

MINUTES

1

Directorate: Corporation**Minutes of:** HCUC Governing Body – Part 1 Minutes**Date:** Tuesday 21 September 2021**Time:** 4.30pm**Venue:** A004/ 005, Uxbridge Campus

Present:

Nicholas Davies	Governor (<i>Chair</i>)
Melissa Bridge	Staff Governor (Uxbridge)
Tracey Critchley	Staff Governor (Harrow)
Darrell DeSouza	Governor (<i>Group CEO and Principal</i>)
Nasim Khan	Governor
Shaliny Lingeswaran	Student Governor (Uxbridge)
Steve Owen	Governor
Alexandra Postar	Student Governor (Harrow)
Mariann Rand-Weaver	Governor

Apologies:

Simon Boulcott	Governor
Steven Cochran	Governor (<i>Vice Chair</i>)
Alasdair MacLeod	Governor
Johanna Morgan	Governor
Amanda Priem	Governor
Ketan Sheth	Governor

In attendance:

Dylan McTaggart	Deputy CEO and Principal Uxbridge College
Jo Withers	Principal Harrow College
Shane Woodhatch	Group Director Finance & Resource Planning
Tracy Reeve	Clerk to the Corporation
Gavin Hughes	AP Learning Support & Safeguarding (<i>item 13 only</i>)
Imtiaz Aziz	HR Director (<i>item 14 only</i>)
Andrew Miller	Exec Director Corporate Services (<i>items 14-15 only</i>)

Governors' pre-meeting

In advance of the formal meeting the Governors held a short pre-meeting with no officers of the College present, (the Clerk was present as was the CEO in his role as Governor). There were no specific items that any of the Governors wanted to raise outside of the formal meeting.

Presentations

The Corporation Members received the following presentations:

- *The College Safeguarding and Prevent Annual Report 2020/21 which was presented by the Assistant Principal Learning Support and Safeguarding (minutes at item 13).*
- *The Covid-19 Update.*

Exec Director Corporate Services (AMi) presented a Covid-19 Update Report to the meeting. Governors were given assurance that the College continued to follow the Government Covid-19 advice and remained agile to respond to both hardening or softening of the restrictions. Through contact with the PHE, HSE, NHS and Hillingdon Health authority HCUC remained up to date with all latest developments and thinking. In line with this guidance, HCUC had adapted for the start of the new academic year and a return to full attendance without social distancing, bubbles or restriction in group numbers. AMi highlighted the following key points in relation to the current position:

- Risk Assessments & related action plan all current. Latest updated versions were published 16 September 21 following the on-site pop-up vaccination centre at Uxbridge.

MINUTES

- Although face coverings were not required by law HCUC was still strongly encouraging the wearing of them in crowded public areas indoors. Hand sanitising stations and Perspex screening have remained in place. Ventilation remained as a key mitigation measure; a delivery date for the Government sponsored air quality monitors to assist in the area was not yet confirmed.
- In the period 1st-10th September 2021 the College recorded 1 staff and 11 student positive COVID-19 cases. AMi informed the meeting that this figure had now risen to 5 staff and 53 students (most cases were at Uxbridge or Hayes campuses); there were 22 cases in one department (Performing Arts at Hayes). AMi confirmed that this 'outbreak' had been contained and not spread to any of the neighbouring departments at Hayes (ESOL, Hair & Beauty or Computing). Governors sought, and were given, confirmation that the College had undertaken a deep clean of the Performing Arts area and SLT were now awaiting a response from PHE as to what – if anything – needed to be done as next steps. DDS highlighted that the cluster of cases was probably due to the nature of the Performing Arts curriculum and lecturers had now scaled back on close contact work to mitigate further outbreaks.
- Onsite LFD testing had not been implemented for returning students as all students had access to At Home testing kits and were now experienced in using these. Home testing for staff and students would remain in place as a positive mitigation measure; all students would be offered a testing pack at tutorial. AMi confirmed that all 53 learner positive cases had been identified by LFD testing. The ESFA had been informed of the College's approach to testing.
- There was a drive to see 16–17year olds and those adults who were yet to have the vaccine take up the vaccination. In agreement with Hillingdon Health authority, HCUC and the NHS had run a pop-up vaccination centre on Tuesday 14th September 2021. The target was to vaccinate up to 420 people that day but attendance had not met this expectation and 132 people had been vaccinated on the day. Work was ongoing with Harrow Council to run pop-up vaccination centres at the Harrow campuses. Staff Governor (MB) confirmed that a large percentage of her tutor group had been vaccinated but there was an ongoing need to run a targeted vaccine day onsite to capture those not yet vaccinated.
- The new rules covering self-isolation (which came into effect on 16th August) had caused some initial confusion, but these issues have been largely overcome through education. The one barrier remaining was that education was not an area where the employer could insist on knowing the vaccination status of its employees.
- The process to report live cases had not changed - with the exception of the changed rules for self-isolation – this would allow HCUC to identify outbreaks at an early stage.

