

HEREFORDSHIRE, LUDLOW AND NORTH SHROPSHIRE COLLEGE

**Annual Report and Financial Statements
For the Year Ended
31 July 2025**

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Reference and Administrative Details

Key Management Personnel:

Key management personnel are defined as members of the College Leadership Team and were represented by the following in 2024/25:

David Williams	Principal and CEO
Joanne Ricketts	Deputy Principal
Edward Gwillim	Finance Director resigned March 2025
Clare Perez	Finance Director from February 2025
Debra Baldwin	Personnel Director resigned August 2024
Victoria Bushell	Director of HR from July 2024
Melanie Taylor	Vice-Principal
Jonathan Gill	Vice-Principal
Ian Higgins	Vice-Principal

Board of Governors:

A full list of Governors is given on page 17 of these financial statements.

Rebecca Semple acted as Clerk to the Corporation until January 2025.
Helen Trembeth acted as Clerk to the Corporation from April 2025.

External Independent Auditors:

Forvis Mazars LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
8th Floor, Assembly Building C
Cheese Lane
Bristol
BS2 0JJ

Internal Auditors:

TIAA Ltd
Artillery House
Fort Fareham
Newgate lane
Fareham
PO14 1AH

Bankers:

Barclays Bank plc
1/3 Broad Street
Hereford
HR4 9BH

Solicitors:

T A Matthews
32-35 Broad Street
Hereford
HR4 9AR

Report of the Members of the Corporation for the Year from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025

Operating and Financial Review

Nature, Objectives and Strategies:

The members present their report and the audited consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2025.

Legal Status

The Corporation was established under The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 for the purpose of conducting Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College. The College is an exempt charity for the purposes of the Charities Act 1993 as amended by the Charities Act 2011.

The Corporation was incorporated as Hereford College of Technology. Following the merger with Ludlow College the Secretary of State granted consent to the Corporation to change the College's name to Herefordshire and Ludlow College from 1st August 2013. The College merged with North Shropshire College on 1st November 2018 and was known as Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College from that date.

Public Benefit

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is an exempt charity under Part 3 of the Charities Act 2011 and following the Machinery of Government changes in July 2016 is regulated by the Secretary of State for Education. The members of the Governing Body, who are trustees of the charity, are disclosed on page 17.

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

In delivering its mission, the College provides the following identifiable public benefits through the advancement of education:

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

Implementation of strategic plan

The latest strategic plan was developed in 2021 with the support of the College Management Team, Governors, staff, students and regional stakeholders. During this process, views on the College's character, mission, vision, key values and strategic priorities were sought.

The plan's Strategic Commitments frame the direction and development of the College's business for a five-year period from 2021 to 2026. This is underpinned by a series of one-year Annual Operational Plans (AOP) that detail agreed actions and targets against each of the commitments. Additionally, the production of an annual operating plan enables managers and governors to respond to ongoing developments in a timely manner.

Progress against the actions identified in the AOP was regularly monitored by the Governors' Finance and Employment committee and the Quality and Standards committee before being reported to the full Board.

Mission

To realise potential and support success

Vision

We support students, communities and businesses to fully realise their potential by delivering high quality academic, technical, professional and community learning.

We take pride in our legacy: successful students who are skilled, knowledgeable, enterprising, professional and resilient.

Values

Care
Commitment
Integrity
Equity
Ambition
Partnership
Sustainability

Strategic Objectives

- We will ensure that teaching and learning is of the highest quality, leading to excellent student outcomes and positive destinations
- We will ensure that Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is an excellent and inclusive employer
- We will continue to invest in the College estate and infrastructures, developing and maintaining high quality, efficient, sustainable and ethically sound resources for our students
- We will ensure that the provision fully supports the needs of our students and local economies
- We will ensure that the College remains financially viable and continues to operate effectively for the benefit of the communities we serve

Strategy to achieve these objectives

We will ensure that teaching and learning is of the highest quality, leading to excellent student outcomes and positive destinations

We will:

- Teach in a way that inspires and enables our students to achieve their full potential
- Deliver a sequenced curriculum which delivers the knowledge, skills and behaviours identified by employers
- Support all students to further develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills
- Create a clear line of sight from the classroom to career, ensuring students understand what is required to be successful
- Provide appropriate additional support for those in need
- Listen to the views of our students, discussing and responding to their concerns
- Celebrate students' successes, using them to encourage others to do the same

We will ensure that Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College is an excellent and inclusive employer

We will:

- Support staff to improve their health and wellbeing
- Involve staff in the creation of strategic and operational plans, policies and procedures, by engaging in meaningful dialogue and taking account of their views
- Be mindful of the impact on staff workload when creating or amending policies or procedures
- Maintain a positive culture where staff are trusted to be responsible and are held accountable for their work
- Enhance the performance of staff through meaningful support, training and development
- Support those who wish to advance their career in the College by providing appropriate development opportunities
- Encourage all staff equally to achieve their potential
- Ensure that the workplace is professional and that interactions between staff at all levels of the organisation are honest, courteous and respectful

We will continue to invest in the College estate and infrastructure, developing and maintaining high quality, efficient, sustainable and ethically sound resources for our students

We will:

- Further develop the College's estates strategy, taking account of the varying needs at each of our sites
- Rationalise space where appropriate to maximise efficiency and reduce our environmental impact
- Continue to seek external sources of funding to undertake capital development works
- Maintain, improve and renew existing parts of the estate
- Develop a digital strategy to guide future investment in the digital infrastructure
- Employ digital technologies to minimise inter-campus travel
- Monitor and reduce the impact of our activities on the environment

We will ensure that the provision bridges the gap between the needs of our students and the local economies

We will:

- Ensure that students have access to the training they need locally by continuing to offer a broad range of vocational and academic training opportunities in each of the areas we serve
- Develop a curriculum strategy that aligns with the needs of employers in each of the communities we serve
- Work in partnership with other providers to ensure that our offer aligns with theirs to meet the needs of students and employers
- Work alongside other stakeholders to improve the socioeconomic landscape by up-skilling the community and increasing productivity

We will ensure that the College remains financially viable and continues to operate effectively for the benefit of the communities we serve.

We will:

- Maintain and improve the financial health and resilience of the College
- Maintain financially self-sufficient campuses that each generate an operating surplus
- Develop plans for targeted growth in further education, adult education, higher education and apprenticeships
- Consider alternative opportunities for growth and diversification
- Bid for project and grant funding opportunities where they support the College's strategic aims
- Ensure that we can demonstrate value for money in all that we do
- Work in partnership where it is mutually beneficial and financially prudent to do so

Financial Objectives

The College's financial objectives are:

- To continue to maintain accumulated reserves of at least 10% of income throughout the development plan period
- To continue to maintain cash days of 60 or more at all times
- To achieve at least break-even at operating level
- Pay expenditure targeted at a maximum of 65% of income
- To generate positive cash inflows from operating activities
- To maintain a current ratio of at least 1.5 throughout the development plan period
- To be in financial health category "Good", as defined by the Department for Education, at the end of the development plan period
- To produce management accounts on a monthly basis incorporating an income and expenditure account, balance sheet, 24-month rolling cash flow forecast and financial performance indicators
- To test the desirability and affordability of any proposals which have a financial implication for the College;
- Providing financial and non-financial returns on time and in the agreed format
- Ensuring all returns requiring certification by auditors are unqualified
- Adhering to the policy to aim to pay all suppliers within 30 days of receipt of an invoice
- Providing advice, guidance and training to staff, management and governors on funding, funding methodologies, budgeting and the College's financial procedures
- Providing adequate information to ensure staff, management and governors are kept up to date with the financial position of the College
- Generating sufficient funds to ensure the College's specified programme of planned maintenance can be undertaken
- Generating sufficient funds to ensure the College can invest in new technology and equipment required to support learning programmes and administration
- Ensuring adequate procedures are in place to protect assets from loss, theft and neglect

Performance Indicators

Student

The College usually measures its performance using the student satisfaction surveys, the Department of Education's Compare Schools Performance website and national comparators. For 2024/25 the College's student survey and the National Student Survey (for higher education students) were used as performance indicators along with Strata detailing the College's performance data against national comparators.

Finance

The College is required to complete the annual Finance Record for the Department of Education (DFE). The Finance Record produces a financial health grading. The current rating is "Good".

Key performance indicator	Target	Actual for 2024/25
Reserves as a % of income	10%	70%
Sector EBITDA as % of income	5%	2.55%
Staff costs as a % of income	63%	58%
Cash days in hand	60	58
Current ratio	1.5	1.70
DFE Financial health grade	Good	Good

Financial results

The College accounts have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102.

The College incurred a deficit before other gains and losses in the year of £213,000 (2023/24: deficit of £635,000).

Net assets at the year-end were £22,142,000 (2023/24: net assets of £18,315,000).

**Report of the Members of the Corporation
For the Year from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 (continued)**

Total Comprehensive Income for 2024/25 was £3,827,000 (2023/24: Expense of £326,000).

The Total Comprehensive Income for the year includes an actuarial gain of £4,040,000 (2023/24: £280,000) in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The College has cash and short-term investment balances of £5,380,000 (2023/24: £7,457,000).

Tangible fixed asset additions during the year amounted to £3,813,000 (2023/24: £3,760,000).

The College has significant reliance on the education sector funding bodies for its principal funding source, largely from recurrent grants. In 2024/25 the FE funding bodies provided 82% of the College's total income (2023/24: 84%).

Treasury policies and objectives

Treasury management is the management of the College's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

The College has a separate treasury management policy in place which aims to preserve the capital value of any investments and reduce risks.

Short-term borrowing for temporary revenue purposes is authorised by the Accounting Officer. All other borrowing requires the authorisation of the Corporation and shall comply with the requirements of the Financial Memorandum.

Cash flows and Liquidity

Net cash flow from operating activities was £1,528,000 positive (2023/24: £3,148,000 positive).

The College is satisfied that current cash balances are sufficient to cover short-term liabilities as well as to allow future investment.

Value for Money

The College delivers value for money through its procurement methods as determined by its Financial Regulations. The College reports annually to its Audit Committee upon measures taken to ensure Value for Money.

Reserves Policy

The College recognises the importance of reserves in the financial stability of any organisation and ensures that there are adequate reserves to support its core activities. The College currently holds no restricted reserves.

Income and expenditure reserve - this surplus relates to the College's performance in the year and previous years. There are no restrictions imposed upon it.

