Skills, Enterprise & Sustainability Committee
28th April 2026 5:00pm
Cambridge campus

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Present	Richard Tunnicliffe, Chair Jo Lancaster Gabriella Giuffrida Tim Richardson Heather Du Quesnay Mark Robertson Chris Leeding (for item 5) Chris Hayward (for item 6)
In attendance	Laura Kerry Judith Cutts Kate Da Costa
Clerk	Emily Baldwin

1	**Declarations of Interest** **Apologies for absence**
There were no declarations of interest. There were no apologies for absence.	
2	**Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2026**
The minutes of the meeting of 20th January 2026 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.	
3	**Marketing and applications report**
J Cutts presented the marketing and applications report.	

- New 16–18 applicant numbers were 3% below the same point last year, with the gap continuing to close.
- First-choice applications were ahead of last year, with positive trends at both Cambridge and Huntingdon campuses.
- New applicants were lower at the Huntingdon campus, in part due to the impact of later recruitment from a key Huntingdon feeder school.
- A number of actions were being taken to support recruitment, including an additional open day at Huntingdon and a new year 10 taster day
- Open day attendance and school engagement was higher than the previous year.
- Careers events had higher student attendance than previous years.

Governors noted the growth in application numbers for trades courses which was particularly pleasing. Governors asked about the impact of the new energy training centre in the region. K Da Costa confirmed that the College was working collaboratively with the centre so there had not been any negative impact on College numbers.

The Committee congratulated the team on the increase in school engagement. They asked if there was potential to expand into primary schools. J Cutts said there was potential to build this into the workplan, but there was limited funding for transport to bring students into the College. Governors agreed that it was important to engage with primary school students to demonstrate the careers paths supported by further education. Funding options could be explored, particularly in the Fenland and other rural areas.

The Committee noted the increase in demand from adults for construction courses at Huntingdon. It was noted that this would align with the campus' focus on environmental courses and the new apprenticeship units.

Governors said it would be useful to understand the proportion of internal students progressing and new students in any given year.

The Committee **noted** the report.

4	**Employer engagement & commercial opportunities update**

L Kerry introduced the update on employer engagement, international and commercial operations.

Apprentice enrolments were below the profiled target, although income was forecast to meet budget by year-end despite external labour-market challenges. The future change in apprenticeships and increased flexibility was hoped to boost numbers in the future.

Governors received the target employer list, and asked for clarification on the basis of which companies had been selected. The list included a number of large companies that the College did not currently have a relationship with. Governors noted that some of the companies only offered degree apprenticeships or jobs for graduates, and may not have many opportunities for CRC students. This was particularly the case for companies that had a research focus. It was noted that some of the larger companies may have opportunities for support staff but these services were often contracted out.

Governors asked about engineering apprenticeships which was a major skills gap in the area. However, there was a shortage of employers offering apprenticeships in this area. Governors also asked about the potential for more construction apprenticeships and noted that the College was already fully subscribed for the courses.

The Committee asked for clarification on what constituted a strategic partnership. It was noted that it varied from partner to partner, but that in most cases the partner offered resources, advice and/or student talks.

Governors noted the commercial income trends which were all positive, and particularly congratulated the Park Restaurant on an increase in customers.

The Committee **noted** the report.

5	**Accountability statement**

C Leeding joined the meeting.

The Committee considered the updated Accountability Statement for 2026/27. It was noted that the statement had been updated with the latest data, progress against 2025/26 priorities and newly identified priorities for 2026/27. Governors noted that the statement aligned with the current Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), with a revised LSIP expected later in the year.

Governors asked about the recent Technical Excellence Centre (TEC) application, which had been supported by Huntingdonshire District Council. It was noted that the College had not been one of the five colleges selected. However, the College had worked closely with other colleges in the Eastern region and along the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor to support other bids. As a result, the College was expected to be a spoke for Digital and Clean Energy and should benefit in future from additional funding as a result. The Committee agreed that the College should capitalise on the links it had been from putting together the defence TEC application which had private and public sector support.

The Committee asked for dates to be added to figures in the appendix and for some minor typos to be corrected. They also suggested adding the University of Cambridge to the list of partners. It was noted that Fenland District Council tended to work with the CPCA for skills development and therefore it was not appropriate to add as a College partner.

C Leeding asked about the process for reviewing the new LSIP. M Robertson confirmed that it would inform the College's next round of curriculum planning. It was noted that foundation and short apprenticeships were likely to be a key feature of the new LSIP which the College supported, subject to appropriate funding. It was expected that defence would also be included as a new priority sector.

The Committee **recommended** the Accountability Statement to Corporation for approval, subject to the changes above.

C Leeding left the meeting.

6	**Environmental update**

C Hayward joined the meeting.

K Da Costa gave a presentation providing an update on environmental sustainability activity within the College in 2025/26.

The presentation covered national policy changes, the work of the internal Environmental College Group and progress made against the agreed KPIs. The Committee noted the considerable progress made and the areas of focus for future development.

C Hayward, Governor lead for sustainability, said he had been impressed by the breadth of the work being carried out by the College, and particularly the way in which it involved students in the planning. He also explained the concept of scope 3 emissions and advised that it was difficult to measure. The College was taking a pragmatic approach to measure what was feasible. The Committee agreed that this was an appropriate approach.

T Richardson and J Lancaster had participated in the final for the Big Bid, which had involved sustainability projects and were assured by the way in which students were embedding sustainability. Governors agreed that student voice was essential to success of environmental sustainability at the College.

The Committee **noted** the update, including new KPIs for 2026/27

C Hayward left the meeting.

7	**Any other business** **Committee self-assessment**

There was no other business.

Governors agreed that the meeting had been effectively chaired with good contributions from all members.

There was no other business and the meeting ended at 6:30 pm.