AMi outlined the national Winter/ Autumn plan for booster jabs which would not affect students but would affect some staff. He confirmed that if the Government moved to 'Plan B' the current guidance was that colleges should support social distancing rather than enforce it. Mandatory face coverings would come back into effect alongside the advice to work from home wherever possible. However, this situation was hopefully not going to happen; any change to the Travel Plan was still unclear. **Governors asked whether the college had any comparative data from the same time in 2020 and it was AGREED that this would be useful for the College to analyse.** The CEO confirmed that there had not been any clusters in the prior year and AMi confirmed that the number of student cases had never exceeded 8 or 9 per week during September/ October 2020.

Student Governor (AP) sought clarity on what online lessons and learning would be offered to students who were required to self-isolate. DMcT confirmed that teachers had the capacity to teach online at the same time as teaching in the room – using headsets. AP cited an example of a learner not being offered online learning and the SLT confirmed that they would look at this example to confirm the student did have ongoing access to lessons and assignments. Staff Governor Harrow (TC) confirmed that the computers at Harrow computers had microphones so there was no additional need for tutors to wear a headset in order to deliver online as well as 'in the room'.

The Covid-19 Update was NOTED and RECEIVED

MINUTES

- Digital Strategy: cyber-security and GDPR update.

AMi presented this report which gave the meeting an update on progress made to date in this important area of work; the College was now in a much stronger position than at the start of 2020/21. Work during the summer term had focussed quite heavily on the intended merger with Richmond Upon Thames College (RuTC) which had originally been planned for 30 July 2021. The highest priority had been to enable the linking of the two parent College networks while maintaining a high level of security; both Colleges had worked towards the Cyber Essentials certification as an industry standard. This work had been delayed in line with the delay to the merger date. Since the pause in merger activity the focus had now switched back to HCUC alone for the time being, with regular contact being maintained with RuTC to ramp up collaboration again when a merger date was confirmed.

The report covered the following areas for Governors' update:

Staffing: The meeting noted that the Head of IT role - currently filled on an agency basis – had now been advertised as a director level role. It had been expanded to include digital vision and was now titled Director of IT and Digital Innovation. The advert closed on 9th September 2021 with 24 applicants of which six were considered to be strong applicants. After an appointment had been made, the new incumbent would work to finalise the College Digital Strategy. Governors sought clarity on where this post would report in to and noted that it would report directly to the Exec Director Corporate Services. The meeting also noted that the IT Services team was also undergoing review and ultimately restructure to enable flexibility and RuTC to be brought on board when the merger date was finalised.

Cyber Security: HCUC were now at the final stages of gaining the initial Cyber Essentials certification. Once this level has been successfully gained the College would move forward towards obtaining Cyber Essentials Plus which was noted as the premium certification. The Cyber Security training across HCUC had improved with the introduction of an online Safesmart package. This covered all the areas required for the basic user and was measured by the use of test questions within the module. Governors were pleased to note that at the end of the 2020/21 academic year, 662 HCUC staff from a total of 770 had completed the module.

Move from Skype to Teams: The summer half term saw the college move from using Skype to Teams for general communications. This had broadly seen the abolition of telephone handsets with communications now taking place solely using IT hardware. Generally, this had worked well with minimal teething problems.

Move from Zoom to Teams: The decision had been made to be Office 365 based and as such Microsoft Teams was agreed as the way ahead for HCUC. However, a Zoom capacity would remain in case outside organisations insisted upon this method. MS Teams training had been conducted and staff were becoming increasingly familiar with the new tools.

Move from Drives to SharePoint hosted on Teams: AMi highlighted this as the largest project ongoing for HCUC staff. It was linked to both the need to secure data but also to destroy and control the amount of data held; the meeting was reminded that SLT were working closely with JISC on this project. Although the timeline of the original Gantt charts had been lengthened due to unforeseen complications, the meeting was assured that the priorities remained the same.