Revaluation reserve – this reserve resulted from the revaluation of College assets prior to 1st August 2010. There are no restrictions imposed upon it.

The College needs to retain sufficient reserves to enable it to meet its obligations should there be an unexpected revenue shortfall. The existence of unrestricted reserves also offers the College flexibility to plan and fund major investment projects to develop and maintain its buildings and services. Such unrestricted reserves are expendable at the discretion of the Corporation in furtherance of College objectives.

Available unrestricted reserves (ie, unrestricted funds excluding defined benefit obligations of £nil and restricted project income of £2m) were £22m (69% of income) at 31 July 2025. The Corporation's target is for the level of such reserves to exceed 10% of annual income.

Current and Future Development and Performance

Financial Health

Using the DfE financial health model scoring system the College has assessed its year end score to be 200 points placing it in the “Good” category.

Student Numbers

Total full-time student headcount for 2024/25 was 2424, comprising 2320 who were 16-18-year-olds, and 104 adults. The College enrolled 3803 part-time students (headcount) made up of 55 students who were 16-18-year-olds and 3748 students who were adults. Over 2024/25 there were 847 apprentices in learning.

Student Achievements

In 2024/25 the College continued to demonstrate good achievement rates – the headlines being an achievement rate of 86.1% all age, all qualifications (compared to 85.1% in 2023/24) rising to 89.7% excluding English and Maths. Overall apprenticeship achievement rates were 66.3%

College Inspection

A full inspection took place in October 2022 and the result was published in December 2022. The Ofsted inspectors judged the college to be “Good”.

Curriculum Developments

The College offers a broad curriculum including AS Levels, A Levels and vocational qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 that include animal care, agriculture, business, engineering, computing and IT, travel and tourism, hair and beauty, hospitality and catering, health, social and childcare, public services and sport, construction, plumbing, electrical and motor vehicle studies.

The College is also committed to providing access to work and further education programmes at entry levels 2 and 3 to develop useful life skills, including gardening, catering and hospitality, car maintenance and household DIY. The College has introduced new T Level programmes in Business and Administration, Animal Care and Management and Agriculture, joining T Levels in Early Years Educator and Building Engineering Services - Electrotechnology.

The Eden Hair Health and Beauty Salon at Hereford and Salon QB at Oswestry are open to the public offering a wide range of services, providing realistic working environments to support the hair and beauty curriculum. The College's industry standard training kitchens, Cider Orchard restaurant at Hereford and Scholars restaurant at Oswestry, support the hospitality and catering courses.

In 2024/25, 795 apprentices were in training. Current apprentices are enrolled onto a variety of apprenticeship standards, including: Health and Social Care, Business and Administration, Children and Young People's Workforce, Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools, Hairdressing, Hospitality and Catering and Vehicle Maintenance and Repair.

The College continues to work collaboratively with the University of Worcester to offer higher education provision and has recently increased its higher education offer, through Higher technical Qualifications (HTQs) with Pearson Qualifications. The Hereford University Centre is run in partnership with the University of Worcester. The centre acts as an educational and cultural hub, aiming to raise aspirations in Herefordshire and encourage increased participation in higher education.

Payment performance

The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, which came into force on 1 November 1998, required colleges, in the absence of agreement to the contrary, to make payments to suppliers within 30 days of either the provision of goods or services or the date on which the invoice was received. The target set by the Treasury for payment to suppliers within 30 days is 95%. During the year ended 31 July 2025 the College paid 89% of its invoices within 30 days of receipt (2023/24: 87%). The College incurred no interest charges in respect of late payment for this year (2023/24: nil).

Future prospects

The College has various resources that it can deploy in pursuit of its strategic objectives and intends to work with other Further Education colleges in the Marches to collectively analyse curriculum, highlighting any geographical gaps in provision and opportunities for capital and/or curriculum development.

Tangible resources include five main college sites; Holme Lacy, Hereford, Shrewsbury, Walford and Oswestry; two farms; Pound Farm and Walford Farm as well as all the associated fixtures, fittings, machinery and equipment. The College has £1.6m held in net current assets (2023/24: £2.8m).

Financial

The College has £22m of net assets excluding the £nil defined benefit contribution liability (2023/24: £22m excluding £4m defined benefit contribution liability).

People

The College employs 428 people (expressed as full-time equivalents), of whom 180 are teaching staff, and 248 non-teaching staff (2023/24: 349 people, 147 teaching, 202 non-teaching).

Reputation

The College has a good reputation locally and nationally. Maintaining a quality brand is essential for the College's success at attracting students and external relationships.

Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Corporation considers that the College has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

The increase in 16-19 learner numbers in 2023/24 resulted in increased funding in 2024/25. This, combined with another tranche of funding mid-year to support increased supplier and staffing costs, were beneficial to the College. Continued high inflation rates causing sustained high costs represent a financial challenge. Despite this the College achieved a net cash inflow from operation activities of £1.528m and maintained net assets excluding the defined benefit contribution liability at £22m.

For the year to 31st July 2025 the number of funded learners has increased slightly on 23/24 figures by 4% but the main 16-19 funding rates have been increased significantly, a change that has resulted in an overall 16-19 funding allocation increase of £1.6m or 10%. Indications are that learner numbers have increased again in the autumn 2025 enrolment which will result in an increase in funded learner numbers for the year to 31st July 2027.

In the year to 31st July 2025 the College received £1.163m in new capital grant funding which is to be expended by March 2028 and is therefore held as a creditor in the balance sheet. The college has invested £3.8m in fixed assets in the year to 31st July 2025. Cash days remain at a healthy level of 58 days.

The detailed monthly cash flow projection for the 24 months to August 2027 shows a minimum cash holding of £4.5m.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The College has undertaken further work during the year to develop and embed the system of internal control, including financial, operational and risk management which is designed to protect the College's assets and reputation.

Based on the strategic plan, college managers undertake a comprehensive review of the risks to which the College is exposed. They identify systems and procedures, including specific preventable actions which should mitigate any potential impact on the College. The internal controls are then implemented, and each subsequent term's appraisal reviews their effectiveness and progress against risk mitigation actions. In addition to these termly reviews, college managers also consider any risks which may arise as a result of a new area of work being undertaken by the College.

A high-level risk register is maintained at the College which is reviewed termly by the Audit Committee and more frequently where necessary. The risk register identifies the key risks, the likelihood of those risks occurring, their potential impact on the College and the actions being taken to reduce and mitigate the risks. Risks are prioritised using a consistent scoring system.

Outlined below is a description of the principal risk factors that may affect the College. Not all the factors are within the College's control. Other factors besides those listed below may also adversely affect the College.

Government funding

The College has considerable reliance on continued government funding through the further education funding bodies and The Office for Students (OfS). In 2024/25, 82% of the College's revenue was ultimately publicly funded (2023/24: 73%) and this public funding percentage is expected to continue. There can be no assurance that government policy or practice will remain the same or that public funding will continue at the same values or on the same terms.

External Factors Affecting Future Funding and Strategic Planning

The College continues to monitor a range of external developments that may significantly influence future funding, delivery models, and strategic priorities:

- **T Level Expansion and Curriculum Reform** - The continued national rollout of T Levels is reshaping the post-16 curriculum. As funding is increasingly aligned with technical education pathways, there is a risk of reduced flexibility in curriculum planning and potential displacement of existing provision.
- **Introduction of V Levels** - From 2027, the government will introduce V Levels as a new Level 3 vocational pathway, sitting alongside A Levels and T Levels. V Levels are intended to replace many existing qualifications, streamlining the current landscape of over 900 qualifications. While this reform aims to simplify choices for learners, it may result in the defunding of existing applied general qualifications, impacting curriculum breadth and learner choice. The College will need to adapt its offer to align with these new qualifications and ensure staff are prepared for delivery.
- **Defunding of Applied General Qualifications** - As part of the qualifications reform, the Department for Education has confirmed that public funding will be withdrawn from a significant number of Level 3 qualifications from 1 August 2025. This includes qualifications within the 16–19 study programme, advanced learner loans, and the Level 3 statutory entitlement. The College is reviewing its curriculum to mitigate the impact of these changes.
- **National Minimum Wage Uplift and Lagged Funding** - The Autumn 2024 increase in the National Minimum Wage has placed upward pressure on staffing costs. Although additional funding for FY25 was received in September 2025 and accrued, the College remains reliant on this income stream being maintained in the future.
- **Autumn 2025 Spending Review and Budget** - The 2025 Spending Review confirmed an additional £1.2 billion per year in skills investment by 2028–29, supporting up to 1.3 million 16–19-year-olds annually. However, the College awaits further detail on how this funding will be distributed and whether it will be sufficient to meet rising costs and support curriculum reform.

- **Macroeconomic and Political Volatility** - The current global economic uncertainty, coupled with changes in government both domestically and internationally, may impact public sector spending. Any reduction in education budgets or adverse changes to funding rates could materially affect the College's operations.
- **Sector Pay Disparity** - The persistent pay gap between schoolteachers and FE staff continues to challenge recruitment and retention. While the College has received a share of the £300 million uplift announced in the Autumn 2024 Budget, this was insufficient to achieve parity with the school sector.
- **Transfer of Skills Policy to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)** - The realignment of the skills agenda under the DWP introduces uncertainty regarding future policy direction, funding priorities, and the integration of employment and skills strategies.
- **Devolution of Skills Funding** - The continued devolution of adult education budgets to mayoral combined authorities introduces regional variability in funding priorities and access. This may lead to inconsistencies in funding allocations and increased administrative complexity for providers operating across multiple regions.
- **Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)** - The LLE, due to be fully implemented by 2027, will provide individuals with a flexible loan entitlement to use over their lifetime. While this presents opportunities for modular and adult learning provision, it may also shift funding risk from government to individuals and impact enrolment patterns.
- **Employer-Led Skills System and LSIPs** - Colleges are expected to align provision with Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), which may constrain curriculum autonomy and require rapid adaptation to local labour market demands.
- **Accountability and Performance Measures** - A new performance dashboard and enhanced accountability frameworks are being introduced, with a focus on outcomes and progression. This may increase scrutiny and performance-related funding pressures, particularly in areas with challenging learner demographics.

