

the inclusion of levels of deprivation statistics, national comparators, the communities served and how the college responds.

Governors were interested in the numbers of high needs learners reported and queried if there were any national benchmarks/comparators that could be drawn as it is suspected that CWA most likely has a higher proportion of high needs learners than other college settings. Some comparators are available and as college reporting strengthens in response to the new approach to Ofsted reporting, these will be included.

6 Operational Oversight Report (including HE numbers)

A diagram had been included in the report to explain the 'purple (perilous) status' and withdrawal process. Being on purple status indicates that a learner is at risk of withdrawal. Not every 'purple' learner will withdraw as the diagram illustrates three lines of defence that are exhausted before a withdrawal is authorised.

It was noted that for the fourth year the withdrawal rate (pre-census) is lower than 3%. An update will be provided to the Corporation at the meeting to be held in December 2025 noting that there is typically an increase of withdrawals historically in the month of November. Governors were interested to know how the retention rate would be maintained throughout the year, noting that the number of withdrawals at the beginning of the year are positive but then learners drop off close to the year end. An analysis of the higher volumes of withdrawals last year has instigated 'Step into' level 2 and level 3 programmes (Maths, English, Digital, and Transferable skills) and every opportunity to focus on retention (KPI 92%) is taken.

It will be important to closely monitor, track and evaluate the hypothesis of these programmes from a learner experience, quality, and delivery perspective to ensure that these programmes are delivering a good experience for the learner and positive outcomes. It is equally important that these programmes are not used to sideline learners who are thought will not be able to progress so are moved onto 'step into' programmes. Maths and English are a focus this year particularly with the increased in hours of delivery (condition of funding) so these 'step into' programmes are really supporting learners to step into appropriate programmes and next year there may be more of a need to introduce more lower-level step into programmes to accommodate many learners who don't meet entry level requirements for vocational programmes.

Looking at the data reported, governors acknowledged the positive retention rates for 16-18s but raised concern of the attendance rates for adults which was particularly poor across most areas. It was recognised that poor attendance doesn't always correlate to poor retention or achievement. Every absence is known and adults often have other pressures of life (carer/parent responsibilities, work commitments) that get in the way of attending college.

Governors noted the high adult retention rate and therefore it was questioned if CWA is good at attracting those who would otherwise be NEET and providing them with what they need to achieve. Another governor said it would be useful to understand the qualitative side of the data and the reasons why learners are at risk of withdrawal, acknowledging that it is not necessarily what the college is offering but withdrawals are in part due to the attitudes and behaviours of young people. Is there therefore a wider piece of work needed to drill down into the data of those that leave, to understand where they go, and if they end up NEET. There is a risk next year as the transition of the shared prosperity fund ends in March 2026 and this may impact several NEET/vulnerable learners and continuation of delivery. It was noted that the wider risk is not just the potential loss of funding for a period, but the local government restructure and potential devolution deal will also impact so it may be necessary to review the college strategic risk register to reflect this.

HoG

7 Meeting Skills Needs Curriculum Planning Strategy

The review of the strategy has drawn out a focus on retention, 'step up' programmes, changes around English and maths and the impact on future qualification levels. The

strategy expands on inclusivity and references the White Paper that will influence future iterations of the strategy. Meeting skills needs and CWAs engagement with stakeholders remains key and a focus on progression and destinations. Governors asked how employer input can be evidenced in terms of curriculum planning. There are projects, assignments and planning, schemes of learning and delivery and this has been seen for example in animal care, but this needs to be seen consistently across the college. Acknowledging that there are more young people moving into employment, governors asked if feedback is obtained from employers that shows that these young people do have the skills that they need in the workplace. CWA periodically gathers employer surveys and the career's fairs are also good opportunities where feedback is gathered.

S Moore and S Anstiss joined the meeting at 9.30am

8 Priority Item 1 – Apprenticeships/Technology

It was reported that apprenticeship statistics are moving in the right direction. Currently there is a focus though on electrical installation as there are a number of fails that are causing concern. To date there are 193 new starts on the system and flexibility in the team to increase this in year. There is a lot of interest in early years programmes so there is some confidence that the recruitment target will be met/achieved. The team is engaged and managing impending changes to standards, but this is considered manageable.

It was reported that the number of learners passed the end date has reduced and is estimated to reduce again in January 2026 to 7% after several plumbing learners go through. All apprenticeship accountability measures are green which is positive and governors were complimentary of the effort and notable positive change in this regard.

