was still under consultation, which would likely delay the inspections planned for the new academic year. David confirmed that the BCUC Higher Education Strategy had been unanimously approved.

### **Audit Committee – 11 June 2025**

- 27 Jim Sutcliffe reported that Governors had received a presentation from James Stott about the penetration testing exercise that had been conducted and concluded that the outcome had been positive. James also updated governors on the progress made to the network configuration and that security had been significantly improved.
- 28 Jim also wished it to be noted that the Audit Committee were extremely grateful for the additional work that Susan had undertaken in Stuart's absence.
- 29 Lukman Patel asked about Governor involvement in the drafting of the Audit Plan and whether the scope of the audits should be widened. Gillian Bardin confirmed that the plan was to involve Governors going forward.
- 30 Gillian Bardin asked whether the College was aware of the practices at other colleges when providing reassurance to Governors in relation to risk.

**Action: Finance Director**

- 31 Sharon Roscoe asked why the College was aware of the dates when the penetration testing would take place. Susan explained that privileges had to be extended to the tester to give them access to the network system to allow them to conduct the testing. Jim explained that the Internal Audit Plan for 2025/2026 would be agreed once the new internal auditors had been appointed and would include Governors when deciding on the areas to audit.

#### **Safeguarding Termly Meeting - 11 June 2024**

- 32 Gillian Bardin explained that case numbers continue to be high, but the team had predicted the increase and the structure and working arrangements had allowed them to be prepared for the increase.
- 33 The legislation around safeguarding is set to change in the next 12 months and the new Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) has been delayed due to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools' Bill making its way through Parliament.
- 34 There will also be changes to the safeguarding reporting and structure during 2025/26 to take account of the best practice advocated in the ETF Training modules. This included reporting on the impact of safeguarding, improved reporting to Governors and the establishment of an operational safeguarding group to include Facilities, Human Resources, Information Technology, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Management Team.

#### **Finance Committee – 18 June 2025 - Confidential**

- 35 The Committee agreed to an in principle pay award but any pay award decision still requires the approval of the Full Governing Board.

### **Strategic Objectives and Goals 2024-2027**

36 Kate Wallace introduced the report, outlining previous goal changes over the last few years. Kate explained that there are no proposed updates to the Goals or Objectives for the 2025/26 Strategic Plan and that at an appropriate time following the publication of the Ofsted report and following the outcome of the investigation that all stakeholders including employers, staff, partners, parents and learners are consulted fully on a new strategic plan.

37 Jim Sutcliffe referred to Goal 4 and requested that the reference to May 2018 be removed.

**Action: SMT**

38 Governors unanimously agreed that all goals remain the same for the 2025/26 academic year and agreed to the proposed consultation with all stakeholders takes place at the appropriate time.

### **Health and Safety Update 2024-25**

39 Neil Burrows provided an update of the Health and Safety operations since the last meeting.

40 Neil summarised the breakdown of accidents; the near misses and that there had been no reportable accidents. There had been a total of 20 inspections across the College between March and May 2025 and that staff training continues to take place.

41 Neil presented the Health and Safety Policy for annual review and approval which include amendments to roles and responsibilities.

42 Sharon Roscoe referred to Point 10 in relation to the outstanding actions from Inspections, she asked that the reasons for their non-completion to be presented in future reports.

**Action: Finance Director**

43 Guy Thomas asked whether the actions from previous inspections have been concluded as they are not reported on Table 3. Neil confirmed that Governors would be provided with assurance of the progress of all outstanding actions going forward.

**Action: Finance Director**

44 David Tomlinson asked whether we operated a risk-based approach to higher risk areas in the College. Michelle Blakey explained that higher risk areas are inspected monthly, medium every alternate month and all others on a 3 monthly basis. Michelle agreed for this information to be presented at future meetings.

**Action: Michelle Blakey and Finance Director**

- 45 Gillian Bardin referred to David Shorrock's report in relation to the bolting down of weightlifting rigs in Fitness Evolution, as an example of formally closing down actions. Michelle advised she would include actions from all external and internal reports into the auditing software (Safety Culture) that the College uses to monitor and log Health and Safety actions.

