

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting 27th March 2019 5:30pm
 Huntingdon Campus, Cambridge**

MINUTES

Present

Vernice Key [Chair]
 Heather Du Quesnay
 Mark Robertson
 Jo Lancaster
 Paul Gaudin
 Nichola Harrison
 Tim Arthur
 Barry Fyfield
 Theresa van Ruth
 Andy Jennings
 Judith Coplowe
 Lewis Beddow
 Nauris Kalnins
 Terry Butcher

In attendance

Derek Sharp, Corrin Hoyes, Michelle Dowse, Laura Kerry

Clerk

Emily Baldwin

Section 1: Introduction		
1.1 1.2	Declarations of interest Apologies for absence	<p>Apologies were received from Martin Doel, Martin Clapson, Michael Cole, Joseph Winters and Raj Kumar.</p> <p>It was noted that Martin Doel had declared an interest as interim Chair of Hadlow College; the Clerk agreed to amend the Register of Interests accordingly.</p> <p>Theresa van Ruth was welcomed to the meeting as a new Staff Governor.</p>
1.3	Minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2018 and Awayday on 18th January 2019, and matters arising	<p>The Clerk agreed to amend the minutes of the Corporation Awayday on 18th January 2019 to record that Andy Jennings was present.</p> <p>L Kerry reported that the key worker scheme was no longer available at a national level.</p>

		The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.
1.4	Governor link scheme	<p>V Key reported on a successful and uplifting Apprenticeship Award Dinner. Governors asked for dates for key events to be circulated in good time in the future.</p> <p>T Arthur reported that he had attended the AOC Governor induction which he had found very useful. The Clerk agreed to circulate the slides from the session to all Governors.</p>
Section 2: Strategic Matters		
2.1	Governor insolvency	<p>M Kelly from Eversheds introduced the presentation on the FE insolvency regime and its impact on Governors.</p> <p>He confirmed that the new regime had been in place from 31st January 2019. The focus of the regime was on protection for the learners. He explained what steps would be taken if an administrator for a College was appointed.</p> <p>It was noted that Governors' liability has not changed under the new regime, provided they acted appropriately, including seeking advice where necessary. It was confirmed that this did not necessarily mean that the Board needed to get separate advice from management. The College had directors' liability insurance, but this would not cover criminal activity including wrongful trading.</p> <p>Governor expressed concern over use of sub-contractors which would have an impact on the College's finances. It was important that the Board were able to respond quickly to events.</p> <p>T Arthur asked that the F&R Committee had cash flow reports on a rolling 12 month basis, rather than just within the financial year. It was noted that the College had an overdraft facility in place, although it had not been used.</p> <p>M Kelly also reported that the insolvency regime had had an impact on the interest rates that banks now offered colleges which they viewed as more commercial. D Sharp confirmed that there was concern in the sector about the cost of pension schemes in the future.</p> <p>Governors asked about the likelihood of future mergers. M Kelly said this was possible given the financial pressures on many colleges.</p> <p><i>J Coplowe joined the meeting.</i></p> <p>M Kelly was thanked for his useful presentation.</p> <p><i>M Kelly left the meeting.</i></p>
2.2	Principal's Report	<p>M Robertson introduced his Principal's Report and the attached KPI report.</p> <p>He drew attention to progress against the Strategic Implementation Plan. In particular, he highlighted the action around delivering more of the Adult Education budget (AEB) programmes in-house which had not been fully achieved. This was a priority for the future. Curriculum planning was now in a two year cycle, which would help planning for AEB delivery.</p>

On KPIs, he explained the parameters that had been set for the RAG ratings. Governors noted the particular concern around English and Maths achievement and attendance rates. H Du Quesnay explained that the issue had been discussed at length at the L&Q Committee. The Principal explained that the organisation of English and Maths had followed a new model which had decoupled the link between the curriculum subject and English and Maths classes with the aim of giving more options for English and Maths classes. This was a model that had been followed at other colleges with good results. However, in practice the model had not proved to have been successful at this college. A number of students were not clear which class they should be attending and it had made it very difficult for tutors to monitor where students should be. The Staff Governor confirmed that the roll-out of the new system had been problematic.

