

**Minutes of the Corporation held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021: 5:30pm**  
**Virtual meeting**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**Present** Heather Du Quesnay, Chair  
 Mark Robertson, Principal  
 Tim Arthur  
 Judith Coplowe  
 Andy Jennings  
 Martin Clapson  
 Martin Doel  
 Lynn Morgan  
 Raj Kumar  
 Nichola Harrison  
 Paul Gaudin  
 Theresa van Ruth (Staff Governor)  
 Abby Houghton (Staff Governor)  
 Cordelia Williams (Student Governor)

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

**Clerk** Emily Baldwin

<b>1. Introduction</b>		
<b>1.1</b>	Declarations of Interest	There were apologies for absence from Yeish Mohamad, Lewis Beddow, Jo Lancaster and Mike Cole.
<b>1.2</b>	Apologies for absence	
<b>1.3</b>	Minutes of the meeting held on 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	The minutes of the meeting of 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2021 were agreed to be a true record.
<b>1.4</b>	Governor feedback	<p>Governors gave feedback on their link visits and visits to the College.</p> <p>M Cole had attended the local safeguarding board meeting.</p> <p>A number of Governors had attended student board meetings, including T Arthur, N Harrison, L Morgan, M Doel, J Coplowe and H Du Quesnay. Governors gave feedback on the meetings. Overall, Governors had been very impressed at the format and points covered in the meetings. One of the meetings had had poor attendance due to a clash with exams.</p> <p>It was noted that T van Ruth had offered to show Governors a selection of online courses.</p>

## 2. Matters referred from Committees

2.1	Principal's Report	<p>M Robertson introduced the Principal's Report. His report covered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The College had returned to arrangements in place before the January 2021 lockdown due to the relaxation of national COVID restrictions. Intold over 70% of learning undertaken was being delivered on college sites.</li><li>• Work was underway to ensure appropriate arrangements were in place for Teacher Assessed Grades.</li><li>• A plan was being developed to identify all the quality assurance measures to be undertaken in the expected 12 months lead up to the Ofsted inspection.</li><li>• The FE Commissioner visit would take place on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> July and would involve a selection of governors.</li><li>• The Strategic Conversation with ESFA would take place on 15 June involving the Chair and SMT.</li><li>• Student monitoring indicators such as attendance, retention and satisfaction rates had been improved</li><li>• A new mayor had been elected, although it was too early to know what impact he would have on educational funding or strategy. L Morgan said that she had contributed to a social care document for the Mayor's office which the College may find useful.</li></ul> <p>Governors <b><u>received</u></b> the Principal's Report.</p>
2.2	Period 8 Management Accounts	<p>D Sharp introduced the Period 8 Management Accounts.</p> <p>The forecast for the year had been re-evaluated as a result of the changing COVID situation and as a result the projected deficit had increased to £(412)k for the year. The forecast was being continually reviewed and there were potential risks and opportunities in the results. In particular, there were increased risks around apprenticeship achievements and the international market.</p> <p>D Sharp confirmed that the next version of the Management Accounts would include more information on the calculations underpinning financial health. It was noted that the College was likely to remain 'requires improvement'. There had been some possible funding opportunities in the next year, including increased FE funding and rise in applications. However, this was not yet clear.</p> <p>[Wording removed for confidentiality reasons]</p> <p>T Arthur underlined the importance of ensuring that the budget for 2021/2022 was positive, and that it needed to include sufficient contingency. He noted that many of the financial processes involved in budget setting were manual in the College.</p> <p>Governors asked about the cash flow position. It was noted that the cash forecast looked to 2 years in the future, so the College was taking a longer-term view. It had not taken account of possible proceeds from the sale of iBlock.</p> <p>Governors asked about the College position on its Adult Education Budget contracts. Under the current contracts, it was unlikely that there would be any clawback because the budget had been spent.</p>