Governors queried why there is a notable downturn with electrical installation that has in the past performed well. This appears to be due to multiple factors; staff training, two new assessors in the team, many businesses are struggling with bigger contractors, local employers struggling financially. Management is aware of the issues and are responding/dealing with them.

Work has been paused on the student portal. Staff training will be a gradual process, and the team is ahead of changes although some functionality and level of testing is not in place so the project is stalled until functionality can be tested and a pilot with one standard will be rolled out before opening it to the wider range of apprenticeships. Time is being taken now to evaluate functionality of Off the Job and training plans to ensure that these are applied consistently.

S Moore and S Anstiss left the meeting and R Boast joined the meeting at 9.45am

9 Priority Item 2 – A Level Provision

In summary the report evidenced several strengths noted by Phillip Elliot who led the external APR visit. The APR looked at what was happening in the classroom and the experience of students which were reported to be positive. There are some recommendations and urgent action suggested, and these have been assimilated into an A Level QIP. Things are being put in place that will impact the new starts in 2026 and there must be trust that the team are baking in the improvement needed to make a positive impact.

The Principal/CEO commented that it was good to see the urgency since the last meeting. It appears that the biggest complexity is the structure of A Level provision (matrix management) and the recommendations made are around capacity, ownership and capability so governors were interested to know how the team plans to deal with such fundamental challenges. The Head of Public Sector Services confirmed that capacity remains a problem at Programme Manager level where dual roles are conflicting priority. Support is being provided to free time and space to enable a more focussed space for A Levels and there is a commitment at Head of Faculty level to build and rapidly improve. Whole college team meetings and tutor training planned for the New Year.

Governors acknowledged the planned QIP actions and noted that these will take time to embed before improvement will be realised. On page 2, there is an action with a target date of May 2026 about reducing duplicated tasks and governors asked why it would take until May 2026 to resolve. This task is dependent upon the CIS Team aligning reports with the matrix management so May 2026 is considered a comfortable and realistic timeline. There are other aspects of this action (collating APRs to a centralised repository) that have been achieved quicker. The committee will be informed on progress at the next meeting to be held in March 2026.

Noting the recommendation to implement a system for homework and independent study monitoring had a target date of December, governors asked if this was on track to be piloted and fully implemented. Progress was reported to be good, and it is expected to complete and fully rolled out on time.

R Boast left the meeting at 9.55am

10 Headline Quality Improvement Plan

There are still 12 improvement areas however one has since been closed, there are three blue (completed/achieved), and one paused (grey). The others continue with reasonable and/or good progress. The next iteration of the QIP will look different as new additions/changes will be imported arising from the whole college self-assessment report. Governors asked that A Level provision is added to the QIP and likewise governors asked for a thorough review to ensure that all areas for improvement are captured. This review will take place in December 2025.

11 Learning and Curriculum Report

This is the first report from the new Head of Quality who had included a greater focus on teaching, learning and assessment. New faculty structures were provided in the report and expansion plans for animal care. The lesson visit process is under review so more work will be done to improve consistency in approach and stretch the process over a longer period so not all are done in the first term. PDPs are also under review. Teacher Education continues to grow with 21 signed up for the Diploma in Teaching, starting January 2026. Survey completion rates on average overall are 33.2% so a review of questions and process will be completed to improve completion rates.

Acknowledging the growth in initial teacher training governors questioned what this meant in terms of upskilling the wider workforce. It appears that there is some inconsistency in approach or practice around learner assessment feedback, so what is being done to unify approach? The Head of Quality is yet to triangulate and see the whole picture, but the aim is to collate the picture and look beyond the attainment of the qualification with a CPD programme, a library of topics to extend learning beyond the qualification. There is also inconsistency in the learning practice between faculties that the Head of Quality is looking at to bring a more cohesive and united approach from onboarding through to ITT completion.

The Chair commented that the data in the report for faculty F01 showed that only 2 of the 43 observations had been planned so was this because 41 haven't been planned but should've been planned for or are they still to be planned but later down the line. This faculty is one of the biggest faculties in terms of student numbers so governors suggested that observations should perhaps be prioritised. The Head of Quality acknowledged that this process required a complete overhaul to provide better understanding and visibility, and they are currently working through this systematically.

12 Complaints 2024/25

In the 2024/25 academic year there were 92 formal complaints recorded. The most common category was staff/student interaction (29), often involving communication and safeguarding concerns, particularly with vulnerable learners. More training to support staff to deal with these scenarios will be delivered to staff. The report will no longer include the 'other' category. This has been removed as an option so that complaints can be categorised appropriately. The average resolution time is longer than hoped (11.5

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days) although this year it is tracking at 4.2days. Noting that some of the complaints highlighted safeguarding concerns these are being tracked in more detail and the actions taken so far were detailed in the report. Automated responses are also being considered although in some regard complaints need a more personalised response. Finally, governors suggested to see complaints broken down by category for each faculty as this may highlight complaint trends in a particular area.