Governors expressed disappointment that the issues were not picked up quickly enough at a senior management level. It was important that SMT did not rely on a single point of information. There was also concern that the data systems did not show attendance issues at an earlier point in time.

The Principal reassured Governors that the quality department would now be separate from the curriculum delivery so that SMT could have direct input from quality which would help ensure that issues were picked up earlier. The model for delivery of English and Maths in 2019/2020 would revert to the previous model with clear links between the curriculum area and English and Maths classes.

Governors asked about other models such as intensive week long programmes. M Dowse confirmed that this model was being rolled out for apprenticeships, but it was less suitable for GCSEs.

Governors asked for assurance that English and Maths staff were being supported appropriately. They also asked that SMT ensure that timetabling put English and Maths at the core of curriculum. M Robertson agreed that it was essential to do this to minimise non-attendance of English and Maths, and this was already the case.

Governors also discussed staff absence levels which had increased this year. L Kerry agreed to look at the split between short term and long term absences and to give further information to Governors in the future. It was noted that there was some correlation with English and maths staff absences.

The Principal drew attention to the mid-year student satisfaction survey which would be discussed in more detail at the next L&Q Committee. The preliminary results were very pleasing and showed an improvement on the previous year. The College was outperforming the average on 9 out of 10 questions asked. Governors agreed that this was an excellent improvement.

On apprenticeship numbers, the College was 8.6% below recruitment levels in comparison to the previous year. Some of the shortfall would be made up through acquiring learners from private providers. M Dowse was confident that apprenticeship targets would be reached in terms of numbers, but as these would be in lower value apprenticeships, it would affect the income targets. It was noted that in some areas, the facilities were not available to cope with increased expansion, such as in construction. J Lancaster agreed to talk to M Dowse separately about options for this.

		<p>It was noted that recruitment to staff in key areas remained a risk. Governors urged SMT to have a longer term plan for staff recruitment, including training apprentice assessors, recruiting out of area and looking at possible housing support. L Kerry confirmed that these actions were in place, and the College was also looking to increase marketing at specific demographic groups to attract lecturers and assessors, particularly those towards the end of their career.</p> <p>Governors received the report.</p>
2.3	<p>Equality and Diversity Annual Report</p>	<p>C Hoyes introduced the Equality and Diversity Annual Report. There were no significant gaps in achievement rates between 16-18 males and females in classroom-based learning or between apprenticeships. There were small gaps in achievement levels of some ethnic groups, but these were not statistically significant.</p> <p>The College was looking at in-year retention according to different characteristics. It had also introduced a new learning and support strategy focused on supporting level 3 students who required additional support.</p> <p>For 19+ students, there was a reported achievement gap of 4.5% between male and female students. These related to short employability programmes. Quality issues with the affected programmes were being addressed.</p> <p>Governors asked for clarification on the definition of disability which C Hoyes provided.</p> <p>L Kerry reported on the HR Equality and Diversity report. Overall, the equality monitoring data demonstrated fair practice within the College and adherence to the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Governors asked that themes from staff exit interviews be included in the HR termly report for the F&R Committee.</p> <p>Corporation received the report.</p>
<p>Section 3: Matters Referred from Committees</p>		
3.1	<p>Matters for decision from Commercial Strategy</p>	<p>M Dowse updated Governors on the main discussions from the Commercial Strategy Committee held on 14th February 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on apprenticeship improvement plan, with a particular emphasis on improvements to the sign-up process, better communication, improved account management and more effective curriculum planning • Employer engagement, and discussion over different ways to build more meaningful connections with employers so that employers view CRC as their college • Update on contributions from the nursery and other commercial areas, with guidance that targets needed to be ambitious but realistic; Governors advised that the impact of the nursery on existing learners needed to be included in any assessment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on international strategy, recognising declining accommodation options in the city and uncertainty over Brexit • Discussion over iMET with support for its focus on composites. <p>A confidential item was taken which was minuted separately.</p> <p><i>J Lancaster left the meeting</i></p> <p>It was agreed that the next Corporation meeting should include agenda items on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended item on apprenticeships • A confidential item was taken which was minuted separately.
3.2	Matters for decision referred from the F&R Committee	<p>T Arthur updated Governors on the main discussions from the F&R Committee held on 26th February 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks around apprenticeships and progress against budget for 2018/19 which was tight, in part due to shortfall in apprenticeship income; T Arthur supported a further discussion on apprenticeships at the next Corporation meeting • Progress with estates strategy, including with international accommodation • Substantial increase in pension costs from 2019/2020 onwards; an assumption had been made it would be funded centrally in 2019/2020 but not thereafter • Future changes with regard to the Adult Education Budget, • A new policy for management on spot salaries • Confirmation of annual staff bonus based on two criteria - affordability and overall college performance (enrolments and outcomes) <p>Governors asked for clarification on the Student Union Accounts and it was noted that the Student Union had made a contribution to furniture.</p> <p>Corporation <u>agreed:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees Strategy 2019/20 • Sub-contracting proposal, including an increase in the contract value for Skills Network by £250,000, if required. • Revised Pay Strategy • Revised Disciplinary & Grievance Policies • Student Union and Social Club Accounts 2017/18
3.2	Matters for decision referred from the L&Q Committee	<p>H Du Quesnay updated Governors on the main discussions from the L&Q Committee held on 5th March 2019 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful demonstration of the VLE, including the Teacher Takeaway Toolkit • Support for the approach to T-levels and the decision to bid for two pilot T-Levels - digital business services and education & childcare • Considerable discussion over attendance figures, particularly around English and maths, and timetabling issues at start of the year • Discussion over Quality Improvement Plan, noting issues around apprenticeship outcomes