Mitigating Actions

The College has implemented a range of measures to mitigate the risks associated with external funding and policy uncertainty:

- **Diversified Funding Portfolio** - The College secures income through a broad mix of direct and indirect funding streams, including core allocations, devolved authority contracts, commercial income, and project-based grants. This diversification reduces reliance on any single funding source.
- **Commitment to High-Quality Provision** - A strong focus is maintained on delivering high-quality teaching, learning, and outcomes. This supports the College's reputation, enhances student recruitment and retention, and ensures continued eligibility for performance-based funding.
- **Strategic Engagement with Funding Bodies** - The College invests in maintaining robust relationships with key stakeholders, including the Department for Education (DfE), local authorities, and mayoral combined authorities. Regular dialogue ensures the College remains informed of policy changes and funding opportunities.
- **Alignment with National and Regional Priorities** - Curriculum planning is strategically aligned with priority sectors identified in Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and national industrial strategies, ensuring the College remains well-positioned to attract future funding.
- **Operational Efficiency and Financial Resilience** - The College continuously reviews its operations to identify efficiencies, optimise resource allocation, and maintain a sustainable cost base. This includes proactive workforce planning and curriculum efficiency reviews.
- **Prudent Financial Management** - Strong financial governance is maintained through effective budgeting, forecasting, and treasury management. Investment decisions are guided by long-term value and risk considerations.
- **Workforce Strategy and Employer Value Proposition** - The College strives to offer competitive pay and conditions within sector constraints, supported by a compelling employee value proposition that includes professional development, wellbeing initiatives, and flexible working arrangements.
- **Maximising External Funding Opportunities** - The College actively pursues all available grant and capital funding opportunities, including those linked to skills reform, digital infrastructure, and green technologies, to enhance its offer and reduce reliance on core funding.

Safeguarding, Child Protection and Mental Health Duty

The College recognises that the increasing complexity of safeguarding, child protection, and mental health responsibilities presents a significant and evolving risk. These obligations are shaped by statutory guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*, and the growing prevalence of mental health challenges among young people and adults at risk.

There is a risk that the College could fail to meet its safeguarding and mental health duties, which could manifest in several ways, including:

- A serious safeguarding incident involving a student or staff member
- A concern being identified but not escalated or managed appropriately
- Delays in responding to safeguarding or mental health disclosures, leading to harm or deterioration in wellbeing

Such failures could result in significant harm to individuals (under or over 18), regulatory sanctions, legal liability, and reputational damage.

Mitigating Actions

To manage and mitigate these risks, the College has implemented a comprehensive safeguarding and wellbeing framework, including:

- **Robust Policies and Procedures** - The College maintains up-to-date safeguarding, child protection, and mental health policies aligned with statutory guidance (e.g., KCSIE, Working Together to Safeguard Children). These are reviewed regularly and clearly communicated to all stakeholders.
- **Designated Safeguarding Leadership** - A qualified and experienced Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is in place, supported by a team of trained Deputy DSLs. This ensures appropriate coverage across all campuses and during all operational hours.
- **Mandatory and Ongoing Training** - All staff, including temporary and contracted personnel, receive mandatory safeguarding and Prevent training at induction, with regular updates. Governors also receive tailored safeguarding training to support their oversight responsibilities.
- **Student Awareness and Engagement** - Safeguarding and mental health awareness are embedded in student induction, tutorials, and enrichment activities. Students are informed about how to report concerns and access support services.
- **Mental Health and Wellbeing Support** - The College has invested in dedicated mental health and wellbeing services, including access to trained counsellors, mental health first aiders, and external referral pathways. A whole-college approach to mental health is promoted through campaigns and staff CPD.
- **Individual Risk Assessments and Support Plans** - Where appropriate, individualised risk assessments (College Pastoral Support Assessments – CPSA) and safeguarding plans are developed for students identified as vulnerable or at risk, in collaboration with external agencies and families.
- **Multi-Agency Collaboration** - The College works closely with Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs), social care, police, and health services to ensure a coordinated response to safeguarding concerns.
- **Internal Audit and External Assurance** - Regular internal audits and safeguarding reviews are conducted to assess compliance and identify areas for improvement.
- **Safeguarding Governance and Reporting** - Safeguarding is a standing item at senior leadership and governing body meetings. The Safeguarding Annual Report provides assurance on activity, trends, and areas for development.
- **Culture of Vigilance and Continuous Improvement** - The College fosters a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff are encouraged to be professionally curious, to report concerns promptly, and lessons learned from incidents or near misses are used to strengthen practice.

Loss and/or Corruption of Essential Data

The College recognises that the increasing scale, sophistication, and frequency of cyber threats presents a significant risk to the integrity, availability, and confidentiality of its data and systems. As a provider of essential public services, the College is a potential target for cyber-crime, including phishing, ransomware, and impersonation attacks.

This risk could materialise in a variety of ways, including:

- Failure or breach of network security infrastructure (e.g. firewalls, intrusion detection systems).
- Staff inadvertently responding to phishing emails or clicking malicious links.
- Fraudsters impersonating trusted organisations or individuals to gain access to systems or sensitive data.
- Malware or ransomware attacks leading to data encryption, loss, or theft.

Such incidents could result in:

- Compromise of personal, financial, or sensitive data.
- Disruption to teaching, learning, and business operations.
- Reputational damage, regulatory sanctions, and significant financial cost associated with recovery and remediation.

Mitigating Actions

To manage and reduce the risk of data loss or corruption, the College has implemented a multi-layered cyber resilience strategy, including:

- **Comprehensive Cyber Security Policies and Procedures** - The College maintains a suite of up-to-date policies covering data protection, acceptable use, incident response, and cyber security. These are regularly reviewed and communicated to staff and students.
- **Advanced Technical Controls** - The College employs a range of technical safeguards, including:
 - Next-generation firewalls and endpoint protection.
 - Multi-factor authentication (MFA) for system access.
 - Regular patching and vulnerability management.
 - Network segmentation and access controls to limit exposure.
- **Penetration Testing and Security Audits** - External penetration testing and internal IT audits are conducted to identify and address vulnerabilities. Findings are reported to senior leadership and used to inform continuous improvement.
- **Staff Awareness and Training** - All staff receive mandatory cyber security and data protection training, with regular updates to reinforce vigilance and good practice.
- **Investment in Modern IT Infrastructure** - The College continues to invest in secure, cloud-based systems and resilient infrastructure to support data integrity, business continuity, and remote access.
- **Robust Data Backup and Recovery Protocols** - Critical systems and data are backed up regularly, with off-site and encrypted storage. Disaster recovery plans are tested periodically to ensure rapid restoration in the event of an incident.
- **Incident Response and Escalation Procedures** - A formal incident response plan is in place, aligned with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) guidance. This includes clear escalation routes, containment protocols, and communication strategies.
- **Compliance with Legal and Regulatory Standards** - The College ensures compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018, and relevant DfE cyber resilience expectations.
- **Cyber Insurance Cover** - The College holds appropriate cyber insurance to mitigate the financial impact of a major incident, including costs related to investigation, recovery, and legal liabilities.

Stakeholder Relationships

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

- Students
- Education sector funding bodies
- FE Commissioner
- Staff
- Local employers
- Local authorities
- Government Offices/Regional Development Agency/LEPs
- The local community
- Other FE institutions, schools and universities
- Trade unions
- Professional bodies

The College recognises the importance of these relationships and engages in regular communication with them through the College Internet site and by meetings.

Equality and Diversity

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College values social and cultural diversity and aims to ensure people will find the College to be an inclusive and welcoming place to study. We are a learner focused organisation with values based on trust, integrity and respect. We seek to provide a working environment free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation. We will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour against actual or potential learners, visitors or employees. The College aims to actively promote equality of opportunity and challenge discriminatory attitudes.

Equality and diversity effects everyone as we all work in diverse teams with people of different genders, ethnic origins, sexual orientation, ability, beliefs, values, and working styles.

It is important to understand what we mean by equality and diversity, how it impacts on everyday life and the reasons for and benefits of promoting it.

Equality is about fair treatment

'Equality' means treating all groups of people fairly, providing equality of opportunity and removing barriers to success. It is not about treating everyone the same because different people have different needs. For example, making reasonable adjustments for disabled people removes barriers to equality of opportunity and helps prevent discrimination. Increasing our understanding of the needs of different groups of people promotes good relations between people.

The College's equality principles are:

- Challenging Inequality
- Celebrating Diversity
- Committed to Safeguarding including the Prevent Agenda and Duty

These principles recognise and support the equality characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act which are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment (transgender)
- Marriage/civil partnership
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy/maternity leave
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Diversity is about respecting difference

'Diversity' refers to individual difference. People are unique and differ from one another in a range of ways. Differences may or may not be visible and may include personal characteristics such as background, culture and personality. We value diversity, which means that we aim to realise the potential of every individual learner or member of staff.

Disability statement

The College seeks to achieve the objectives set down in the Equality Act 2010.

- a) The College provides information, advice and arranges support where necessary for students with disabilities.
- b) The College has a range of specialist equipment and students who require additional specialist equipment can request an assessment of their support needs prior to enrolment. The College has access to specialist agencies who will also assess their equipment needs prior to confirming an offer of a place on a course.
- c) The admissions policy for all students is described in the Enquiries & Application Procedure. Appeals against a decision not to offer a place are dealt with under the Student Complaints Procedure.
- d) The College has made a significant investment in the appointment of specialist staff to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are a number of teaching assistants and assessors who can provide a variety of support for learning. There is a continuing programme of staff development to ensure the provision of a high level of appropriate support for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- e) Specialist programmes are described in College prospectuses, and achievements and destinations are recorded and published in the standard College format.
- f) Counselling and welfare services are described in the College Student Guide, which is available to students together with the Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure on the student intranet and is incorporated in student induction programmes.

Trade Union Facility Time

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

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	FTE employee number
1	1

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

Total cost of facility time	£818
Total pay bill	£17,935,000 FY25
Percentage of total bill spent on facility time	0.0046%
Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time	0.0056%

**Report of the Members of the Corporation
For the Year from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 (continued)**

Disclosure of information to auditors

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

Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 9th December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A J Layng'.

**Mr A Layng
Chair of the Corporation**

Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control

The following Statement is provided to enable readers of the Annual Report and Accounts of the College to obtain a better understanding of its governance and legal structure. This Statement covers the period from 1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

The College endeavours to conduct its business:

- i. in accordance with the seven principles identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership);
- ii. in full accordance with the guidance to colleges from the Association of Colleges in the Code of Good Governance 2023 ("the Code").

