

**Minutes of the Corporation held on 5th October 2022
Cambridge Campus 5:30pm**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Present Tim Arthur, Deputy Chair
 Mark Robertson, Principal
 Martin Doel
 Paul Gaudin
 Lynn Morgan
 Tim Waller
 Lesley Deacon
 Richard Tunnicliffe
 Louise Armstrong
 Jo Lancaster
 Michael Killick (Staff Governor)
 Beryl Gillespie (Staff Governor)
 Yvette Watson (Staff Governor)
 Nathan Smith (Student Governor)

In attendance Michelle Dowse, Laura Kerry, Kate Da Costa, Corrin Hoyes, Vic Annells (Cambs Chamber of Commerce), Laura Ruaux (Cambs Chamber of Commerce)

Clerk Emily Baldwin

<p>1.1 1.2</p>	<p>Declarations of Interest Apologies for absence</p>	<p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>There were apologies for absence from Heather Du Quesnay, Bradley Dorrington, Jack Williams, Martin Clapson, Neil Hunter and Mason Friars.</p> <p>Due to the Chair's absence, it was agreed that T Arthur, Deputy Chair, would chair the meeting.</p>
<p>1.3</p>	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 28th June 2022</p>	<p>The minutes of the meeting of 28th June 2022 were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.</p> <p>L Morgan asked about the status of the action concerning apprenticeship curriculum. An options analysis setting out proposals for longer term plans for the apprenticeship curriculum should be developed. It was agreed this would be discussed at L&Q Committee and the Strategy Day.</p>
<p>1.4</p>	<p>Governor training/College visits/safeguarding meetings feedback</p>	<p>Governors reported on College visits and events that they had attended.</p> <p>R Tunnicliffe reported on a successful CRC event at which CBI sponsored a table. It had given students an excellent opportunity to talk to employers and</p>

		<p>develop their softer skills. R Tunnicliffe also reported on a College visit to see supported learning in his governor lead role.</p> <p>T Arthur and L Morgan reported positively on their visit to the College to view student enrolments.</p> <p>L Morgan had met with K Da Costa to discuss start of term arrangements. T Arthur had met with S Jones to get an update on the financial outturn and budget.</p>
2	Presentation – the role of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)	<p><i>V Annells and L Ruaux joined the meeting.</i></p> <p>V Annells and L Ruaux outlined the role of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the progress to date. The Chambers of Commerce were approaching the development of the LSIP in a collaborative way and had already pulled together an advisory group across the region, including M Dowse representing CRC. The initial report would be finalised in May 2023, when a second phase of monitoring would commence. The Chambers of Commerce was an independent body and was well positioned to bring parties together.</p> <p>Governors discussed the role of education providers in the region. Employers had reported the need for a different skillset from their employees. V Annells quoted a statistic that an estimated 65% of people without further skills training would not be carrying out their current job in 5 years' time. There needed to be a particular focus on retraining those approaching 50.</p> <p>Governors discussed the role of the College in meeting skills needs in the region. The College had to mediate between employer need and student demand. M Doel said that for 16-18 FE learners, the focus should be on engagement and motivation, rather than training for precisely specified jobs. For adult learners and apprenticeships, it should be expected that there was more of an alignment between courses and priority sectors. The College needed to identify priority areas where there were skills gaps and look to meet those needs organically. Bootcamps could play a particular role for adult learners. FE Colleges also needed to recognise that young people may have aspirations that would take them away from the region, and this should not be discouraged.</p> <p>L Deacon agreed that employers reported the need for general skills, such as communication skills, problem solving and resilience.</p> <p>P Gaudin suggested that recruitment agencies be approached about their experience and knowledge of skills gaps. T Waller suggested that job descriptions could also be scrutinised to identify what skills employees needed.</p> <p>Governors asked what lessons had been learnt from the pilots. V Annells reported that the main lesson was that educational providers be included in the development of the LSIP.</p> <p>Governors discussed whether English and Maths GCSEs were wanted by employers, rather than more functional skills. It was noted that this was not within the remit of the LSIP.</p>