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noting of the considerable progress made in level of student involvement at the College, which was very pleasing • Noting of the substantial improvement in the collection of destination data, particularly at Huntingdon campus, (Of the 87% of leavers with a known destination, 96% had a positive destination to work or further training) • Approval of the L&Q targets which were included in the KPI spreadsheet
3.3	Matters for decision referred from the Audit and Risk Committee	<p>A Jennings updated Governors on the main discussions from the Audit and Risk Committee held on 14th March 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely useful presentation on the risks and opportunities of the adult education budget, which will require more in-house delivery • Significant assurance on two internal audits – quality management and merger benefits • Internal audit plan on track
Section 4: Final matters		
4.1	Nomination process for Chair	<p>The Clerk outlined the nomination process for a new Chair to be appointed from December 2019.</p> <p>N Harrison encouraged Governors to nominate themselves for the position using the form enclosed in their pack.</p>
4.2	Recommendation for contract for temporary and permanent staff	Governors approved the award of contracts for temporary and agency academic and support staff to Protocol.
4.3	Any other business – confidential item	A confidential item was taken which was minuted separately.
4.4	Self-assessment of Governors' performance	Governors felt it had been a productive meeting, but felt that the acoustics in the meeting room were inadequate for discussion. It was agreed that Corporation meetings would be held at the Cambridge campus in the future.

Summary of Actions

Actions			
Item	Action	Lead	Date
1.4 Governor link scheme	T Arthur reported that he had attended the AOC Governor induction which he had found very useful. The Clerk agreed to circulate the slides from the session to all Governors.	E Baldwin	April 2019
2.1 Governor insolvency	T Arthur asked that the F&R Committee had cash flow reports on a rolling 12 month basis, rather than just within the financial year.	D Sharp	June 2019
2.2 Principal's Report	Governors also discussed staff absence levels which had increased this year. L Kerry agreed to look at the split between short term and long term absences and to give further information to Governors in the future.	L Kerry	June 2019
	It was noted that in some areas, the facilities were not available to cope with increased expansion, such as in construction. J Lancaster agreed to talk to M Dowse separately about options for this.	J Lancaster	June 2019
2.3 Equality and Diversity Report	Governors asked that themes from staff exit interviews be included in the HR termly report for the F&R Committee.	L Kerry	June 2019

The meeting closed at 20:00.

Signed

Chair