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It was noted that the compliments email address has been resurrected, and governors were reminded that these can be viewed in the weekly CWA Connect Newsletter.

C Pelling joined the meeting at 10.20am

13 Learner Voice

The report provided a summary of activities this autumn term. Student Ambassador recruitment has been positive with 7 student ambassadors across 8 areas recruited, with more interest expressed. Online meetings are being trialled to maximise attendance and participation and to provide students with the opportunity to talk to key staff about the things that they want to know or have questions about. The first meeting was with the Head of Property Services and students have raised questions about work experience so a member of the Careers and Destinations team will be meeting with students at the next meeting.

14 Student Satisfaction

The report provided a summary of the last student survey completed this term. Student feedback indicates that just under 90% of students found the application process easy, but there is further work needed with the 10% that struggled. The team is working with the admissions team to simplify future processes for students. The results of the survey also highlighted that 10% of students did not feel that PREVENT was covered at induction and around 5% reporting that safeguarding, e-safety and British values were not covered.

Positively, students were satisfied with their induction experience with 97% feeling it was good or very good and nearly 96% of students feel that their tutors have high expectations for them at college. A large majority (97%) of students also feel safe at college.

The Chair highlighted that the response rate was 58% so there was still a large proportion of students that we don't know what their experience is, so governors were interested to know what could and would be done to follow up with those who did not complete the survey. The Head of Quality and the Head of Learner Experience are working on this together. There are multiple mechanisms for students to participate in surveys, not one single source, so an analysis of the most effective ways to reach students is being investigated. Governors wondered if using incentives would encourage more to participate, but incentives are used.

15 Single Equality Action Plan 2025/26

The action plan is an iterative document that has been updated. The highlight of the report was the 'One College Walking' event which united staff and students who all participated in this charitable event to raise awareness of the prevention of suicide of young people. The team are looking to develop new ways for student ambassadors to engage who would like to be Inclusion Ambassadors.

F Miller left the meeting at 10.30am

The Chair acknowledged the positivity of student engagement which of course feeds into better retention and student experience. On the action plan it was noted that the target achievement date to review and implement a clear process/policy for staff (against the objective to ensure equitable access to free meals) has been moved from September 2025 to December 2026 which seemed a long review period. It was acknowledged that this was an error and would be corrected for the next iteration of the plan. Likewise, the action for effective support for students with additional needs was August 2025 and is now August 2026. It was acknowledged that this could move forward

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faster so the Head of Learner Experience will talk to the team to see what can be implemented sooner. The Principal/CEO commented that it was National White Ribbon Day yesterday and asked what CWA students had been involved in at the college. This was included in tutorial sessions and resources were provided, and the college will be involved in the 16 days of action, and the marketing team will be posting messages and releases over these days to highlight not just what is happening nationally but how students have been involved in various activities.

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C Pelling and R Petto left the meeting at 10.35am

16 Strategic Targets 2025/26 Progress Review

The report shows good and reasonable progress made with just two 2 behind target, the HE strategy and growth plan that has been paused, and learner engagement and retention with week one showing lower retention rates across the faculties compared to the same period the year before.

17 Any Other Business

The Chair asked if there was an opportunity for governors to go 'back to the floor' with SMT members in apprenticeship week in February 2026. The HoG will see if there is an appetite for this with governors and the Chair expressed her interest to participate.

HoG

18 Chair's Items for Briefing to Corporation

- The committee received and considered the Headline Self-Assessment report confirming that the college is 'good' with a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.
- The SAR includes deprivation national comparators, highlights the increased enrolments and retention figures, which remain a real focus for the committee.
- The committee recommends the SAR to the Corporation for approval.
- The Operational Oversight Report focused on meeting targets on enrolments and confirmed strong pre-census retention.
- The committee recommends the Meeting Skills Needs Curriculum Planning Strategy to the Corporation for approval.
- Apprenticeship achievement rates are improving, and all accountability measures are green.
- The committee received the A Level report and comprehensive quality improvement plan enabling governors to monitor and track progress through regular reports.
- Students have been involved in many activities this term with positive feedback from a recent student survey and increased number of student ambassadors recruited.

Chair

19 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 3 March 2026 at 8:30am (Meeting Room, Principal's Suite, KL)

Meeting ended at 10.40am