In the opinion of the governors, the College complies with all the provisions of the Code, and it has complied throughout the year ended 31 July 2025. This opinion is based on an External Governance Review undertaken from February – May 2024 and reported to the board on 4th July 2024. There is ongoing progress on the report's recommendations. The governing body recognises that, as a body entrusted with both public and private funds, it has a particular duty to observe the highest standards of corporate governance at all times. In carrying out its responsibilities, it takes full account of the Code of Good Governance issued by the Association of Colleges in 2023, and adopted by the Board in April 2024, and the College has due regard to its principles and guidance.

The Corporation

The Members who served the Corporation during the year and up to the date of signature of this report were as follows:

Name of Governor	Date of Appointment, most recent date of re-appointment	Date of Resignation	Term of Office	Status of Appointment	Committee Served	Attendance
Mr A Layng	07.07.2020 01.08.2024		4 years	Independent Member	Chair: Corporation from 01.09.22 Finance & Employment (Chair) Remuneration Curriculum and Quality Search & Governance	100%
Mr A G Bramley	14.12.2021 01.12.2022		3 years	Independent Governor	Search & Governance (Chair) Audit Committee (Chair) Remuneration	88%
Mrs J Evans OBE	01.09.2022 01.09.2023		3 years	Independent Governor	Finance & Employment	88%
Mrs L Johnston	03.07.2018 03.07.2022		4 years	Independent Member	Curriculum and Quality (Chair) Search & Governance Remuneration	82%
Mr J Nicholls	23.10.2019 01.11.2022		4 years	Independent Member	Remuneration (Chair) Curriculum and Quality	82%
Mr T Kinnaird	01.10.2023 01.10.2024		4 years	Independent Member	Finance and Employment	67%
Mrs G Herbert	01.10.2023 01.10.2024		4 years	Independent Member	Audit Committee	63%
Mr I Scott-Bell	01.01.2024 01.01.2025		4 years	Independent Member	Finance & Employment	50%
Dr J Davey	04.07.2024 04.07.2025		4 years	Independent Member	Curriculum and Quality	88%
Mr P Houghton	01.12.2024		1 year	Independent Member	Audit Committee	100%
Mr M Roberts	01.10.2024		1 year	Independent Member	Curriculum and Quality	83%
Mrs L Forrester-Walker	08.07.2025		1 year	Independent Member	TBC	100%

Mr D R Williams	01.08.2020		Ex-officio	Principal	Finance & Employment Search & Governance Curriculum and Quality	84%
Mrs D K Lambert	29.04.2014 31.08.2024		4 years	Co-opted Member	Curriculum and Quality	67%
Mr R A Ford	12.12.2011 01.08.2024 01.03.2025		1 year	Co-opted Member	Audit Committee	100%
Mr K M Tong	04.07.2017 27.04.2021 01.03.2025		1 year	Co-opted Member	Audit Committee	100%
Mrs K Price	10.05.2022	24/06/2025	4 years	Staff Governor		0%
Mr B Greenwood	01.12.2023		4 years	Staff Governor		50%
Mr Z. Owen	01.12.2024		2 years	Student Governor		33%
Miss W Sevry	01.12.2023	Left 07/2025	2 years	Student Governor		0%

Four new governors were appointed in 2024-25 and a new Clerk to the Corporation was appointed in April 2025.

The Governance Framework

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

The Corporation is provided with regular and timely information on the overall financial performance of the College together with other information such as performance against funding targets, proposed capital expenditure, quality matters and personnel-related matters such as health and safety and environmental issues. The Corporation meets each term with formal agendas, papers and reports provided to Governors prior to meetings in a timely manner. Briefings are also provided on an ad hoc basis.

The Corporation conducts its business through several committees. Each committee has terms of reference, which have been approved by the Corporation. These committees are Finance and Employment, Remuneration, Curriculum and Quality, Search and Governance, and Audit. Full minutes of all meetings, except those deemed to be confidential by the Corporation, are available on the College's website at www.hlnsc.ac.uk or from the Clerk to the Corporation at:

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College
Folly Lane
Hereford, HR1 1LS

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

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

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

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

Corporation Performance

Each of the Corporation's committees carried out a self-assessment of its own performance for the year ended 31 July 2025. No areas of significant weakness were identified. The Corporation commissioned an External Governance Review during 2023-24. This was a positive exercise identifying exemplary areas of good practice. No areas of significant weakness were found, and a number of areas for action to further improve governance were identified, which have been accepted. A summary report of the External Board Review and its findings are available on the College's website. The report is under review as an ongoing agenda item for the Board and the Clerk is proactively monitoring and logging progress. The governor induction process has been improved, and a new in-depth governor skills analysis is being rolled out.

Training and Development

A new induction process for governors was implemented in 2024/25, and the Corporation is committed to training and development for all Governors and for the Clerk to the Corporation. All Governors receive induction training with the appropriate senior managers on appointment. Training needs are considered through a periodic skills audit (last completed in October 2023, with a fresh audit being completed in October 2025) and in discussions with Governors. Governors and the Clerk to the Corporation have attended several external events, such as webinars, regional governance conferences, induction and networking events. Staff and Student Governors are invited to attend training specifically for their roles. Governor workshops are held during the year with a variety of internal and external speakers. Governors are enrolled on Smartlog (an online training platform) to undertake training modules covering safeguarding and prevent, equality and diversity, health and safety and basic GDPR awareness.

A new Clerk to the Corporation was appointed in April 2025 and has undertaken training and development opportunities during the first 6 months in post. The Clerk is currently being mentored by the Group Director of Governance at the Bedford College Group under the 'National Leaders of Governance for further education' scheme.

Appointments to the Corporation

Any new appointments to the Corporation are a matter for the consideration of the Corporation as a whole. The Corporation has a Search and Governance Committee which comprises of five members responsible for the selection and nomination of any new member for the Corporation's consideration. The Corporation is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is provided as required.

Other than the Principal, who is an ex-officio appointment, and Student Governor, who are appointed for the period that they remain students of the College, members of the Corporation are initially appointed for a 1-year term of office, followed by another two terms of three and four years respectively, but are eligible for consideration for re-appointment at the end of this term.

Remuneration Committee

Throughout the year ended 31 July 2025, the College's Remuneration Committee comprises of four members. The Committee's responsibilities are to make recommendations to the Board on the remuneration and benefits of the Principal, the Clerk and other designated senior post-holders.

Details of remuneration for the year ended 31 July 2025 are set out in note 7 to the financial statements.

The Board has adopted the AoC's Remuneration Code for Senior Staff and has recognised the necessary amendment to the Association of Colleges Code of Good Governance. There is a requirement that the College must publish a readily accessible annual statement based on an annual report to the Governing Body. This annual report was presented to Corporation on 8th April 2025.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee comprises three members of the Corporation (excluding the Principal as the Accounting Officer, and Chair of the Corporation), and two Co-opted members who are finance and audit specialists. The Committee operated in accordance with written terms of reference approved by the Corporation. Its purpose is to advise the Corporation on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's system of internal control and its arrangements for risk management, control and governance processes.

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

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

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

The Audit Committee also advises the Corporation on the appointment of internal and external auditors and their remuneration for both audit and non-audit work as well as reporting annually to the Corporation. The Audit Committee conducted a tendering exercise for internal auditors and external auditors in 2022; contracts were awarded to different audit firms.

The Audit Committee met three times in the year to 31 July 2025. The members of the committee and their attendance records are shown below:

Committee Member	Meetings attended
Mr A G Bramley	4
Mrs G Herbert	4
Mr R A Ford	4
Mr K M Tong	4
Mr P Houghton	1

Internal Control

Scope of responsibility

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

The Corporation has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Principal, as Accounting Officer, for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the College's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which he is personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to him in the Funding Agreement between the College and the funding bodies. They are also responsible for reporting to the Corporation any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

The purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of College policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the College for the year ended 31 July 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual financial statements.

Capacity to handle risk

The Corporation has reviewed the key risks to which the College is exposed, together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Corporation is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the College's significant risks that has been in place for the year ended 31 July 2025 and up to the date of approval of the annual financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Corporation.

The risk and control framework

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

- Comprehensive budgeting systems with an annual budget, which is reviewed and agreed by the governing body
- Regular reviews by the governing body of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts
- Clearly defined capital investment control guidelines
- The adoption of formal project management disciplines, where appropriate

The College has an internal audit service, which operates in accordance with the requirements of the DFE's Post 16 Audit Code of Practice, replaced by the new Framework for auditors and reporting accountants of colleges in March 2025. The work of the internal audit service is informed by an analysis of the risks to which the College is exposed, and annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. The analysis of risks and the internal audit plans are endorsed by the Corporation on the recommendation of the audit committee. As a minimum, the internal auditor provides the Corporation with a report on internal audit activity in the College. The Internal Auditor's Annual Report includes the auditor's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College's system of risk management, controls and governance processes.

Risks faced by the Corporation

The College identifies, evaluates and manages risk, including an impact and likelihood evaluation of key operational, financial, compliance and other risks through the College Management Team and Operational Managers. The risk register is dovetailed to the College's strategic objectives incorporated in the strategic plan. A high-level risk register is regularly reviewed by the Audit Committee.

An annual risk management report was presented to the Corporation on 2nd December 2024, including the approach taken to manage and mitigate risks.

Control weaknesses identified

No significant internal control weaknesses were identified in year and up to the date of signing the financial statements.

Responsibilities under funding agreements

The College meets its contractual responsibilities under its funding agreements and contracts with the DFE by complying directly with the conditions of funding within the DFE's annual funding agreements issued to, and signed by, the College. These requirements are supported by internal rigorous data management, timely reporting, a detailed understanding of the funding requirements and the establishment of the appropriate controls and measures.

Statement from the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee has advised the Board of Governors that the Corporation has an effective framework for governance and risk management in place. The Audit Committee believes the Corporation has effective internal controls in place.