**Action: Michelle Blakey**

- 46 Governors noted progress made on Health and Safety during 2024/25 and unanimously approved the annual update of the College's Health and Safety Policy.

### **Update on Governance Issues for Summer term 2024/25**

- 47 Simone Lomas introduced the report which covered five key areas.

**i) Confidential items**

The minutes being considered had been redacted in advance of the meeting for Governor consideration. Governors unanimously approved for the minutes to be published on the website with the highlighted redactions.

**Action: Clerk**

**ii) Corporation Seal**

It was noted that the Corporation Seal had not been used during this period.

**iii) Membership Issues**

Simone Lomas advised that there remains one external Business Governor vacancy on the Audit Committee and one internal Staff Governor vacancy. It was agreed at the last Search and Governance Committee to delay the recruitment of the Staff Governor vacancy until the Term of Office expires for the current Staff Governor, and recruit and appoint both staff governors at the same time. Governors noted the update.

**iv) The Code of Good Governance Update**

Simone advised governors of the updates that have been made to the Code by the Association of Colleges (AoC) since it was presented to Governors at the Strategic Planning Event in May 2025. Governors noted the report.

**v) Instruments and Articles of Government**

Simone advised governors that the Instruments and Articles of Government have been updated including the Action Plan to reflect best practice in accordance with the FE Commissioner and the Department for Education guidelines in relation to the Terms of Office of Governors. The expectation is that Governors hold office for no more than two terms equating to eight years. Currently the Board has five governors who go beyond this and there is increasing pressure from the regulatory bodies to comply with the guidelines. After a lengthy discussion that included the impact of the changes to the Board Governors unanimously approved the updated Instruments and Articles subject to the following changes:

- Points 21 and 22 to be removed
- Point 23 to be moved to point 4 and changed to state 'At the end of a first term of office, members will be eligible to be appointed for one further term, subject to a rigorous review of the member's contribution'.

**Action: Clerk**

48 Governors noted the report.

### **Financial Forecast and Plan 2025 to 2027 (Confidential)**

49 The plan is submitted to the Board for review and approval, prior to submission to the Department for Education (DfE). The Plan has been separately considered by the Finance Committee ahead of the Governing Board meeting.

50 David Brown asked about the deletion of vacant positions in relation to saving on staffing costs through natural wastage when people choose to leave the organisation. Kate Wallace explained that it was on a case-by-case basis and provided examples of this is practice.

51 The Board welcomed the approach the College was taking, commending them on the positive position the College is in. They unanimously approved the Financial Plan for 2025/27 for submission to the Department for Education, proposed by Lukman Patel and seconded by Guy Thomas.

### **Annual Accountability Statement 2025**

52 Kate Wallace introduced the updated College Accountability Statement following governor feedback from the Strategic Planning Event held in May 2025, of which many points have now been incorporated.

53 Jim Sutcliffe noted that the statement didn't look to have the changes suggested included. Kate agreed to check that the changes had been made to the statement.

**Action: Interim Principal**

54 Governors unanimously approved the Annual Accountability Statement for submission to the DfE and to be published on the College website subject to the changes being made.

### **Corporate Performance 2024 & 2025**

55 Kate Wallace introduced the report and outlined the format in terms of the development of the report. Members were invited to question the relevant senior manager on any topics they wished further information on. Kate referred to Goal 1 (paragraph 9) explaining that there were no changes as a result of the current situation. In relation to Goal 9 there is a new EDI focus included.

56 Gillian Bardin referred to Goal 5 (Strategic Partnerships). Gill asked if there had been a different approach in the absence of Karen. Kate explained and provided examples of the successful outcomes from the work that SMT and in particular Neil Burrows was undertaking with stakeholders.



57 Governors noted the content of the report.

### **Governors' Strategic Planning Overview Document**

58 Kate Wallace advised members that this document provides a strategic brief on key issues affecting the College, emphasising the Student Applications. Kate explained the touch points and keeping warm activities that had been taking place to convert the applications to enrolments in September; they include Taster Weeks, Preview Days and BC Programmes.