GDPR Document Retention: AMi highlighted that although the use of SharePoint would assist with the correct retention of documents as it had an auto-delete option there would still be a need to monitor data held and to operate under a policy framework. The data retention document held by JISC was widely recognised as the most suitable for college use; HCUC used it at the inception of GDPR and was using this opportunity to ensure each area was still current. The meeting noted that HR had now finished reviewing their retention periods and were now in line with JISC; they would also be the first area to be completely on SharePoint. JISC had advised that the College might need a post of 'SharePoint Administrator' and this would be reviewed when the project was closer to completion and the workload and expertise needed was better understood.

GDPR Training: The Safesmart training packages for UK GDPR were introduced in the latter stage of the 2020/21 academic year. Despite this late introduction the system had recorded 751 passes from the 770 eligible staff at the basic user level.

MINUTES

4

Move from Desktop to Laptop: HCUC had now made a significant investment in laptops to allow staff greater flexibility from a seamless connection to the college network when working from the office or remotely. The increased flexibility that laptops provided would allow life on campus to be reimagined and would feed into the developing Digital and Estates strategies. These strategies would look to make maximum use of the Estate as virtual or remote learning options increased. AMi highlighted the ongoing need for staff to be vigilant around the security of hardware; he had already been disappointed as there had been a case of a staff laptop being stolen from a car as it was left visible when the car was unoccupied.

Move from Chromebooks to Laptops: The receipt of DfE funded laptops was resulting in a programme to swap out Chromebooks for the laptops; this was being conducted on a priority basis.

Move from Google to Microsoft: HCUC was moving away from Google classrooms to Microsoft which had resulted in training costs for staff but was felt to be the best way ahead and complemented all other moves to a Microsoft based system. The CEO (DDS) confirmed that moving to a single platform - Teams – reduced any vulnerability associated with using multiple platforms. The meeting sought confirmation on how this would fit with the merger with Richmond and noted that RuTC were already using MS Teams platforms and including SharePoint.

The Chair sought confirmation on whether the College had received any further contact from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and management confirmed that there had been none.

The meeting NOTED and RECEIVED the Digital Strategy update.

- *The annual Human Resources Report 2020/21 (minutes at item 14).*
- *The annual Health & Safety Report 2020/21 (minutes at item 15).*

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Simon Boulcott, Steven Cochran, Alasdair MacLeod, Johanna Morgan, Amanda Priem and Ketan Sheth. The Chair welcomed the two new Student Governors to the meeting and all Governors and attendees introduced themselves.

2. Notification of any urgent business Members may wish to raise under any other business, and any items to be taken as read that Members may wish to discuss

There was no other business notified.

3. Notification of interests Members may wish to declare relating to any item

No specific interests were notified.

4. Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 6 July 2021

The Minutes and the Confidential Minutes were APPROVED as an accurate record.

5. Matters arising from Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 6 July 2021, which were not agenda items.

- **Policies update**

The meeting considered a number of updated policies which had been approved by the Corporation in July 2021 as Harrow Richmond and Uxbridge College Policies but were now being represented as HCUC policies after the merger with Richmond Upon Thames College (RuTC) – due to complete on 30 July 2021 - had been delayed. These had been rebadged as HCUC policies and redrafted to reflect the HCUC organisational structure rather than the post-merger organisation. GH highlighted that the Safeguarding Policy had also been amended to include clear reference to enhanced processes in relation to sexual harassment and guidance resulting from the 'Everyone's Invited' campaign. This policy had also been amended at paragraph 19 to include a reference to the 5G networks under 'online safety'. **Governors asked that in future any amended policies should show tracked changes for additional clarity.** The meeting was reminded that these policies had been discussed in detail at the July 2021 Governing

MINUTES

Body meeting and they were essentially only now being brought back to the meeting due to the delayed merger.

The following HCUC policies were APPROVED as presented:

- **Admissions Policy**
- **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**
- **Student Charter**
- **Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

There were no other matters arising that were not already covered by the agenda.

6. Updates

6.1 Chair's Update

The Chair highlighted the regular start of term liaison between himself and the CEO to track enrolment and learner numbers for HCUC. The work in relation to the merger with Richmond Upon Thames College (RuTC) was also still ongoing; although the Merger Joint Steering Group meetings had been paused over the summer break monthly meetings had resumed on 13 September 2021.

6.2 CEO/ Group Principal's Update

DDS highlighted the start of term work around enrolment and the start of a new academic year with two new college principals in place. In his new more focussed role as Group CEO only (rather than Principal Uxbridge as well) he was visiting all the HCUC campuses on a more regular basis. Other important areas during the next few weeks would be preparations for Colleges Week 18-22 October 2021 and the ongoing consultation on Adult Education Budget (AEB) 19+ funding which was aiming to increase accountability and push the money towards high value jobs.

6.3 Update: additional Governors' activities at the College July – September 2021

There was nothing to add from the other governors over the summer period.