The specific areas of internal audit review work overseen by the Audit Committee in 2024/25 and up to the date of the approval of the finance statements are:

- HR Management
- Compliance with Statutory/regulatory requirements – Prevent
- Risk Management – Business Continuity
- Risk Management – Capital
- ICT Review of implementation of new payroll system (Edupay)
- Learner Numbers
- Health and Safety
- Key Financial Controls – payroll and general ledger
- Procurement
- Sub-contracting

In addition, during the year, the Committee:

- Held an additional meeting in January 2025 to consider the new CIAA Global Internal Audit Standards Report 2024, and the CIAA Internal Audit Code of Practice, and to agree changes to our practice to ensure that we were compliant by April 2025.
- In the light of the sector-wide fallout from the investigations into the governance of Weston College, the Committee discussed with both the internal and external auditors the necessary steps to be taken to receive assurance on our compliance with appropriate standards.
- Requested a review the college's Fraud Strategy in the light of the upcoming obligations arising from the Economic Crime & Corporate Transparency Act 2023 which take effect on 1st September 2025.
- Reviewed the current Board Assurance Framework and allocated risk areas to the individual committees (and Board) for them to both oversee and report back on in 2024/25.

Review of effectiveness

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

- The work of the internal auditors
- The work of the executive managers within the College who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework
- Comments made by the College's financial statements auditors and the regularity auditors in their management letters and other reports

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

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

The Audit Committee's role in this area is confined to a high-level review of the arrangements for internal control. The Corporation's agenda includes a regular item for consideration of risk and control and receives reports thereon from the senior management team and the Audit Committee. The emphasis is on obtaining the relevant degree of assurance and not merely reporting by exception. At its December 2024 meeting, the Corporation

carried out the annual assessment for the year ended 31 July 2025 by considering documentation from the senior management team and internal audit and taking account of events since 31 July 2025.

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

Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Corporation considers that the College has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Key factors considered include the College's strong balance sheet, current ratio of 1.29, zero borrowing and a positive financial plan for the next two years.

For this reason, it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 9th December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Mr A Layng
Chair of Governors



Mr D Williams
Accounting Officer

Governing Body's statement on the College's regularity, propriety and compliance with Funding body terms and conditions of funding.

The Corporation has considered its responsibility to notify the Department for Education (DFE) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of funding, under the College's financial memorandum. As part of our consideration we have had due regard to the requirements of the financial memorandum.

We confirm on behalf of the Corporation that after due enquiry, and to the best of our knowledge, we are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the College, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the College's financial memorandum.

We confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or funding non-compliance have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of these statements, they will be notified to the Department for Education.

Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 9th December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Mr A Layng
Chair of Governors



Mr D Williams
Accounting Officer

Statement of the Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation

The members of the Corporation, as charity trustees, are required to present audited financial statements for each financial year.

Within the terms and conditions of the Corporation's grant funding agreements and contracts with the DFE, the Corporation, through its Accounting Officer, is required to prepare financial statements and an operating and financial review for each financial year in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting for Further and Higher Education, DFE's College Accounts Direction and the UK's Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, and which gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Corporation and surplus/deficit of income over expenditure for that period.

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

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Assess whether the Corporation is a going concern, noting key supporting assumptions, qualifications or mitigating actions, as appropriate (which must be consistent with other disclosures in the accounts and auditor's report)
- Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Corporation will continue in operation

The Corporation is also required to prepare a Members' Report that describes what it is trying to do and how it is going about it, including information about the legal and administrative status of the Corporation.

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

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

Members of the Corporation are responsible for ensuring that expenditure and income are applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and that the financial transactions conform to the authorities that govern them. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring that funds from the DFE, and any other public funds, are used only in accordance with the DFE's grant funding agreements and contracts and any other conditions that may be prescribed from time to time by the DFE, or any other public funder. Members of the Corporation must ensure that there are appropriate financial and management controls in place to safeguard public and other funds and ensure they are used properly. In addition, members of the Corporation are responsible for securing economic, efficient and effective management of the Corporation's resources and expenditure, so that the benefits that should be derived from the application of public funds from the DFE and other public bodies are not put at risk.

Approved by order of the members of the Corporation on 9th December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Mr A Layng
Chair of Governors

Independent auditor's report to the members of Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College (the 'College') for the year ended 31 July 2025 which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Changes in Reserves, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cashflows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and the 2019 Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the College's affairs as at 31 July 2025 and of its Surplus of income over expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Corporation is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the College and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the report of the Members of the Corporation and statement of corporate governance and internal control.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the information given in the report of the Members of the Corporation, including the operating and financial review and statement of corporate governance, is inconsistent with the financial statements; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of the Corporation

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Members of the Corporation set out on page 21, the Corporation is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Corporation determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

Based on our understanding of the College and its industry, we considered that non-compliance with the following laws and regulations might have a material effect on the financial statements: compliance with the ESFA funding agreements, the OfS regulatory framework, the OFSTED regulatory framework, safeguarding, pensions legislation, employment regulation and health and safety regulation, anti-bribery, corruption and fraud, money laundering, HM Treasury's "Managing public money".

To help us identify instances of non-compliance with these laws and regulations, and in identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect to non-compliance, our procedures included, but were not limited to:

- Inquiring of management and, where appropriate, those charged with governance, as to whether the College is in compliance with laws and regulations, and discussing their policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations;
- Inspecting correspondence, if any, with relevant licensing or regulatory authorities;
- Communicating identified laws and regulations to the engagement team and remaining alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout our audit; and
- Considering the risk of acts by the College which were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the preparation of the financial statements pension legislation.

In addition, we evaluated the Members of the Corporation and management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements, including the risk of management override of controls, and determined that the principal risks related posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance, management bias through judgements and assumptions in significant accounting estimates, revenue recognition (which we pinpointed to the cut-off assertion for non-core funding) and significant one-off or unusual transactions.

Our audit procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to:

- Making enquiries of the Members of the Corporation and management on whether they had knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- Gaining an understanding of the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud;
- Discussing amongst the engagement team the risks of fraud; and
- Addressing the risks of fraud through management override of controls by performing journal entry testing.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of irregularities including fraud rests with management. As with any audit, there remained a risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal controls.

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

Other required reporting

Opinion on other matters prescribed in the OfS Audit Code of Practice issued under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992

In our opinion, in all material respects:

- funds provided by the OfS and UK Research and Innovation (including Research England) have been applied in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions attached to them; and
- the requirements of OfS's accounts direction have been met.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the OfS Audit Code of Practice requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the provider's grant and fee income, as disclosed in the notes to the financial statements, has been materially misstated, or
- the provider's expenditure on access and participation activities, as disclosed in the financial statements, has been materially misstated.

Use of the audit report

This report is made solely to the Corporation as a body in accordance with Article 22 of the College's Articles of Government. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Corporation those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the College and the Corporation as a body for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Forvis Mazars LLP

Forvis Mazars LLP (Dec 19, 2025 09:00:00 GMT)

Forvis Mazars LLP

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor

8th Floor, Assembly Building C

Cheese Lane

Bristol

BS2 0JJ

Date 19/12/2025

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College
College Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the year ended 31 July 2025

	Note	Year ended 31 July	Year ended 31 July
		2025 College £'000	2024 College £'000
INCOME			
Funding body grants	2	27,040	23,645
Tuition fees and education contracts	4	2,127	2,146
Other income	5	2,423	2,136
Endowment and investment income	6	208	267
Total Income		31,798	28,194
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	7	17,747	16,226
Fundamental restructuring costs	7	188	171
Other operating expenses	8	11,788	10,564
Depreciation and Amortisation	10,11	2,045	1,664
Interest and other finance costs	9	243	204
Total expenditure		32,011	28,829
Deficit before other gains and losses		(213)	(635)
Profit on disposal of assets		-	29
Deficit before tax		(213)	(606)
Taxation		-	-
Deficit for the year		(213)	(606)
Actuarial gain in respect of pensions schemes	20	4,040	280
Total Comprehensive Income /(Expense) for the year		3,827	(326)

All items of income and expenditure relate to continuing activities.

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College
College Statement of Changes in Reserves
For the year ended 31 July 2025

College	Income and Expenditure account £'000	Revaluatio n reserve £'000	Total £'000
Balance at 31st July 2023	17,485	1,156	18,641
Deficit from the income and expenditure account	(606)	-	(606)
Other comprehensive income	280	-	280
Total comprehensive income for the year	(326)	-	(326)
Balance at 31st July 2024	17,159	1,156	18,315
(Deficit) from the income and expenditure account	(213)	-	(213)
Other comprehensive income	4,040	-	4,040
Total comprehensive income for the year	3,827	-	3,827
Balance at 31st July 2025	20,986	1,156	22,142

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College
College Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2025

	Note	College	College
		2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Fixed assets			
Intangible fixed assets	11	-	-
Tangible fixed assets	10	48,514	46,746
Investments		-	-
		48,514	46,746
Current assets			
Stock		544	610
Trade and other receivables	12	1,214	1,741
Cash and cash equivalents	16	5,380	7,457
		7,138	9,808
Less: Creditors – amounts falling due within one year	13	(5,501)	(7,046)
Net current assets		1,637	2,762
Total assets less current liabilities		50,151	49,508
Less: Creditors – amounts falling due after more than one year	14	(27,289)	(26,106)
Provisions			
Defined benefit obligations	15	-	(4,309)
Other provisions	15	(720)	(778)
Total net liabilities		22,142	18,315
Unrestricted reserves			
Income and expenditure account		3,827	(326)
Reserves Brought Forward		17,159	17,485
Revaluation reserve		1,156	1,156
Total unrestricted reserves		22,142	18,315
Total reserves		22,142	18,315

The financial statements on pages 29 to 48 were approved and authorised for issue by the Corporation on 9th December 2025 and were signed on its behalf on that date by:



Mr A Layng
Chair of Governors



Mr D Williams
Accounting Officer

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College
Statement of Cash Flow
For the year ended 31 July 2025

	Note	College 2025 £'000	College 2024 £'000	
Cash flow from operating activities				
(Deficit) for the year		(213)	(606)	
Adjustment for non-cash items				
Depreciation and amortisation	10 &11	2,045	1,664	
Decrease / (increase) in stocks		66	(3)	
Decrease / (increase) in debtors	12	527	(739)	
(Decrease) / increase in creditors due within one year	13	(1,545)	2,238	
Increase in creditors due after one year	14	1,183	1,391	
(Decrease) in provisions	15	-	-	
Pensions costs less contributions payable	20	(327)	(501)	
Adjustment for investing or financing activities				
Investment income	6	(208)	(267)	
Interest payable	9	-	-	
Gain on sale of fixed assets		-	(29)	
Net cash inflow from operation activities		1,528	3,148	
Cash flows from investing activities				
Proceeds from sale of fixed assets		-	34	
Investment income	6	208	267	
Payments made to acquire fixed assets	10	(3,813)	(3,760)	
Net cash (outflow) from investing activities		(3,605)	(3,459)	
Cash flows from financing activities				
Interest paid	9	-	-	
Repayments of amounts borrowed		-	-	
Net cash outflow from financing activities		-	-	
Increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(2,077)	(311)	
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	16	7,457	7,768	
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year	16	5,380	7,457	
Analysis of changes in net debt				
	At 1 Aug 2024 £'000	Cashflows £'000	Other Non-Cash Changes £'000	At 31 July 2025 £'000
Cash and cash equivalents				
Cash	7,457	(2,077)		5,380
Overdrafts				
Cash equivalents				
	7,457	(2,077)		5,380
Borrowings				
Debt due within one year	(7,046)	1,545		(5,501)
Debt due after one year	(26,106)	(1,183)		(27,289)
	(33,152)	362		(32,790)
Total	(25,695)	(1,715)		(27,410)

Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College

Notes to the Accounts

1 Statement of accounting policies and estimation techniques

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

Basis of preparation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2015* (the 2015 FE HE SORP), the *College Accounts Direction for 2017 to 2018* and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 – “*The Finance Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland*” (FRS 102). The college is a public benefit entity and has therefore applied the relevant public benefit requirements of FRS 102.

