

**Minutes of the Corporation held on 24th March 2021: 5:30pm
Virtual meeting**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Present Heather Du Quesnay, Chair
 Mark Robertson, Principal
 Tim Arthur
 Judith Coplowe
 Andy Jennings
 Daniele Gibney
 Martin Clapson
 Martin Doel
 Jo Lancaster
 Lynn Morgan
 Raj Kumar
 Nichola Harrison
 Theresa van Ruth (Staff Governor)
 Cordelia Williams (Student Governor)

In attendance Michelle Dowse, Derek Sharp, Laura Kerry, Kate Da Costa, Corrin Hoyes

Clerk Emily Baldwin

1. Introduction		
1.1	Declarations of Interest	There were apologies for absence from Paul Gaudin, Yeish Mohamad, Abigail Houghton, Lewis Beddow and Mike Cole
1.2	Apologies for absence	
1.3	Minutes of the meeting held on 16 th December 2020	The minutes of the meeting of 16 th December 2020 were agreed to be a true record.
1.4	Governor feedback	<p>Governors gave feedback on their link visits and visits to the College.</p> <p>M Doel confirmed that he had helped to judge the Big Bid competition, along with P Gaudin, and had found it a very rewarding experience. Student videos of the Big Bid had been circulated to Governors.</p> <p>N Harrison had attended the curriculum planning meeting for employability which she reported was impressive and informative.</p> <p>T Arthur had attended the engineering curriculum planning meeting and had forwarded his feedback to the Principal.</p>

		<p>H Du Quesnay had attended two curriculum planning meetings and had found them very useful and had increased her knowledge of department areas. She had also attended the Employers' forums for catering and for early years/childcare. There had been particularly strong employer engagement at the early years/childcare forum. She had also attended an adult education team meeting.</p> <p>D Gibney attended the AOC HE conference which had been a very useful event.</p>
<p>2. Matters referred from Committees</p>		
<p>2.1</p>	<p>Principal's Report</p>	<p>M Robertson introduced the Principal's Report.</p> <p>He set out how the College had progressed with College reopening. The College had been fully opened since March 8th 2021 and had reverted to autumn term arrangements, with adult learners returning to face to face learning. Overall, nearly 75% of learning was carried out on site. This was due to an extensive testing regime at both campuses. Over 6000 tests had been given and overall there had been relatively few reported positive tests. Due to some positive cases at the Huntingdon campus, the campus had been shut for one day on advice of Public Health England in order to conduct a deep clean. Governors expressed their gratitude for the immense work carried out by College staff to set up a testing regime at the College.</p> <p>There had been a 2-day Ofsted monitoring visit which had been broadly positive. There were 2 recommendations from the visit that were being taken forward. The College had taken the decision to waive the next monitoring visit so would go straight to a full inspection in 12-18 months' time.</p> <p>M Gaze has led a team of quality managers to undertake a series of Internal Quality Reviews (IQRs) on key areas identified in the Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>M Robertson reported that in-year progress indicators were broadly on track. Attendance, student and employer satisfaction and retention rates were all strong. The student grade calculations which were to replace examinations would be a huge body of work for teachers in the summer term.</p> <p>The FE White Paper had been published. It was a positive paper which put FE at the heart of the skills system. He drew attention to the emergence of Local Skills Improvement Plans and new loan entitlements for post -18 study. A first Strategic Conversation between the college and the ESFA was to take place within the year.</p> <p>L Morgan expressed her concern over areas that still needed improvement, such as English and Maths, particularly in light of the most recent IQR. M Robertson said that English and Maths continued to be areas of priority for the College. A report on progress would go to the next L&Q Committee and would include clear priorities.</p> <p>N Harrison asked whether the Quality team had the necessary resources to drive improvements. C Hoyes confirmed that there was sufficient capacity. Any identified training needs were being met internally.</p> <p><i>J Lancaster joined the meeting</i></p>