NOTED

7. Governance

• Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

These were presented for biennial review – showing tracked changes - with no major changes required. The meeting was reminded that these had been redrafted to reflect the delay to the HCUC/ RuTC merger. **The HCUC Sub-Committee Terms of Reference and the Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committee (Harrow and Uxbridge) Terms of Reference were APPROVED as presented.**

• HCUC Standing Orders

The Clerk (TR) presented the Standing Orders for review showing tracked changes. TR highlighted the only change – other than name of Corporation staying as HCUC – was for the determined number of the HCUC Corporation (paragraph 5.1) to be amended to 15 from 21. The meeting was reminded that the 21 number reflected the post-merger Governing Body when RuTC Governors joined as Corporation members. TR reminded the meeting of the clear process for selecting RuTC governors to join the post-merger governing body that had taken place in advance of 31 July 2021. The current plan was for this same post-merger organisation – with the same membership - to come into effect when the merger was finalized. The meeting agreed that it would not be beneficial to recruit any new HCUC governors during the pre-merger period but this would need to be kept under review if there was any further delay to the merger being finalised.

The Corporation AGREED that the determined number of the HCUC Corporation should be set at 15 with immediate effect until the merger with RuTC was finalised.

The meeting APPROVED the revised HCUC Standing Orders as presented.

MINUTES

6

- **Governors' Attendance Report**

The Clerk reported on the attendance of HCUC Governors at Corporation meetings during 2020/21. Overall attendance was 83% which exceeded the Governance Key Performance Indicator target (75%). It was noted that where Governors had not met the attendance target individual exceptions had been due to work commitments. The meeting also noted attendance data down to sub-committee level; when combined with attendance at Corporation meetings the overall attendance figure was noted as 88%. The meeting was reminded that the individual Governor attendance statistics had to be included in the formal Members Report which accompanied the annual Financial Statements. The meeting agreed that moving governance online and the use of the Zoom format helped with attendance. The Clerk highlighted the heightened governance activity during 2020/21 centered on the proposed merger with Richmond Upon Thames College (RuTC). When the Joint Steering Group meetings were included there were 37 separate governance meetings held during 2020/21 compared with 20 in the previous year.

The attendance report was NOTED.

8. Merger Update

The CEO (DDS) reminded the meeting that a revised target date for the proposed merger between HCUC and RUTC was being sought, which was dependent on resolution of planning issues relating to RuTC's capital Phase 2 build and reassurances relating to financial risks arising from the planning delays. (See detailed minutes in Part 2 – Confidential Minutes 21/09/21.)

The meeting NOTED the detailed update and AGREED that with the number of unknowns, especially in relation to third parties involved, it was not yet possible to identify a revised target date for merger.

9. Draft Programme for Governors Training Day – 20 October 2021

The CEO/ Group Principal outlined the arrangements for the Governors Training Day to be held in person on 20 October 2021 at Denham Grove Conference Centre. The Clerk had ensured that all social distancing measures would be in place and that it was appropriate for the meeting to go ahead on site. It was noted that the programme would include:

- An update on HCUC enrolments and the impact on HCUC financial forecast 2021/22.
- An update on QAR outcomes for 2020/21.
- Teaching Learning & Assessment priorities for 2021/22 and a focus on preparations for an Ofsted inspection following the pandemic impact.
- Provision and projects within the employability and economic landscape; including a focus on key aspects of the FE White Paper which would shape curriculum drivers for the local and regional recovery plan for London.
- The Strategic Plan 2022-25 and operational priorities for HCUC.
- Developing the Estates Strategy, Digital Strategy and Marketing Strategy for HCUC's next phase of development.
- Annual Safeguarding Update for Governors
- Governors' self-assessment exercise to contribute to the College SAR 2020/21

There would also be some time set aside for additional discussion that the Governors may wish to initiate with or without the wider SLT members in attendance. The Clerk confirmed that Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committee (SSC) Members had been invited to this event and the Chair of Governors and Acting Principal from RuTC would also be attending. The GDFRP (SW) informed the meeting that Resources Committee had also suggested that Barclays Bank plc should be asked to attend the event – remotely – to present to the Corporation on the possibility of HCUC taking part in their Sustainable Treasury Investment Strategy. The Resources Committee on 15 September had noted a paper from Barclays which outlined the detail of their Sustainable Treasury Investment Strategies and how it could work for HCUC. The current annual interest yield on the £30m cash was only £20,000 during 2021/21 and this

MINUTES

7

could be improved. Indicative blended portfolios from Barclays would yield higher annual returns ranging from £78,000 to £353,000 (assuming £12m was invested) with gross returns ranging from 0.66% to 2.94%. The meeting agreed that higher returns would allow HCUC to reinvest further to meet student needs with high quality staff, IT equipment or further developments on the estates. This scheme would also meet the Sustainability Agenda. However, the meeting agreed with the Resources Committee assertion that this would need to be balanced with the risk appetite of the Governing Body and the SLT. Governors suggested that the Corporation should also be briefed on the new Secretary of State at DfE and his priorities as soon as his focus was known. DDS confirmed that this would become clearer after the Comprehensive Spending Review in late October 2021.