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

Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention as modified by the use of previous valuations as deemed cost at transition for certain non-current assets.

Going concern

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

The College currently has no loans outstanding with bankers and a positive cash balance of £5.4m at 31 July 2025. The College's forecasts and financial projections indicate that it will be able to operate within its existing banking facility and covenants for the foreseeable future.

For the year to 31st July 2025 the number of funded learners has increased slightly on 23/24 figures by 4% but the main 16-19 funding rates have been increased significantly, a change that has resulted in an overall 16-19 funding allocation increase of £1.6m or 10%. Indications are that learner numbers have increased again in the autumn 2025 enrolment which will result in an increase in funded learner numbers for the year to 31st July 2027.

In the year to 31st July 2025 the College received £1.163m in new capital grant funding which is to be expended by March 2028 and is therefore a creditor in the balance sheet. The college has invested £3.8m in fixed assets in the year to 31st July 2025. Cash days remain at a healthy level of 58 days.

The detailed monthly cash flow projection for the 24 months to August 2027 shows a minimum cash holding of £4.5m.

Accordingly, the College has a reasonable expectation that it has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and for this reason will continue to adopt the going concern basis in the preparation of its Financial Statements.

Recognition of income

Revenue grant funding

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

The recurrent grant from HEFCE represents the funding allocations attributable to the current financial year and is credited direct to the Statement of Comprehensive income.

Grants (including research grants) from non-government sources are recognised in income when the College is entitled to the income and performance related conditions have been met. Income received in advance of performance related

conditions being met is recognised as deferred income within creditors on the balance sheet and released to income as the conditions are met.

Capital grant funding

Government capital grants are capitalised, held as deferred income and recognised in income over the expected useful life of the asset, under the accrual method as permitted by FRS 102. Other capital grants are recognised in income when the College is entitled to the funds subject to any performance related conditions being met.

Fee income

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

Investment income

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

Accounting for post-employment benefits

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

Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS)

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

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

Worcestershire Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

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

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

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

Short term employment benefits

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

Enhanced pensions

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

Non-current assets – Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Certain items of fixed assets that had been revalued to fair value on or prior to the date of transition to the 2015 FE HE SORP, are measured on the basis of deemed cost, being the revalued amount at the date of that revaluation.

Land and buildings

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

Freehold buildings are depreciated over their expected useful economic life to the College of between 10 and 50 years. The College has a policy of depreciating major adaptations to building over the period of their useful economic life of between 10 and 50 years.

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

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of any fixed asset may not be recoverable.

On adoption of FRS 102, the College followed the transitional provision to retain the book value of land and buildings, as deemed cost but not to adopt a policy of revaluations of these properties in the future.

Assets under construction

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

Buildings owned by third parties

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

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

Equipment

Equipment costing less than £1,000 per individual item is recognised as expenditure in the period of acquisition unless they are part of a large-scale replacement programme. All other equipment is capitalised at cost.

Capitalised equipment is depreciated on a straight-line basis over its remaining useful economic life as follows:

• Technical equipment	5-10 years
• Motor vehicles	4 years
• Computer equipment	3-4 years
• Furniture, fixtures and fittings	5 years.

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

Intangible assets and goodwill

Intangible assets that are acquired by the Group are stated at cost less accumulated amortisation and impairment losses. Amortisation is charged to profit or loss over the assets' estimated economic lives using methods that best reflect the pattern of economic benefits and is included in depreciation and amortisation.

Acquired goodwill, being of the excess of the cost of an acquisition over the Group's interest in the net fair value of the identifiable assets, liabilities and contingent liabilities of the subsidiary, associate or joint venture acquired, is initially recognised at cost and subsequently at cost less any accumulated amortisation and impairment losses. Goodwill arising on the acquisition of subsidiaries and joint ventures is included in the balance sheet category 'Intangible assets.' The gain or loss on the disposal of a subsidiary, associate or joint venture included the carrying value of any related goodwill.

Each financial year the College considers if there is any indication of impairment to the carrying value of goodwill. If such indicators exist, the College will evaluate the carrying value of goodwill to determine if there has been an impairment in value, which would result in the inability to recover the carrying amount. When it is determined that the carrying value exceeds the recoverable amount, the excess is written off to the income and expenditure account.

Borrowing costs

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

Leased assets

Costs in respect of operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term to the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. Any lease premiums or incentives relating to leases signed after 1st August 2014 are spread over the minimum lease term. The college has taken advantage of the transitional exemptions in FRS 102 and has retained the policy of spreading lease premiums and incentives to the date of the first market rent review for leases signed before 1st August 2014.

Leasing agreements which transfer to the College substantially all the benefits and risks of ownership of an asset are treated as finance leases.

Assets held under finance leases are recognised initially at the fair value of the leased asset (or, if lower, the present value of minimum lease payment) at the inception of the lease. The corresponding liability to the lessor is included in the balance sheet as a finance lease obligation. Assets held under finance leases are included in tangible fixed assets and depreciated and assessed for impairment losses in the same way as owned assets.

Minimum lease payments are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding liability. The finance charges are allocated over the period of the lease in proportion to the capital element outstanding.

Investments

Investments in subsidiaries

Investments in subsidiaries are accounted for at cost less impairment in the individual financial statements.

Inventories

Inventories are stated at the lower of their cost (using the first in – first out method) and net realisable value, being selling price less costs to complete and sell. Where necessary, provision is made for obsolete, slow moving and defective items.

Cash and cash equivalents

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

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

Financial instruments accounting policy

The College enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors, accrued income, short term deposits, accruals and cash at bank.

Financial liabilities and equity

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

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

Taxation

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

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

Provisions and contingent liabilities

Provisions are recognised when

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

Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the amount expected to be required to settle the obligation is recognised at present value using a pre-tax discount rate. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as a finance cost in the statement of comprehensive income in the period it arises.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet but are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

Agency arrangements

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

Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

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

- Determine whether leases entered into by the College either as a lessor or a lessee are operating or finance leases. The decisions depend on an assessment of whether the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred from the lessor to the lessee on a lease-by-lease basis.
- Determine whether there are indicators of impairment of the group's tangible assets, including goodwill. Factors taken into consideration in reaching such a decision include the economic viability and expected future financial performance of the asset and where it is a component of a larger cash-generating unit, the viability and expected future performance of that unit.

Other key sources of estimation uncertainty

- *Tangible fixed assets*

Tangible fixed assets, other than investment properties, are depreciated over their useful lives taking into account residual values, where appropriate. The actual lives of the assets and residual values are assessed annually and may vary depending on a number of factors. In re-assessing asset lives, factors such as technological innovation and maintenance programmes are taken into account. Residual value assessments consider issues such as future market conditions, the remaining life of the asset and projected disposal values.

- *Local Government Pension Scheme*

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 20, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore, a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2023 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 July 2025. Any difference between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

2	Funding council grants	Year ended 31 July 2025 College £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 College £'000
Recurrent grants			
Department for Education – adult	3,103	2,864	
Department for Education – 16-18	15,895	15,141	
Department for Education – apprenticeships	2,880	2,517	
Office for Students	76	79	
Specific Grants			
Releases of government capital grants	1,100	788	
Other Grants	2031	1,265	
FE Capital Transformation Phase 3 Round 2	375	370	
Teacher Pension Scheme contribution grant	797	614	
LEA Top up (Element 3 Funding)	783	7	
Total	27,040		23,645

3	OFS grants analysis	Year ended 31 July 2025 College £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 College £'000
Grant income from Office for Students	76	79	
Grant income from other bodies	-	-	
Fee income for taught awards (exclusive of VAT)	114	97	
Fee income for non-qualifying course (inclusive of VAT)	-	-	

The Office for Students only regulates higher education in colleges so the above table only records amounts relating to courses at Level 4 and above.

4	Tuition fees and education contracts	Year ended 31 July 2025 College £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 College £'000
Adult education fees	1,063	1,124	
Fees for FE loan supported courses	76	193	
Fees for HE loan supported courses	114	97	
Total tuition fees	1,253		1,414
Education contracts	874	732	
Total	2,127		2,146

5	Other income	Year ended 31 July 2025 College £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 College £'000
Catering and residences	451	407	
Other income generating activities	843	811	
Farm income	1,071	796	
Miscellaneous income	58	122	
Total	2,423		2,136

6	Investment income	Year ended 31 July 2025 College £'000	Year ended 31 July 2024 College £'000
Other interest receivable	208	267	

7 Staff costs

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

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Teaching staff	180	147
Non-teaching staff	248	202
	428	349

The number of persons (including key management personnel) employed by the College during the year, described by headcount, was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Teaching staff	330	301
Non-teaching staff	442	381
	772	682

Staff costs for the above persons

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Wages and salaries	13,346	12,628
Social security costs	1,265	1,051
Other pension costs	2,768	2,368
Payroll sub total	17,379	16,047
Contracted out staffing services	316	130
Apprenticeship Levy	52	49
	17,737	16,226
Fundamental restructuring costs - contractual	188	171
	17,935	16,397

Key management personnel

Key management personnel are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the College and are represented by the College Management Team which comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal, Finance Director, Director of HR and Vice-Principals. Staff costs include compensation paid to key management personnel for loss of office.