		<p>M Robertson said that the College was likely to have an FE Commissioner visit in the near future. The FEC benchmarks had been revised and there was likely to be a particular focus on the cash in hand days and staff cost ratios. T Arthur said that the College needed to have a clear strategy on how it was working towards meeting the benchmarks. It was noted that they were a basket of measures and no single measure would necessarily be a trigger for intervention. The overriding objective was to ensure the College was profitable.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Strategic Implementation Plan and Risk Register be updated to recognise the need to focus on staff costs. Progress against financial targets needed to be clearer on the KPI sheet, as opposed to progress against forecast.</p> <p>Governors noted the new national guidance on AEB delivery and that this raised the risk of clawback in the event of under-delivery. The financial consequences of this needed to be modelled. D Sharp confirmed that he had carried out some sensitivity analysis and would continue to do so for the next F&R Committee.</p> <p>Governors asked about consultation on the new FE White Paper and noted that there were several different consultations on the different proposals contained within the Paper.</p> <p>Governors <u>received</u> the Principal's Report.</p>
2.3	Curriculum & Estates priorities	<p>M Robertson introduced the curriculum and estates priorities paper.</p> <p>This paper covered two key priorities: developing an integrated curriculum and estates strategy for Huntingdon Campus, and investment in learning facilities at both Huntingdon and Cambridge.</p> <p>He explained that since merger in 2017, CRC had protected almost all provision at Huntingdon Campus, in order to enable student numbers to recover following the very significant decline in enrolments in the 3-4 years prior to merger. To do so a much lower requirement was set for Huntingdon provision than for Cambridge in terms of contribution rates from individual courses.</p> <p>Huntingdon campus currently had four areas where enrolments were improving: High Needs. Employability, Health and Social Care and Construction. These areas had strong levels of student demand and met regional social and employment priorities. Some other areas continued to experience lower levels of enrolment, and consequently small and inefficient group sizes. Consideration should therefore be given to integrating some provision with Cambridge over a period of time.</p> <p>D Sharp introduced the iblock paper. [wording remove for confidentiality reasons]</p> <p>It was noted that the College had secured legal advice on the disposal of the building. Governors were advised that they needed to consider both whether the offer price represented 'best value' for the building and whether the sale would be in the best interests of the College in line with its core purpose.</p> <p>Governors asked about timescales for match funding, and it was noted that final completion would be in 2024.</p>

		<p>If the sale was agreed, Governors discussed the College’s plans for the funds. Its sale could enable the College to invest in areas where it needed to improve and where there was demand for space, most notably in Huntingdon. M Clapson said that the College needed to demonstrate there was a real need for investment, to ensure that funds were spent appropriately on capital assets.</p> <p>Governors asked about the demographics in the Cambridge area. It was noted that 16-18 year old group was rising, but there was also a rise in opportunities for blended learning so it was very unlikely that the College would need the space that iBlock afforded; in any case iBlock’s layout and design were not practical for students.</p> <p>Governors also asked about the role of the proposed business centres in the FE White Paper; it was noted that the role was a convening role and did not necessarily require more space.</p> <p>After some discussion, Governors were of the view that there was a pressing need for investment at Huntingdon campus, and iBlock had not been used well by the College. The majority view was that the sale would enable the College to make targeted investment in line with its curriculum priorities, particularly at Huntingdon.</p> <p>However, Governors said more clarity was needed on how the funds would be spent, particularly if the College would be focusing its provision on the Huntingdon site. This was vital to ensure that the funds were ring-fenced for capital investment.</p> <p>The investment plan needed to be in line with a consolidated curriculum plan across both campuses. The curriculum plan needed to make clear any reputational risks involved in the consolidation of provision, and the need to consult with staff and students. The plan also needed to include data on class sizes and detail on how many courses were falling below the minimum contribution level. It needed to be clear on how many students were affected and over what timescale. A phased approach would be appropriate. It was agreed that some specialisms might only be offered in Huntingdon, rather than Cambridge, so that students might be moving from Cambridge to Huntingdon and not only from Huntingdon to Cambridge.</p> <p>It was also agreed that a separate valuation of both the building and the car park was required in order for Corporation to be assured that the price offered .. was in line with the market rate. The valuation would be reviewed by the Chair and the Chair of the F&R Committee together with M Clapson.</p> <p>Subject to the valuation for the car parking and the building combined being at the same level as the separate valuations, Corporation agreed to the sale of the iBlock building [], subject to contract.</p> <p>M Robertson and D Sharp agreed to bring a detailed investment and curriculum plan to Corporation on use of the funds.</p>
2.2	Risk Register	Corporation reviewed the latest version of the Risk Register. They noted that the Risk Register had been reviewed by different Committees and changes made