The arrangements for the Governors' Training Day were APPROVED.

It was AGREED that Barclays should be asked to attend on 20 October 2021 to present the details of their Sustainable Treasury Investment Strategy to the Corporation.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

10. Curriculum and Quality Headlines**10.1 Learner Achievement 2020/21 – Year End Emerging Headlines**

The Deputy CEO/ Principal Uxbridge (DM) presented this report which contained a summary report as well as the detailed data dashboard for Governors. DM highlighted that the data in the dashboard was from the ILR dated 4 September but final year-end data would be based on the final ILR submission to be made by 22 October 2021.

- Attendance: Full Time 16-18 and 19+ was showing at the year-end target at 85% and so graded 'amber'. DM highlighted the lower remote attendance of 83% during lockdown and of E&M (76% for both 16-18). DM informed the meeting that the most recent data showed that 16-18 attendance was at 86.5%.
- Punctuality 16-18s: this was holding at 3% which had met the target.
- Retention 16-18 (92.8%) & 19+ (94.5%): was well-above NA (91.0% and 93.5% respectively). However, this was below the YTD figure in 2019/20 due to the impact of ESOL learners not having Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) in 2021. However this figure was above 2018/19 (which was the last comparable data set).
- 16-18 QAR: this was matching 2018/19 levels at 86.4% - 88.5% where the National Average was 83.4% but 1% below 2019/20 again due to the impact of the lack of Teacher Assessed Grades for Functional Skills and ESOL learners.
- High Grades: graded 'green' at 42%
- WBL: the overall year-end figure was estimated at 70.5% which was much better than the prior year and 6% above the National Average.
- TLA: 241 formal lesson observations completed with 92% Meets & Exceeds. DM reminded the meeting that the usual HCUC protocol of external verification had not taken place due to Covid so this figure was probably slightly inflated. A more realistic figure would be circa the 86% target.
- Work Experience (WEX): The meeting was reminded of the delayed start & impact of Covid-19 on employer participation which meant that the early focus for HCUC had been on maintaining currency with employers and placements. As a result of this HCUC had completed 61% placements by July 2021 against the target of 80%; this had been mostly achieved during the last few months of the year after lockdown was lifted. DM reminded Governors that an element of remote placements were included within the WEX data, however, all DfE guidance in relation to Standard Industry Placements (SIPs) for T Levels did not allow remote placements in all curriculum areas to count towards project submissions. Principal Harrow (JW) asserted the part that employers played in this positive outcome with many - e.g. Morgan Sindall - working with the College to convert work experience placements to a virtual format.

MINUTES

- Disciplinary: the volumes of stage 3&4 disciplinarys at 97 was below YTD 2020/21 (153); much of this was due to the lockdown and students spending less time on site. Exclusions were also lower at 16 (versus 30 in the prior year).
- Complaints: these were low (34) and only slightly higher than 2019/20 YTD (29). No complaints had resulted in legal action to date, but two at Uxbridge were currently flagged as high risk.
- Learner Satisfaction: the internal HCUC Initial Impressions survey evidenced very high term 1 satisfaction (97%) which was further improved on 2019/20.
- HCUC Higher Education achievement was at 97% with Teacher Training at 100%. The legacy impact of lower retention rates in prior years was noted so HE retention was still flagged as 'amber'.

The emerging QAR data by College, Age and Subject Sector Area was taken as read by the meeting; full data tables would be available for the Governors' Strategy event in October 2021. The Chair of QCS Committee (MRW) sought clarity around the drop in the QAR data for example in UC Engineering where the 2019/20 QAR was 88% but 2020/21 was showing as 62%. JW informed the meeting that this was the current 'live' picture but did not include the final results; this would not be the year-end position once the unknown outcomes were confirmed.