		<p>It was important that the LSIP was based on easily understood evidence and data and was deliverable.</p> <p>Governors discussed how the College could help with the development of the LSIP. The College could be particularly helpful in reaching out to smaller companies who are not on business membership groups.</p> <p>Corporation thanked V Annells and L Ruaux for their useful contribution to the meeting.</p> <p><i>V Annells and L Ruaux left the meeting.</i></p>
3.1	Principal's Report	<p>M Robertson introduced the Principal's report.</p> <p>The new academic year has started well, with few Covid 19 mitigations now required. He reported that student behaviour and compliance with badge wearing and smoking restrictions had been very good so far. This was in part due to the return of face to face pre course, tasters and a refreshed induction programme.</p> <p>Full details of student achievements were being analysed. For apprenticeships, achievement rates were expected to be around 65%, broadly similar to last year, and ahead of the reported national average of 52% for 2021/22.</p> <p>For maths the 16-18 year old achievement rate was currently reported as 21% compared with the national average for resits of 15% and for English 23% compared with the national average of 24%. It had been a very challenging year for students resitting maths and English nationally. The return to examinations and the lifting of some grade boundaries saw a reduction in achievement rates both nationally and at CRC compared to teacher assessed grades. Nonetheless, results at CRC were higher than pre-COVID levels.</p> <p>The transactions for the disposal of IMET were now complete and no further liability to CRC existed in respect of the land or buildings.</p> <p>Enrolments continued to be running above the level of 2021/22, although not high enough for an in-year funding increase. HE and apprenticeship targets were strong. Governors questioned the need for a stretch target and said it would be more appropriate to refer to the financial target for enrolments that was in the budget. Governors asked if there were any trends in the enrolments. It was noted that there were lower enrolments in hair and beauty, which had had a particular impact on the Huntingdon campus.</p> <p>Governors also asked why some students enrolled late. There were a variety of reasons including a number of students deciding to leave 6th form or making a late decision.</p> <p>Governors asked about risks around student affordability for getting to College. This had been exacerbated by bus route closures and the cost of living crisis. The College had reduced the threshold of household income to qualify for a bursary.</p>

Governors asked for more information on attrition and attendance rates. Attrition rates were below the national average. Attendance was higher than a similar point to last year. However, attendance last year had still suffered from student illness and anxiety around COVID.

Governors noted the KPI framework for 2021/22. Although the number of apprenticeship starts was shown as red, the College had hit its income target.

Governors discussed staff pay. The reversal of the increased employers NI levy from November would reduce budgeted payroll costs and would be used for staff pay. Discussions were ongoing with the union as to whether this would in the form of a bonus or consolidated pay, in addition to the 2% offer. Governors supported the Principal in this approach. The F&R Committee had made it clear that any surplus this year should be put into boosting staff pay, a position agreed by the meeting.

The College was also looking for savings in the capital budget. T Arthur had advised S Jones to look at cashflow as well as profitability.

Governors discussed the high level of staff turnover which had increased over the summer period. There were a number of possible reasons for this. B Gillespie, Staff Governor, reported that it had been difficult to feel part of the College when joining in lockdown. There had been limited opportunities to meet staff from other departments or to have a college tour. There were also cultural differences between the two campuses, although it was recognised that overall staff seemed to understand and embody the College values.

M Killick reported that his experience was much more positive, with good communication within his team. The Covid experience had been particularly difficult for new staff members. The large amount of cover required due to staff turnover was challenging.

Governors asked whether the College undertook departmental temperature checks, rather than rely on an overall College survey. L Kerry confirmed this was the case. The survey could also be analysed by department. SMT also regularly attended department meetings.

L Kerry acknowledged that if a staff member had started in a lockdown period, they would have missed out on staff tours and we had overlooked this. She would look at introducing these for those affected staff members. Staff turnover was particularly high amongst learning support mentors where pay was an issue. Recruitment was ongoing and the College was making use of a range of initiatives.

M Doel said that it was important to understand attendance rates, and log information on COVID absences internally. This was a key factor in lower attendance over the last two years.

T Waller advised that the exit questionnaire was presented to Governors with the HR Annual report.

Corporation **noted** the report.