		<p>accordingly, including the inclusion of FE Commissioner benchmarks. It was also noted that a separate tab on safeguarding had been introduced in line with the internal auditors' advice.</p> <p>Governors agreed that a new tab on governance should be introduced which would be monitored by the Search and Governance Committee.</p> <p>Governors noted that English and Maths were rated at amber, but the College would continue to closely monitor this in case they needed to revert to red.</p>
2.4	Equality and Diversity Annual Report	<p>C Hoyes and L Kerry introduced the equality and diversity annual report.</p> <p>The paper reported on the College's performance against the equality indicators of learner participation and success by gender, ethnicity and disability, and reported on the staff profile by equality indicators.</p> <p>Governors discussed the data around student performance of different groups, and noted that this was similar to previous years. There was no significant achievement gap between male and female adult learners, and a small gap between male and female 16-18 learners. Governors also noted the achievement rates for students with different ethnicities which was in line with previous years. The overall performance of students aged 16-18 with a disability fell in 2019-20; this differed from the previous year and would be monitored.</p> <p>It was noted that the College would be following guidance on unconscious bias training for teachers involved in Teacher Assessed Grades.</p> <p>The College Single Equality Scheme had been updated for 2019/20. Data from the report would accompany the scheme at the next update.</p> <p>Staff data was provided within the report. Overall the equality monitoring data demonstrated fair practice within the College and adherence to the Equality Act 2010. The College was undertaking an analysis of its recruitment processes to check for bias. This would also cover student recruitment.</p> <p>T van Ruth asked whether the College was continuing to report on gender binary. L Kerry said this was linked to ESFA reporting but that a change on this should be considered.</p> <p>Governors would also be looking at their own diversity in their membership.</p> <p>The Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan was in the process of review. The aim was for it to be developed with input from across the College and would be presented to Governors in the summer term.</p> <p>Corporation received the report.</p>
3. Matters referred from Committees		
3.1	Matters for decision referred from the Emergency Planning Task and Finish Group	<p>H Du Quesnay presented the main items of discussion from the Emergency Planning Task and Finish Group on 22nd February 2021. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presentation on the implications of the FE White Paper for CRC by Martin Doel, including the emphasis on local planning and collaboration, higher level