<b>3. Matters referred from Committees</b>		
<b>3.1</b>	Matters for decision referred from the Finance & Resources Committee	<p>T Arthur updated Governors on the main items of discussion from the F&amp;R Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021.</p> <p>It was noted that the meeting covered a single issue on staff costs ratio. The College's staff costs ratio was higher than the sector benchmark and the sector average. The College was undertaking considerable analysis on staff costs. This work was still in progress but was being carried out in detail. It would be reviewed as part of the budget process and steps would be proposed if necessary to bring it closer to the benchmark. The Chair and Chair of F&amp;R Committee were meeting with D Sharp in between Corporation meetings to ensure appropriate progress was being made.</p>
<b>3.2</b>	Matters for decision referred from the Emergency Planning Task and Finish Group	<p>H Du Quesnay updated Governors on the main items of discussion from the Emergency Planning Task and Finish Group on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Group had received feedback from Marina Gaze on the findings of the IQRs on work-based learning and traineeships. It showed that the College was making good progress, particularly in the delivery of apprenticeships.</li> <li>• An overview of IQRs to date had been put together, which showed some common messages about consistency and sharing of good practice.</li> <li>• Future work included ensuring that the College was continuing to be clear on the intent of all types of provision and ensuring the quality of online provision. Further reports on careers advice, SEND learners and PREVENT would be carried out. It was imperative that the College was well prepared for the September intake, particularly in the early use of skills scans.</li> </ul> <p>Corporation approved the revised Adult Education Strategy.</p>
<b>3.3</b>	Matters for decision referred from the Search & Governance Committee	<p>N Harrison updated Governors on the main items of discussion from the Search &amp; Governance Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors would be required to renew their online Safeguarding and Prevent training on renewal of their terms of office. This would be in addition to the training already provided within Corporation meetings.</li> <li>• A recruitment campaign for new governors, including a link governor for equality &amp; diversity, and new members for the Audit/Risk Committee would be launched over the summer. A role description for the Governor role would be circulated to all Governors</li> <li>• The governor link scheme would be thematically based in the future, and role descriptions would be developed and circulated to governors. Governors were encouraged to continue to attend quality meetings throughout the year.</li> <li>• Consultation on changes to the AoC Code of Governance was underway. Key changes included more focus on governor training, environmental sustainability and equality and diversity, and increased reporting in Financial Statements.</li> <li>• The Search Committee had interviewed Neil Hunter as a new Governor and had agreed he would be an excellent addition to the Governing body. He would join the Audit and Risk Committee and A Jennings would take on the role of Chair.</li> </ul>

		<p>Corporation approved the following recommendations from the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minor changes to Standing Orders to clarify that a Governor’s term of office could be extended if they were taking on a more senior position.</li> <li>• no changes to the Instruments and Articles.</li> <li>• second terms of office for Jo Lancaster, Martin Doel and Abigail Trencher.</li> </ul>
<b>4 Strategic item</b>		
4.1	Curriculum planning	<p>M Robertson introduced the presentation on curriculum planning.</p> <p>He explained that the College’s mission was still appropriate and relevant to the emerging landscape.</p> <p>He set out what the mission meant for how the College would evolve over the next five years. Key priorities would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to evolving government priorities, local, regional and national.</li> <li>• Providing an excellent experience to all students in all curriculum areas and provision types: young people, high needs, adults, apprentices.</li> <li>• Meeting the needs of employers for skills.</li> <li>• Meeting the needs of larger cohorts of 16-18 year olds.</li> <li>• Generating annual surpluses for investment in physical and human resources</li> <li>• Providing consistently high quality and up to date learning facilities.</li> <li>• Developing and delivering curriculum to meet evolving skills needs – including through provider collaborations.</li> <li>• Extensive employer involvement, with possible involvement in a business centre.</li> </ul> <p>He went on to outline the different priorities for different types of provision:</p> <p>For adult learners, that would mean an increased emphasis on Levels 4 and 5, more focus on green skills in construction, motor vehicle, IT and project management, retraining opportunities and increased Level 3 courses attracting full funding. For young people, there would be a growth in T levels, a focus on sustainability/green skills, employability training and a growth in demographics. There was likely to be a growth in high needs students, a need to enable progression to further study and work and improved and expanded facilities. For apprenticeships, there would be a requirement for growth in construction and green technologies as well as a wider range of level 4 and 4 apprenticeships. It would be important to deliver high quality provision in all areas.</p> <p>Governors asked how far the College would need to change to meet the Government’s emphasis on Levels 4 and 5. M Robertson confirmed this would be a shift, as most of the College’s provision at that level was progression from existing level 3 programmes. The College needed to respond to employer needs, but it was noted that not all smaller employers were able to identify their skill needs of the future. The College was developing a strong relationship with the Chambers of Commerce.</p> <p>Governors asked whether level 4 and 5 apprenticeships would be focused on adults. It was confirmed that there would also be a focus on young people. There would be more cross-regional working. The College needed to continue to improve its maths and English provision.</p>

Governors asked about how the College was addressing students' social skills. M Robertson outlined a number of initiatives, including the Form the Future project and a bid to a college collaboration fund to further students' resilience. Governors welcomed the emphasis on social skills.