The meeting discussed the ongoing poor national performance in maths and English and challenged the fact that a grade 4 was considered a 'high grade'. DM reminded the meeting that 66% of HCUC learners came into the College without a grade 4 in English or maths GCSE. Attendance was still an ongoing issue around maths and English; the Chair sought clarity on what the College would be doing to improve this performance. The Deputy CEO (DM) confirmed that now learners were back on campus this could be pursued with a new dynamism. Both UC and HC were working to standardise delivery across weeks and campuses so that each learner received the same tuition at the same time. SLT were looking for all staff to put a positive spin on the key importance of English and maths to employability and destinations. Governors sought confirmation on how learners were being chased to attend – this was being done through Talon and ProMonitor. DM confirmed that learners needed to be inspired and motivated to attend by the quality of the teaching as well as making them aware of the employers view. DDS highlighted the work that would be undertaken to get employers involved in English and maths project work. This would hopefully counter the negativity that learners felt from their school experience of failing English and maths.

10.2 Ofsted Preparations

As previously discussed at the online Governors Ofsted Training session (9 October 2021), DM reminded the meeting that it was likely that HCUC would almost certainly receive a full Ofsted inspection in 2021/22. The meeting was reminded of the current Self-Assessment Report (SAR) grades as loaded on the Ofsted portal in February 2021. The 'Overall Effectiveness' judgement for the 2019/20 SAR was Outstanding with noted areas for improvement (AFIs). As just discussed in the meeting, DM highlighted that the emerging 2020/21 QAR data remained high and in line with 2018/19 (this was the last nationally recognised data set that Ofsted would reference in advance of an inspection visit). Next steps would be for the management and staff to complete Subject and College level SARs for 2020/21. The final QAR position would be confirmed by mid-October 2021. The meeting noted details of the ongoing CPD for staff to enable a strong showing at inspection this had included Deep Dive activities starting in September 2021. These 'deep dives' included SLT led mock inspection meetings with managers, front loading of walk-through observations and documentation audits (completion & quality reviews).

DM highlighted the current 'challenges' which included:

- A focus on student Knowledge Gaps was now underway- 'baseline assessments' were being tracked across HCUC.
- A clear and maintained focus on students & enrolment to ensure learners were on the right courses and that the number of withdrawals was minimised.
- Work to drive forward increased employer involvement in curriculum design and delivery.

MINUTES

- Continue to focus on achieving improvements in WBL & Construction (the college AFIs) and rebuild the cross college work-experience programme which had been maintained well during the pandemic.

The Clerk to the Corporation reminded the meeting that the detailed briefing notes, presentation from the Governors Briefing on 9 September and the 'Possible Ofsted Questions' briefing were all now available on the HCUC Board Intelligence platform.

10.3 Office for Students Tracker

The meeting noted the very detailed HE Governors spreadsheet which allowed the HCUC Corporation to clearly track the College's ongoing compliance with the Office for Students (OfS) general ongoing conditions for registration. Detail against all of the conditions A to G was provided for full assurance. The RAG rated tracker provided additional clarity for the meeting to gain assurance around HCUC's ongoing compliance.

The Curriculum & Quality Headline Report was NOTED

11. Approval of Corporate Goals 2021/22

The CEO (DDS) presented the draft Corporate Goals for 2021/22 which had been drafted to include any potential future impact of the Covid-19 pandemic or the requirement for the Government to implement their Plan B. The front page of the Corporate Goals Report 2020/21 remained under the four key headings: corporate performance; learner outcomes; quality of education; and responsiveness and compliance. DDS highlighted that the Corporate Goals (CG) front summary page reflected the significant elements for finance and funding which had now established High Needs learners as a constant component and the ongoing but varied Government funded national and regional projects, which were also reflected under 'responsiveness'. The draft CGs for 2021/22 were considered by the meeting and DDS asked Governors to note the following points:

- It was understood that Ofsted Inspections would focus on safeguarding aspects and mental well-being, including the support provided to learners. In addition, following the impact of the pandemic and its disruption to learning, the College's approach to addressing lost learning would also be a key focus of Inspection. Readiness for learning as well as preparing learners for employment and further study would be key themes. With the declared DfE intent to return to more traditional modes of assessment, the pedagogic challenge to meet the varied expectations this year was clear and substantial.
- Quality of Education (previously TL&A) had retained the refinements introduced for 2019/20 corporate goals reporting to reflect the rise in importance of remote learning delivery. The importance of Curriculum intent and real employer/industry impact continued to be emphasised. Lesson observations would now resume the use external validation, but with an increasing focus on the developmental aspects and CPD. 'Drop-ins' observations would also remain an additional way of gauging and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Both measures would be reported on in a comparable way at both colleges in 2021/22. As inspection cycles returned and reports became available, DDS confirmed that this methodology would be further revised as necessary.
- The Finance & Funding section had been amended to reflect the reduced Covid-19 funding elements which would be available in 2021/22. Project funding remained more varied to reflect the promotion of collaborative initiatives focused on economic recovery. Small group tutorial funds were also expected to be forthcoming but this was yet to be confirmed
- Responsiveness and compliance would again focus on the main Government backed projects including the Institute of Technology (IoT); T-level pilots and associated substantial Industry Placements; Mayor's Skills Academy (MSA); and, other activity linked to collaborative economic recovery projects across London and West London.
- The Learner Outcomes section and its contents remain largely unchanged.

