Governance and People Committee
Monday 23rd February 2026 4pm
Cambridge campus

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Present	Jo Lancaster (Chair)	Mark Robertson
	Heather Du Quesnay	Tim Richardson
Apologies	Yvette Watson	
In attendance	Laura Kerry	
Clerk	Emily Baldwin	

1	Declarations of Interest Apologies for absence

There were no declarations of interest.

There were apologies for absence from Y Watson.

1.2	Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September 2025

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd September 2025 were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.

Governors discussed the outstanding actions:

- L Kerry would look into potential Governor involvement in Form the Future
- It was noted that a list of employer forums was being compiled which would be circulated to Governors
- E Baldwin agreed to follow up on the action for the Chair and Deputy Chair to meet with the Student Executive team

2.1	Corporation and Committee membership

Governors discussed Corporation and Committee membership, and upcoming vacancies.

Members noted that there was one current vacancy on the governing body, and a further vacancy from May 2026. The focus of recruitment was for financial or audit professionals to join the Audit and/or Finance Committees. The Committee noted the CV of a prospective candidate but did not feel he filled a particular skills gap at the moment.

The Committee agreed that the College should look at its own employer networks to help with recruitment. E Baldwin agreed to contact external agencies to get a view on costs if other recruitment routes did not bring about a suitable candidate. It was also noted that the Chair's term of office ended in December 2027 and the Committee noted the need to make sure succession planning was in place at least a year before to ensure a strong handover.

The Committee agreed to **recommend** to Corporation

- a second term of office for L Armstrong
- the current Committee membership and Chair/Deputy Chair positions, including the appointment of D Tysoe as Chair of Audit and Risk Committee from May 2026

2.2	Governance improvement plan update and AoC Code of Governance

E Baldwin introduced progress against the governance improvement plan. Key points included:

- There were no areas of expected non-compliance with the AoC Code.
- Recruitment of audit/finance governors remained the most urgent improvement area.
- Attendance was strong overall at **81%** for combined Corporation/Committee meetings, but slightly lower for Corporation meetings.
- Governors were engaging well with AOC/ETF training and curriculum visits/SARs.
- The Strategy day feedback was very positive across all aspects.

The Committee discussed reporting on AI. They noted that there were a number of implications of AI for both staff and students. It was suggested that a briefing paper be presented to Governors on how teaching staff were making use of AI for discussion at board level.

The Committee **noted** the report.

2.3	External review of governance

E Baldwin introduced the paper on the external review. Governors noted that an external review must take place every three years, and so was due to take place before May 2027.

Governors **agreed** that an open tendering process should start as soon as possible with a view to the external review being carried out in January-April 2027.

3.1	HR Mid-year report

L Kerry introduced the HR Mid-year report. Key points included:

- Staff turnover continued to fall, with a forecast year-end position of 13%.
- Recruitment had strengthened, with only 6 hard-to-fill roles remaining. As a result, agency use had reduced significantly.
- Sickness absence had increased to 5.8%, driven in particular by mental ill-health issues. This was a key concern for the College.

Governors questioned management on whether they were confident that the College's sickness policies were sufficiently robust and proportionate. L Kerry confirmed that the College policies were appropriate and reflected the legal framework.

Governors challenged management on the College's range of wellbeing activities, and whether there was sufficient training in place to help staff with non work-related stress. L Kerry confirmed that the College was looking at initiatives for all staff to help with personal resilience. Governors agreed that preventative education was crucial to support staff where necessary. They asked if there was a correlation between the level of authority in the College and mental health issues. L Kerry confirmed that there was no obvious correlation. They agreed it would be useful to look at the profile of length of service and absence record to see if there were any links.

Governors noted that owing to a change in employment law, protection from unfair dismissal would become a right after 6 months of being in a job, rather than the current 2 years from January 2027. The College needed to ensure its probationary policies were rigorously adhered to.

The Committee **noted** the report.

3.2	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Annual report & strategy

L Kerry introduced the annual statutory EDI report and updated 2026-28 strategy and action plan.

It was noted that the student data would be analysed in detail at the Learning and Quality Committee. Most student achievement gaps remained low.

Governors discussed the gender pay gap report in more detail. They noted that there had been a slight increase in the median pay gap, and asked for more information on why this was the case. It was noted that the gap was affected by the fact that more female staff occupied lower paid support roles within the organisation and male employees held a higher proportion of high-earning technical and management roles. This had resulted in a higher average pay for men.

Governors noted there was pressure on the lower echelons of the pay scale due to minimum wage requirements. Governors further noted the support staff job evaluation exercise which was ongoing, and were assured that the job evaluation process was robust.

The Committee agreed that it was a data-rich strong report. The Committee noted the updated EDI strategy with only minor updates.

The Committee **recommended** the annual report and updated EDI strategy to Corporation

3.3	Agile working policy

L Kerry introduced the College's agile working policy.

Agile working was now fully embedded and positively impacted staff satisfaction and recruitment. It had also enabled repurposing of office space for student use. There were no changes proposed to the existing policy.

The Committee asked if there was a central record of agile working. It was noted that agile working, as opposed to contractual flexible working, was not centrally logged. It was suggested that the use and benefits of agile working might be a question in the forthcoming staff workload survey.

The Committee **recommended** the policy to Corporation and agreed that going forward it would no longer require Corporation approval.

4.1	Terms of reference and workplan 2026/27

E Baldwin introduced the updated terms of reference which had mainly been updated to bring more consistency to the terms of reference across the different committees.

The workplan had been structured around two core meetings (autumn/spring).

The Committee **agreed** the workplan for 2026/27, and **recommended** the updated terms of reference to Corporation.

4.2	Any other business

Governors noted the proposed committee/corporation meeting schedule. It was noted that the exact dates were subject to Governor and staff availability.

The Committee supported the inclusion of an additional autumn F&R meeting to support pay proposal timelines. They also supported the May Corporation meeting being designated for strategy/training.

It was noted that the timetable would be circulated more widely to check availability.

4.3	Self-assessment of Governors' Performance

The Committee agreed it had been a positive meeting, with good pace and contributions from all members.

There was no other business and the meeting ended at 5:45 pm.