Emoluments of Key management personnel, Accounting Officer, and other higher paid staff

	2025 Number	2024 Number
The number of key management personnel including the Accounting officer was:	<u>7.2</u>	<u>7</u>

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

	Key management personnel		Other Staff	
	2025 Number	2024 Number	2025 Number	2024 Number
£ 5,001 to £10,000	0.1	0	-	-
£20,001 to £25,000	-	0.3	-	-
£30,001 to £35,000	0.5	-	-	-
£50,001 to £55,000	-	0.7	-	-
£65,001 to £70,000	0.6	-	-	-
£75,001 to £80,000	4	2	-	-
£80,001 to £85,000	-	1	-	-
£95,001 to £100,000	-	2	-	-
£100,001 to £105,000	1	-	-	-
£145,001 to £150,000	-	1	-	-
£155,001 to £160,000	1	-	-	-
	7.2	7	-	-

Key management personnel emoluments are made up as follows:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Salaries	686	666
National Insurance	90	81
	776	747
Pension contributions	169	151
Total emoluments	945	898

There were no amounts due to key management personnel that were waived in the year nor any salary sacrifice arrangements in place.

The above emoluments include amounts payable to the Principal Accounting Officer (who is also the highest paid officer) of:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Salaries	158	149
National Insurance	21	19
	179	168
Pension contributions	45	38

Compensation for loss of office paid to former key management personnel

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Compensation paid to the former post-holder – contractual	-	39

The members of the Corporation other than the Principal Accounting Officer and the staff members did not receive any payment from the institution other than the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses incurred in the course of their duties.

The total remuneration of the Principal

One of the roles of college Governors is to oversee the appointment, grading suspension, dismissal and the determination of pay and conditions of Senior Postholders and the Clerk to the Corporation. The Corporation has a Remuneration Committee, chaired by the Vice Chair of Governors, its remit is to review and determine the Corporation's policy on executive remuneration package of the Senior Postholders and the Clerk to the Corporation. To do this fairly and transparently the Committee took account of the AoC's college senior pay survey 2021 comparing benchmarks with the Principal's total remuneration against other Principals' salaries in colleges of similar size and across a range of geographic areas, the College's performance, including the impact of COVID-19 and how the College's teaching and learning was sustained during lockdown. The Committee is also responsible for appraising Senior Postholders' performance. These processes ensure that Senior Postholders' remuneration is appropriate, they are fairly rewarded for their individual contributions to the college's overall performance, and to demonstrate to the public that the pay of the senior postholders is set by a Committee which has no personal interest in the outcome of its decision and which gives due regard to the interests of the public and of the financial health of the College.

Pay multiple

The accounting officer's basic salary divided by the median pay of all salaried corporation employees (all on a full-time equivalent basis was: 5.12 (FY24: 6.01)

The accounting officer's total emoluments divided by the median pay of all salaried corporation employees (all on a full-time equivalent basis was: 7.46 (FY24: 6.45)

This was calculated from an analysis of grossed-up FTE salaries paid during the year and excludes agency and casual staff

8	Other operating expenses	Year ended 31 July 2025		Year ended 31 July 2024	
		College £'000	College £'000	College £'000	College £'000
Teaching costs		4,951		4,413	
Non-teaching costs		2,664		2,460	
Premises costs		4,220		3,691	
Total		11,835		10,564	
Other operating expenses include:		2025		2024	
		£'000		£'000	
Auditors' remunerations:					
Financial statements audit		36		34	
Internal audit		24		27	
Other services provided by the financial statements' auditors		10		11	
Hire of assets under operating leases		149		152	
9	Interest payable				
		2025		2024	
		£'000		£'000	
On bank loans, overdrafts and other loans:		-		-	
Pension finance costs (note 21)		243		204	
Total		243		204	
10	Tangible fixed assets				
		Land and buildings	Equipment	Total	
		Freehold	Long leasehold		
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation					
As at 1 August 2024		58,700	941	6,207	65,848
Additions		2,477	-	1,336	3,813
Merger		-	-	-	-
Disposals		-	-	(488)	(488)
At 31 July 2025		61,177	941	7,055	69,173
Accumulated Depreciation					
At 1 August 2024		14,198	354	4,550	19,102
Charge for the year		1,266	32	747	2,045
Disposals		-	-	(488)	(488)
At 31 July 2025		15,464	386	4,809	20,659
Net book value at 31 July 2025		45,714	555	2,245	48,514
Net book value at 31 July 2024		44,502	587	1,657	46,746

Fixed Assets include £1,287,000 of assets which were gifted to the College by the merger with part of the Pershore Group of Colleges at 1 August 2008. Land and Buildings of £1,287,000 were valued for this purpose by Mr J A Turner FRICS, whilst equipment of £nil book value was valued on a depreciated historic cost basis.

Fixed Assets also include £737,000 of assets which were gifted to the College by the merger with Ludlow College at 1 August 2013. Land and Buildings of £861,000 were valued for this purpose by Mr J A Turner FRICS at that date.

Fixed assets also include £15,553,000 of assets gifted to the college by the merger with North Shropshire College on 1 November 2018

The properties gifted by Ludlow College are legally owned by the Foundation of Ludlow College. The objective of the Foundation of Ludlow College is the provision of items, services and facilities to the former Ludlow College. The Foundation therefore cannot sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any of its property where this is still required for use by the College. The valuation of these assets has therefore been recognised in these financial statements subsequent to their transfer at merger. Lease agreements for the use of these properties by Ludlow College commenced on 1 August 2013, entitling the College to use the properties for 21 years.

11	Intangible fixed assets				
		College £'000			
Cost					
As at 1 August 2024		63			
At 31 July 2025		63			
Accumulated Amortisation					
As at 1 August 2024		63			
Amortisation - charge for the year		0			
At 31 July 2025		63			
Net book Value at 31 July 2025		0			
Net book value at 31 July 2024		0			
Intangible fixed assets consist of investments in software, including installation costs, which are written off over its estimated economic life.					
12	Trade and other receivables				
		College 2025 £'000	College 2024 £'000		
Amounts falling due within one year:					
Trade receivables		615	628		
Prepayments and accrued income		590	380		
Other receivables		9	733		
Total		1,214	1,741		
13	Creditors: amounts falling due within one year				
		College 2025 £'000	College 2024 £'000		
Bank loans and overdrafts		-	-		
Other loans		-	-		
Trade payables		892	1,028		
Other taxation and social security		-	-		
Accruals and deferred income		603	736		
Deferred income – government capital grants		1,296	821		
Amounts owed to the DFE		2,710	4,461		
Total		5,501	7,046		
14	Creditors: amounts falling due after one year				
		College 2025 £'000	College 2024 £'000		
Bank loans		-	-		
Other Loans and HP		-	-		
Deferred income – government capital grants		27,289	26,106		
Total		27,289	26,106		
15	Provisions				
		Defined benefit Obligations £'000	College Enhanced Pensions £'000	Other £'000	Total £'000
At 1 August 2024		4,309	728	50	5,087
Expenditure in the year		(1,515)	-	-	(1,515)
Transferred from income and expenditure account		(2,794)	(58)	-	(2,852)
At 31 July 2025		-	670	50	720

Defined benefit obligations relate to the liabilities under the College's membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Further details are given in Note 20.

Other provisions relate to leasehold dilapidation provision on premises occupied by the College.

The enhanced pension provision relates to the cost of staff who have already left the College's employment and commitments for reorganisation costs from which the College cannot reasonably withdraw at the balance sheet date. This provision has been recalculated in accordance with guidance issued by the funding bodies.

The principal assumptions for these calculations are:

	2025	2024
Interest Rate	5.5%	4.8%
Inflation Rate (CPI)	2.7%	2.8%

16 Cash and cash equivalents

	At 1 August 2024 £'000	Cash Flows £'000	At 31 July 2025 £'000
Cash and cash equivalents	7,457	(2,077)	5,380
Total	7,457	(2,077)	5,380

17 Capital commitments

	College 2025 £'000	College 2024 £'000
Commitments contracted for at 31 July	1,174	2,052

18 Lease Obligations

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

	College 2025 £'000	College 2024 £'000
Future minimum lease payments due		
Land and buildings		
Not later than one year	36	36
Later than one year and not later than five years	156	152
Later than five years	160	200
	352	388
Other		
Not later than one year	7	2
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	-
	7	2
Total lease payments due	359	390

19 Contingent liabilities

The college is not aware of any circumstances at this time that would give rise to a material contingent liability (2024: nil).

20 Defined benefit obligations

The College's employees belong to two principal post-employment benefit plans: The Teachers' Pension Scheme England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff; and in the Worcestershire Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff, which is managed by Worcestershire County Council. Both are multi-employer defined-benefit schemes.

Total pension cost for the year	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Teachers' Pension Scheme: contributions paid	1,755	1,504
Local Government Pension Scheme:		
Contributions paid	1,504	1,491
FRS 102 (28) charge	(491)	(627)
	1,013	864
Enhanced pension charge to Statement of Comprehensive Income	-	-
Total Pension Cost for Year within staff costs	2,768	2,368

The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries. The latest formal actuarial valuation of the TPS was 31 March 2020 and the LGPS 31 March 2025.

There were no outstanding or prepaid contributions at either the beginning or end of the financial year.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pensions Regulations 2010, and, from 1 April 2014, by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. These regulations apply to teachers in schools and other educational establishments, including academies, in England and Wales that are maintained by local authorities. In addition, teachers in many independent and voluntary-aided schools and teachers and lecturers in some establishments of further and higher education may be eligible for membership. Membership is automatic for full-time teachers and lecturers and, from 1 January 2007, automatic too for teachers and lecturers in part-time employment following appointment or a change of contract. Teachers and lecturers are able to opt out of the TPS.

The Teachers' Pension Budgeting and Valuation Account

Although teachers and lecturers are employed by various bodies, their retirement and other pension benefits including annual increases under the Pensions (Increase) Acts are, as provided for in the Superannuation Act 1972, paid out of monies provided by Parliament. Under the unfunded TPS, teachers' contributions on a 'pay as you go' basis, and employers' contributions, are credited to the Exchequer under arrangements governed by the above Act. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

The Teachers' Pensions Regulations require an annual account, the Teachers' Pension Budgeting and Valuation Account, to be kept of receipts and expenditure (including the costs of pensions' increases). From 1 April 2001, the Account has been credited with a real rate of return which is equivalent to assuming that the balance in the Account is invested in notional investments that produce that real rate of return.