DDS highlighted that the targets shown under work experience, learner engagement and T level delivery were very uncertain at the current time due to the ongoing constraints around work placements. The meeting noted the summary HCUC front sheet and the individual summary sheets for each of the two colleges. Further detail on the nuances of the local colleges Corporate Goals was reflected in the narrative of the supporting report which sat behind the summary sheets. The meeting was reminded that within the body of the draft Corporate Goals the left hand column provided the key Corporate Goal (CG) target details, whilst the right hand side 'Notes' column provided an explanation of the CG target or objective. Sometimes targets or objectives had been carried over, albeit on an updated basis, from 2020/21. Where a goal was new or had been changed substantially this was indicated in the 'Notes' commentary.

The meeting also noted that due to the fact that performance data would not be published for 2020/21 no updated national averages (NA) would be available; the comparison against 2018/19 NA would be considered until new benchmarks were available. DDS informed the meeting that all curriculum areas were aiming to make assessment as front-loaded as possible to mitigate the impact of any future Covid-19 lockdown.

The meeting APPROVED the summary report for the Corporate Goals and the target key performance indicators for 2021/22.

12. Audit Matters

Internal Audit Strategy 2021/22-2022/23

The meeting noted a paper which detailed the updated internal audit strategy and the annual plan for 2021/22. Governors were reminded of the requirements and obligations placed upon the Audit Committee and the Corporation under the overarching statutory documents of FE colleges. The importance of the challenge and scrutiny role of the Audit Committee and Governors was noted and agreed. Governors were reminded that since 1 August 2015 the Uxbridge College Corporation had agreed that no one audit firm would be appointed to deliver the annual internal audit contract; internal audit requirements were now reviewed annually and specialist firms appointed as necessary. It was confirmed that this had worked well during each year since for HCUC. Specialist audits had been commissioned where necessary; this had provided a good level of assurance for Governors and had also proved to be good value for money. It was confirmed that after further discussion at Audit Committee in September 2021 this approach was proposed to continue into 2021/22 for HCUC.

The meeting noted the key areas of concern after a review of the HCUC risk register for 2021/22 and in discussion with HCUC senior managers. The meeting noted a summary of internal audits undertaken in 2020/21 and GDFRP highlighted an error which had been raised at Audit Committee but not yet corrected on the report – Human Resources had been audited in 2019/20 not 2020/21. Areas planned for inclusion in the internal audit plan 2021/22 were noted as: Key Financial Controls; Payroll; Funding compliance; Human Resources; Estates (compliance with statutory requirements); IT systems maintenance; compliance with GDPR legislation; and Apprenticeships. The Governing Body was informed that Audit Committee had been concerned that this would be a lot of internal audit work to be undertaken in one year but had agreed that it was important to catch up on the slippage due to the Covid-19 lockdowns. SW confirmed that Audit Committee had been assured that as the audits were spread across different areas of the College the workload would not be too onerous. The Governors agreed that all of these key audits should remain on the strategy for the year, but they should be spread out throughout the whole 2021/22 academic year to aid staff and to ensure that there was no overload of Internal Audit Reports at any Audit Committee meetings.

The Corporation APPROVED the HCUC Strategy for Internal Audit and the detailed Audit Plan 2021/22 and 2022/23 as presented with the caveat that the large number of internal audit reviews during 2021/22 should be spread evenly across the academic year.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

13. Safeguarding Report 2020/21

Members considered the annual report, prepared by the two College Safeguarding Leads, which gave an overview of the Safeguarding and Child Protection issues raised during 2020/21. The report covered both Harrow College and Uxbridge College. The meeting noted overall numbers of serious safeguarding cases and the breakdown by category of incident during 2020/21 for both Colleges. Gavin Hughes, the Uxbridge safeguarding lead attended the meeting to present the report and take questions. He highlighted that the statistics were not markedly different from the Mid-Year Report which was brought to the March 2021 Corporation meeting but that there had been an increase of domestic violence cases and sexual exploitation during lockdown. There had also been marked increase in learners declaring mental health issues. GH assured the meeting that the College had continued to support all at-risk learners throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The ongoing negative impact on learners' mental health was highlighted with a marked increase in anxiety and mental health in new enrolments for 2021/22.