59 Governors were pleased to note the report.

### **Stakeholder Surveys**

60 Kate Wallace provided an overview of the context behind the formal and informal mechanisms in relation to the surveys and of the actions that had been implemented across all provisions.

61 They concluded that to ensure consistency in the Quality of Education across the College, stakeholder surveys are embedded within the College's Quality Cycle, to complement existing quality activities, such as learning walks, deep dives, accountability boards and divisional reviews.

62 Feedback from stakeholder surveys enables the College to monitor the quality of provision from an employer, learner and parental perspective, to shape future programme developments.

63 Stakeholder feedback is collated and analysed for patterns to inform staff development activity, contributing to curriculum Quality Improvement Plans, in addition to divisional and College Self-Assessment Reports.

64 Lukman Patel asked whether the College had considered giving incentives to the stakeholders. Kate confirmed that incentives are offered, for example, to encourage the completion of the surveys.

65 David Tomlinson noted that the Apprenticeship surveys were not particularly positive and suggested that the actions to improve them should be included in the QIP.

**Action: Interim Principal**

66 Vikki Goddard asked whether the results could be presented using a dashboard. Kate agreed for a dashboard to be included in the QIP

**Action: Interim Principal**

67 Governors noted the report.

### **Single Equality Policy**

68 Nina Parkin confirmed that most Governors have seen the policy previously as it is an annual report, although is being reviewed in collaboration with the National Centre for Diversity. The policy has been consulted through the Academic Board process and feedback obtained.

- 69 Lukman Patel asked what steps were being taken to incorporate the transition in relation to the Supreme Court Ruling for Human Rights. Nina Parkin confirmed that the new legislation will be discussed, considered using the guidance at the next EDI Committee to support students and staff in relation to the ruling.
- 70 Governors unanimously approved the Single Equality Policy, proposed by David Brown and seconded by Vikki Goddard.

### **College Improvement Plan (QIP)**

- 71 Kate Wallace introduced the report explaining the QIP is created in line with the College Self Assessment Report (SAR) where feedback, data and performance is reviewed and internally validated through divisional and support area reviews comparing performance against national averages and College targets.
- 72 The College QIP focuses on key priorities linked to the College Core Values, that drive meaningful improvements by outlining actions and timescales which correspond to the following judgement areas within the Education Inspection Framework:
- Quality of Education
  - Behaviours and Attitudes
  - Personal Development
  - Leadership and Management
  - Contribution to meeting Skills Needs
- 73 The Governing Board play a vital role in overseeing and supporting developments to the College QIP ensuring that strategies remain effective and impactful.
- 74 Governors considered the College QIP and proposed the following actions:
- That the impact of each action is presented in the QIP
  - That a column detailing the progress of each action is included and that those actions that are 'in progress' are minimal.
  - That the QIP continues to be presented to the Board.

**Action: SMT**

### **Governors' Self Assessment Report 2023/24**

- 75 Simone introduced the report and advised governors that the Governance Self Assessment Report and Action Plan have been factually updated to reflect 2023/24 results and achievements following suggestions made at the Strategic Planning Event last year.
- 84 Governors considered and unanimously approved the Governors' Self Assessment report relating to governors' performance during the year 2023/24.

### **Burnley College Access and Participation Plan 2026/27 to 2029/30**

- 85 Nina Parkin and Natalie Lewis-Lamb introduced the report explaining the Access and Participation Plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access, succeed in and progress from higher education.

- 86 Lukman Patel asked about the support provided to disabled students; Natalie explained that the College has developed disabled inclusion packages that include initiatives that provide wrap-around support for the students. Nina also noted that students are supported when applying for Disability Student Allowance (DSA) and have provided specialist support for students.
- 87 Lukman Patel asked about whether there were objectives for the College to measure themselves against. Nina confirmed that there are KPI's included in the Access and Participation Plan which will be tracked and monitored and reported on. Nina also added that she is working with staff from across the divisions and support areas to map out the number of hours and costings in terms of staffing and resourcing.
- 88 Governors unanimously considered and approved the new Access and Participation Plan for 2026/27 to 2029/30.

Approved by Chair, David Brown

Signed: David Brown

Date: 22 September 2025

NOTE: Final approval of the minutes will be at the following Board meeting.