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

The latest actuarial review of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education (DfE) in October 2024. The valuation reported total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service at the effective date of £262 billion, and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222 billion giving a notional past service deficit of £40 billion (compared to £22 billion in the 2016 valuation).

As a result of the valuation, new employer contribution rates will rise to 28.68% from April 2024 (compared to 23.68% during 2018/9).

Scheme Changes

Following the Hutton report in March 2011 and the subsequent consultations with trade unions and other representative bodies on reform of the TPS, the Department published a Proposed final Agreement, setting out the design for a reformed TPS to be implemented from 1 April 2015.

The key provisions of the reformed scheme include: a pension based on career average earnings; an accrual rate of 1/57th; and a Normal Pension Age. Importantly, pension benefits built up before 1 April 2015 will be fully protected.

In addition, the Proposed Final Agreement includes a Government commitment that those within 10 years of Normal Pension Age on 1 April 2012 will see no change to the age at which they can retire, and no decrease in the amount of pension they receive when they retire. There will also be further transitional protection, tapered over a three and a half year period, for people who would fall up to three and a half years outside of the 10-year protection.

Regulations giving effect to a reformed Teachers' Pension Scheme came into force on 1 April 2014 and the reformed scheme commenced on 1 April 2015. The pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £1,755,000 (2024: £1,504,000).

FRS 102 (28)

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

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

As the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the reporting date is less than the fair value of the plan assets at that date, the plan has a notional surplus. As management do not consider that the College will be able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan, the surplus has not been recognised in these financial statements in line with paragraph 28.22 of FRS 102.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined-benefit plan, with the assets held in separate funds administered by Worcestershire Council. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 July 2025 was £1,850,000, of which employer's contributions totalled £1,486,000 and employees' contributions totalled £364,000. During the year, the LGPS transitioned to a guaranteed scheme, providing enhanced security for members' benefits. As a result, the agreed contribution rates for future years are 19.3% for employers and range from 5.5% to 12.5% for employees, depending on salary.

On 26 October 2018, the High Court handed down a judgement involving the Lloyds Banking Group's defined benefit pension schemes. The judgement concluded the schemes should be amended to equalise pension benefits for men and women in relation to guaranteed minimum pension benefits, ('GMP'). The Government will need to consider this outcome in conjunction with the Government's recent consultation on GMP indexation in public sector schemes before concluding on any changes required to LGPS schemes.

LGPS Liabilities Recognised

In June 2023 the High Court ruled in the case of Virgin Media Limited v NTL Pension Trustees. The ruling was that certain pension scheme rule amendments were invalid if they were not accompanied by the correct actuarial confirmation.

This High Court ruling was appealed. In a judgment delivered on 25 July 2024, the Court of Appeal unanimously upheld the decision of the High Court.

At the date of approval of these financial statements, while it is known there is potential for additional pension liabilities to be recognised as a result of this ruling, the impact in monetary terms is not known and it is reasonable to form the view that it is not reasonably estimable. Accordingly, no adjustments to reflect the impact of the ruling have been made in these financial statements. The College will continue to monitor the developments and consider the impact on the LGPS liabilities recognised.

Principal Actuarial Assumptions

The following information is based upon a full actuarial valuation of the fund at 31 March 2023 updated to 31 July 2025 by a qualified independent actuary.

	At 31 July 2025	At 31 July 2024
Rate of increase in salaries	4.3%	4.25%
Future pensions increases	2.8%	2.75%
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.75%	4.95%
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.8%	2.75%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums	75%	75%

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

	At 31 July 2025	At 31 July 2024
	Years	Years
Retiring today		
Males	21.5	21.2
Females	23.7	23.6
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	22.7	22.5
Females	25.5	25.0

The College's share of the assets in the plan and an expected rate of return were:

	% Asset Allocation 2025	Fair Value at 31 July 2025 £'000	% Asset Allocation 2024	Fair Value at 31 July 2024 £'000
Equities	44%	21,392	42%	19,410
Government Bonds	-	-	-	-
Other Bonds	36%	17,502	38%	17,561
Property	18%	8,751	19%	8,781
Cash/liquidity	2%	972	0.9%	462
Other	-	-	-	-
Total market value of assets		48,617		46,214
Weighted average expected long term rate of return		1.5%		1.5%
Actual return on plan assets		2,949		1,793

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

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Fair value of plan assets	48,617	46,214
Present value of plan liabilities	(48,617)	(50,523)
Net pensions liability (Note 15)	-	(4,309)

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income in respect of the plan are as follows:

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Amounts included in staff costs		
Current service cost	1,024	873
Curtailments & admin expenses	-	-
Total	1,024	873

Amounts included in investment income

Net interest cost	(208)	(169)
	(208)	(169)

Amounts recognised in Other Comprehensive Expense

Experience (Losses)/Gains arising on defined benefit obligations	(625)	(343)
Adjustment in respect of unrecognised assets	(3,401)	
Amount recognised in Other Comprehensive Expense	(4,026)	(343)

Movement in net defined benefit liability during the year

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Deficit in scheme at 1 August	(4,309)	(5,110)
Movement in year:		
Current service cost	(1,024)	(873)
Employer contributions	1,515	1,500
Administration expenses	-	-
Curtailments	-	-
Net interest on the defined (liability)/asset	(208)	(169)
Business combinations	-	-
Adjustment in respect of unrecognised assets	3,401	
Actuarial gain or loss	625	343
Net defined benefit liability at 31 July	-	(4,309)

Asset and Liability Reconciliation

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligation		
Defined benefit obligations at start of period	50,523	47,234
Current Service cost	1,024	873
Interest cost	2,480	2,353
Contributions by Scheme participants	364	337
Experience gains and losses on defined obligations	(3,619)	1,450
Changes in financial assumptions	-	-
Estimates benefits paid	(2,155)	(1,724)
Past Service cost	-	-
Curtailments and settlements	-	-
Business combination	-	-
Defined benefit obligations at end of period	48,617	50,523

Reconciliation of Assets

	2025	2024
Fair value of plan assets at start of period	46,214	42,124
Interest on plan assets	2,272	2,184
Remeasurements (assets)	-	-
Return on Assets excluding amounts included in net interest	407	1,793
Administration expenses	-	-
Business combination	-	-
Employer contributions	1,515	1,500
Contributions by Scheme participants	364	337
Estimated benefits paid	(2,155)	(1,724)
Assets at end of period	48,617	46,214

21 Related party transactions

Owing to the nature of the College's operations and the composition of the board of governors being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, it is inevitable that transactions will take place with organisations in which a member of the board of governors may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the College's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures. There are no identified related party transactions other than as reported in relation to expenses below.

The total expenses paid to or on behalf of the Governors during the year was £850; 3 governors (2024: £582; 5 governors). This represents travel and subsistence expenses and other out of pocket expenses incurred in attending Governor meetings and charity events in their official capacity.

No Governor has received any remuneration or waived payments from the College or its subsidiaries during the year (2024: None).

22 Amounts disbursed as agent

Learner support funds

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Funding body grants – bursary support 16-18	552	497
Funding body grants – residential bursaries 16-18	102	114
	<hr/> 654	<hr/> 611
Disbursed to students	(624)	(583)
Administration costs	(30)	(28)
Balance unspent as at 31 July, included in creditors	<hr/> 0	<hr/> 0

Funding body grants are available solely for students. In the majority of instances, the College only acts as a paying agent. In these circumstances, the grants and related disbursement are therefore excluded from the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

23 Financial Instruments

The College has the following financial instruments:

	Note	College 2025 £'000	College 2024 £'000
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost:			
- Trade debtors	12	615	628
		615	628
Financial Liabilities measured at amortised cost:			
- Trade creditors	13,14	892	1,028
- Amounts owed to DFE	13,14	2,710	4,461
		3,602	5,489

Independent reporting accountant's report on regularity to the corporation of Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College and the Secretary of State for Education

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 29 May 2025 and further to the requirements of Department for Education (DfE), as included in the extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Colleges, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether anything has come to our attention that would suggest, in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received by Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College during the period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 have not been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament or the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Respective responsibilities of the accounting officer of [name of corporation] and the reporting accountant

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of the corporation's accountability agreement with the Secretary of State for Education and the College Financial Handbook, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament, and that the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the extant Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Colleges. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work, which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 have not been applied for the purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Colleges issued by DfE, which requires a limited assurance engagement, as set out in our engagement letter.

The objective of a limited assurance engagement is to perform such procedures as to obtain information and explanations in order to provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express a negative conclusion on regularity. A limited assurance engagement is more limited in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in a reasonable assurance engagement. Accordingly, we do not express a positive opinion.

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

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- Reviewed the statement on the College's regularity, propriety and compliance with Funding body terms and conditions of funding.
- Reviewed the College's completed self-assessment questionnaire on regularity.
- Read the accountability agreements, grant funding agreements and contracts with the ESFA/DfE.
- Tested a sample of expenditure disbursed and income received to consider whether they have been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and in accordance with funding agreements where relevant.
- Tested a sample of individual learner records.

- Tested a sample of credit card transactions.
- Tested a sample of expense claims in respect of KMP and Members of the Corporation.
- Tested a sample of suppliers and reviewed and assessed adherence to procurement policies.
- Tested a sample of bursary expenditure and reviewed whether such expenditure was in line with funding agreements.
- Reviewed all payments to senior post holders on termination of employment or in respect of claims made in the year.
- Reviewed approved policies and procedures operating during the year for each funding stream that has specific terms attached.
- Obtained the policy for personal gifts and/or hospitality.
- Obtained the register of personal interests.
- Obtained the financial regulations/financial procedures.
- Obtained the College's whistleblowing policy.
- Reviewed the College's compliance with Part 5 of the College Financial Handbook in respect of delegated authorities.
- Considered whether the college has complied with the requirements concerning senior pay controls as summarised in part 2 of the College Financial Handbook.

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 has not been applied for the purposes intended by Parliament, or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Signed:

Forvis Mazars LLP

Forvis Mazars LLP

Date: 19/12/2025