M Robertson set out areas where the College was already well positioned to meet government priorities, such as its high-quality study programmes, its role in the local community and its links with employers. He then set out areas where the College needed to improve, including raising the standard of Huntingdon facilities, improvements in some areas already identified in the Ofsted report, growing the size of workshops to meet demand, meeting financial challenges and more efficient group sizes

Priorities for the future were:

- Improving financial performance.
- Consolidating curriculum to improve student experience, group sizes and access to best facilities.
- Ensuring all students were able to access good facilities and targeting capital investment to specific sites.
- Improving teaching, learning and management in key areas.
- Developing collaborations for quality improvement and curriculum development and delivery.

M Doel asked about the College's relationship with neighbouring colleges. M Robertson said that the College did have good relationships and consulted on key new curriculum decisions. He gave an example of a recent decision to locate green motor vehicle in Cambridge campus, rather than Huntingdon, to ensure there was no duplication of the offer in the north of the region.

T Arthur questioned whether employer forums were sufficiently attended. It was noted that some of the forum were less well attended than others, but the College undertook a wide range of employer engagement activity such as being part of the Cambridge Ahead employer forum. Governors said that the College should look at a broader range of HE partners other than universities.

M Robertson outlined his proposal for curriculum consolidation. The strategy to continue to offer the curriculum unchanged on both campuses after merger had been successful in some areas, but had worked less well in others. Where class sizes were small, particularly in Huntingdon, students were not having the optimum student experience. Furthermore, small class sizes were having an adverse impact on the College's finances. Some specialisation would allow capital investment to be more focused to raise the quality of facilities overall. Governors asked about ensuring equality of opportunity for students in Huntingdon, and were given assurance on the transport arrangements. Governors stressed the importance of good communication and consultation with staff and students about the consolidation of the curriculum.

*P Gaudin joined the meeting*

*J Coplowe left the meeting*

*R Kumar left the meeting*

		<p>M Robertson set out the proposal for specialisation of delivery on the two campuses. Three areas that were currently delivered at Huntingdon would move over time to Cambridge – engineering, motor vehicle and art/design. Gas training, access to humanities and green construction would be delivered solely at Huntingdon. For 2021/22, engineering and art/design would be consolidated at Cambridge. This involved relatively few students and would be carefully managed so that the total number of students at Huntingdon would remain at or above current levels. The College had already consulted with employers about the proposal to deliver gas training solely at Huntingdon campus, and the employers said that they were comfortable with having training moved to Huntingdon and the students were generally employed so had their own transport. There was high demand for gas courses.</p> <p>The College’s capital proposals would then be aligned with the consolidation of the curriculum, including growth in construction facilities at Huntingdon.</p> <p>Governors discussed the proposals in detail. They felt it was a logical and reasonable approach which would enable the College to invest in better facilities for the benefit of students and to focus its curriculum on changing employer needs. They asked about the proposal to move level 1 motor vehicle as students undertaking level 1 courses were less inclined to travel. M Robertson said this would be kept under review based on student enrolment numbers. Governors suggested that the plans include self-study space at the Huntingdon campus so that students could make use of blended learning to limit travelling and could undertake private study away from home if necessary.</p> <p>Governors endorsed the principle that any movement of students out of Huntingdon should be offset by growth in existing or new courses.</p> <p>Governors agreed the approach would enable a more sustainable business model for the following year. It was important to understand the worst-case scenario for capital funding if proceeds from the sale of iBlock were not forthcoming. D Sharp confirmed that the College’s capital investment plan was not wholly reliant on these proceeds.</p> <p>A vote was taken and Governors agreed with the proposed plan for consolidation of the curriculum and endorsed the approach set out in the presentation for 2021/22. A detailed minute would be recorded of the discussion and the slides would be circulated to all governors.</p>
<b>5 Final matters</b>		
<b>5.1</b>	Matters agreed between meetings	<p>Governors noted the items that had been approved electronically since the last meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of cladding contractor for Huntingdon refurbishment (F&amp;R Committee)</li> <li>• Appointment of Neil Hunter as member of Corporation (Corporation)</li> </ul>
<b>5.2</b>	Use of the seal	Governors noted the use of the seal for the Huntingdon land sale.
<b>5.3</b>	Confidential item	A confidential item was taken which is minuted separately.

<b>5.4</b>	Self-assessment of Governors' performance	Governors agreed it had been a good meeting. The meeting had moved at pace in order to give appropriate focus to the curriculum planning item.  A Jennings said that he had welcomed the re-ordering of the agenda with Committee papers at the start.
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There was no other business and the meeting ended at 7:45pm.