<p>3.2</p>	<p>Strategic Plan 2021/22 – 2024/25</p> <p>Strategic Implementation Plan</p>	<p>The Principal introduced the updated Strategic Plan. The updates included reference to the delivery of T Levels in the Operational Goals.</p> <p>The Principal presented the new Strategic Implementation Plan. It was agreed that this was an operational document and should be agreed by Corporation on an annual basis. Monitoring of the Plan was through the KPIs.</p> <p>Governors asked whether the College had any contingency plans in place to deal with another COVID wave and cost of living crisis. It was noted that the principles and guiding intent set by the Governors was appropriate, and the management had appropriate flexibility to deal with situations as they arose. The College had shown it could adapt to situations in an agile way.</p> <p>Corporation approved the Strategic Plan and Strategic Implementation Plan.</p>
<p>3.3</p>	<p>Ofsted update</p>	<p>C Hoyes gave a presentation on the new Ofsted framework, including the new criteria around meeting skills needs. Governors noted the new requirements and how the College had already responded. The College would be preparing a position statement that would be shared electronically with Governors.</p> <p>Governors agreed that they were in a strong position for scrutinising skills needs as this was a role already carried out by the Skills, Enterprise and Sustainability Committee. It would be sensible for all Governors to revisit the curriculum strategy to ensure it met local/regional skills needs.</p> <p>The College did not rely on the employer survey for all its feedback from employers due to the low response rate. It used other sources such as attendance at employer forums and business membership organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce. Governors could play a role in meeting with employers on behalf of the College.</p> <p>Corporation noted the Ofsted update.</p>
<p>3.4</p>	<p>Skills, Enterprise and Sustainability Committee terms of reference</p>	<p>E Baldwin introduced the updated terms of reference for the Skills, Enterprise and Sustainability Committee.</p> <p>Governors suggested that the terms included reference to apprenticeships.</p> <p>Subject to that addition, Corporation approved the terms of reference.</p>
<p>3.5</p>	<p>Safeguarding Report</p>	<p>M Dowse introduced the safeguarding report. It included the Safeguarding Self-assessment required by the County Council.</p> <p>Governors noted the recommendations in the report.</p> <p>They noted that e-safety was a big area of focus, including the risks around live streaming. Governors would receive training on the topic.</p> <p>N Jones, Student Governor, suggested that training be extended to student leaders as they were often in a position of trust. They needed to be appropriately trained to deal with safeguarding concerns that were made known to them. Governors agreed this was a very good suggestion and would be actioned.</p>

4.1	Matters for decision referred from the Audit and Risk Committee	<p>T Waller introduced the main areas of discussion from the Audit and Risk Committee on 28th September 2022.</p> <p>The Committee had reviewed the updated Whistleblowing policy. They had recommended the policy be amended to include a central contact for reporting whistleblowing concerns rather than reporting to line managers.</p> <p>The Committee had reviewed the Risk register, which they felt was a strong document. The Committee would be undertaking deep dives into particular risks in the future.</p> <p>The internal audit plan had been reviewed, and the Committee had agreed that the internal audit on T-levels preparation should be brought forward.</p> <p>The Committee had also reviewed the regularity self-assessment questionnaire which they had found to be credible and backed by evidence.</p> <p>Corporation approved the whistleblowing policy and internal audit plan for 2022/23. It was agreed that the regularity self-assessment questionnaire could be signed by the Chair.</p>
5.1	Corporation workplan	Corporation approved the workplan for 2022/23.
5.2	Matters agreed between meetings	It was noted that the safeguarding policy had been approved electronically. Additional reference would be made in the policy to vulnerable adults.
5.3	Any other business	<p>Governors asked whether the College was continuing to see a rise in mental health issues amongst students. M Dowse confirmed this was the case and the College was responding with increased support such as a new mindfulness programme. The College had introduced a new mental health app, which was funded by the combined authority and was now being rolled out to 16-18 year olds. N Smith confirmed that the Student Union had looked at the app.</p> <p>There were also concerns regarding food poverty. The College was mindful of the pressures that students were facing and was looking at the bursary system to ensure it supported students appropriately.</p>
5.4	Self-assessment of Governor performance	Governors said it had been a productive meeting. They particularly welcomed the contributions from staff and student governors.

There was no other business and the meeting ended at 7:50 pm.