		<p>technical education, apprenticeship growth and the possible introduction of local business centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education Strategy – a further draft was discussed and the format would be used as the basis for future strategies. <p>Other items such as the Ofsted monitoring visit and the plans for College reopening had been covered under the Principal's report.</p>
3.2	Matters for decision referred from the Finance & Resources Committee	<p>T Arthur presented the main items for discussion from the Finance & Resources Committee on 9th March 2021. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iMET – discussions had not been concluded with the Combined Authority regarding sale of the building. • Staff costs – The Committee had noted that the College was behind the FE Commissioner benchmark on staff costs as proportion of income, even taking impact of SEND learners and pensions into account. A further paper on staff costs would be presented to Governors after Easter. • Period 6 Management Accounts – showed a deficit of £640k before restructuring, which was £86k adverse to forecast position. This was partly due to apprenticeship income which the College had expected to be refunded from the ESFA. Cashflow remained positive. • Health and Safety – one RIDDOR reportable event which was being investigated internally. • Environmental report – energy statistics would be published on the College website and a refreshed Environmental Committee established with the aim of developing an Environmental Strategy for the next academic year. • Human Resources update – there were still issues with recruitment in some areas, and probationary reviews were behind target. A staff development plan had been developed. • Pay proposal – the National living wage was being introduced from April 2021 which would have an impact on lower pay scales for support staff. The College had an ambition to be a Foundation Living Wage employer but this was not currently affordable. <p>Corporation approved the following recommendations from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application in Principle for DfE Transformation Grant funding for additional construction facilities at Huntingdon campus • Subcontracting – transfer of an additional £100k to BRC Ltd contract (bringing total to £593k), due to a shortfall of delivery from Code Nation • Students Union and Sports and Social Club accounts • Fees Strategy & Regulations 2021/22, which had been updated in line with audit recommendations • Financial Regulations update, with some flexibility in place for international fees • LGPS Discretions Policy (no changes)
3.3	Matters for decision referred from the Learning &	<p>L Morgan presented the main items for discussion from the Learning & Quality Committee on 1st February 2021 and 2nd March 2021. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance data – the Committee had scrutinised in-year data such as attendance and retention data, as well as destinations. It had also reviewed

	Quality Committee	<p>the outcomes of GCSE resits; there had been an increase in the gross number of students passing, but the increased number of entrants had negatively affected the pass rate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education IQR – the number of strengths now outweighed the areas for improvement and many areas identified in the Ofsted report had been rectified. • Higher Education Strategy – a new draft strategy had been developed which set out the College’s three-year approach to HE. It was agreed that a final version of the Strategy would come back to Corporation following the finalisation of the Adult Education Strategy due to links between the two areas • PIAP – the PIAP had been updated to take account of Ofsted feedback and the latest set of IQRs
3.4	Matters for decision referred from the Audit & Risk Committee	<p>J Coplowe presented the main items for discussion from the Audit and Risk Committee on 15th March 2021. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny of internal audits on Pro Monitor and IT resilience, both of which had received substantial assurance. • GDPR report – Committee had noted the increase in data breaches, primarily as a result of home working but were assured the breaches themselves were minor. <p>Corporation approved the following recommendations from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data protection policy, with updates to take account of COVID
3.5	Matters for decision referred from the Commercial Strategy Committee	<p>M Doel presented the main items for discussion from the Commercial Strategy Committee on 18th March 2021. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome of the employer satisfaction survey, which was largely positive; the Committee had recommended it should also be shared with the Learning & Quality Committee • International business, noting the uncertainty in the market and the fact that the College had regained its tier 4 licence • the GCP’s Form the Future partnership which was aligned with the College’s priorities; the Committee had recommended the project to Corporation due to its scale and it was endorsed by Governors
4 Final matters		
4.1	<p>Matters agreed between meetings</p> <p>AOB</p>	<p>Governors noted the items that had been approved electronically since the last meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalisation of the Financial Statements • Huntingdon campus contract award • Update to the Safeguarding policy • Contract for WiFi tender • Outcome of Ofsted inspection and decision to waive the next monitoring visit <p>D Sharp presented a proposal to vary the Huntingdon campus contract that had been awarded to Noble House to take account of additional works required. Governors agreed to the extension of the contract by £312k ex VAT, noting</p>

		that the additional sum was covered by the existing funding grant. The Clerk agreed to circulate the breakdown of the additional items by email to Governors.
4.2	Self-assessment of Governors' performance	Governors agreed it had been a good meeting, with appropriate robust debate. They asked that more detail about curriculum priorities, particularly as they affected Huntingdon, be presented to Governors at the next meeting.

There was no other business and the meeting ended at 7:55pm.