Safeguarding Register: Categories within the 52 serious safeguarding cases at Uxbridge College and 26 cases at Harrow College were noted and this was benchmarked against the figures for the prior year (28 and 26 respectively in the prior year). The details of numbers and action taken with learners on a Secondary 'at risk' register at each of the colleges was noted by the meeting. The strong network and interaction with numerous external agencies to support learners was commended. Governors were pleased to note that HCUC remained committed to supporting the work of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Prevent: There had been one new Prevent referral made at Uxbridge College (UC) during 2020/21 and none at Harrow College (HC). GH informed the meeting that one of the UC Prevent referrals made in 2019/20 was also carried over to the 2020/21 year. The meeting sought, and was given, assurance that the College was in full compliance with the specific duties placed on FE colleges because of the 'Counter-terrorism and Security Bill 2015'. It was noted that both Colleges attended the London HE/ FE Regional Prevent Meetings; this had been a useful source of networking and sharing good practice

Staff Training and Development: The meeting noted details of activity taken during the year and was given assurance that 99% of staff at HCUC had received Prevent and Safeguarding training. Annual updates were delivered to all staff via an online training system with face-to-face training on a biennial basis.

Criminal convictions and bullying: Governors were reminded that both Colleges now used the same procedure at enrolment with all students asked to declare any unspent criminal convictions. The consistent procedures to deal with any criminal convictions gained during learners attendance at HCUC were noted and Governors were assured that each case was dealt with on an individual basis whilst remaining mindful of overall safeguarding implications for other learners. In 2020/21 there had been 44 self-declarations (37 in the prior year) and 6 were stopped from enrolling (compared to 3 in September 2020).

Student Involvement: The student involvement regarding Safeguarding and Prevent was noted; all students had a Prevent tutorial delivered to them during their first few weeks at HCUC. A further British Values/ Prevent tutorial was delivered in September or October 2020. Anti-bullying week was promoted throughout the College in November and anti-bullying, cyber-bullying mental health and domestic violence tutorials were delivered during the year. Safer Internet Day was promoted around the College in November 2020; the e-Safety tutorial was delivered, and advice shown on the plasma screens around College campuses and on the front page of Moodle. A knife crime awareness week was delivered in tutorials in March 2021 and new tutorial materials had been developed to address sexual harassment for students. The meeting commended this specific action as it was of real concern to the Governors. Governors noted that Staff were been trained in mental health first aid and had held regular Wellbeing sessions with students. This was supported by dedicated materials on the Student Portal and a poster campaign around the college which encouraged students to talk about issues such as extremism, radicalisation and peer harassment as well as how to report any concerns. Students were further

MINUTES

12

supported by the new Mental Health Student Support Officer posts and extended work with local agencies including CCG, MIND, the WISH Centre, Papyrus and Paiwand.

GH highlighted the other enrichment and tutorial activity that had been put in place to ensure that students felt safe on Campus. The College's annual Staying Safe Fair had included activity on bullying, knife crime, eSafety, Hate Crime and Drug abuse. The college has been assigned a PCSO and a Safer Schools Officer who had been involved in supporting these agendas, including the use of a knife-arch metal detector.

GH reminded the meeting of the arrangements for a Link Governor for Safeguarding which had been in place since 2017/18. Each of the two Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees had one nominated non-executive adviser (NEA) member with a specialist remit for safeguarding; these two NEAs attended the individual colleges Safeguarding Committees. This local focus was then brought together at HCUC Corporation level with Nasim Khan acting as the Corporation lead on Safeguarding issues; he liaised with both of the specialist NEAs and the SLT links to keep an over-arching watch on both Colleges.

Safeguarding Audit

Governors were reminded that a full safeguarding audit was conducted in January 2021 by a specialist consultant who was also an HMI. The report was very positive and stated the following:

'The college safeguarding arrangements are fully compliant with all statutory requirements.'

'The college has clear comprehensive and effective safeguarding policies and procedures which all staff understand.'

'HCUC has very well-established and effective arrangements to ensure all decision-making processes relating to safeguarding matters remain independent from wider-college or other interests. The DSL and safeguarding officers operate within a clearly defined structure which is transparent and open to scrutiny.'

GH confirmed that the few recommendations made within this audit had been accepted by management and actioned.

Safeguarding during Covid-19 Lockdown

The meeting was reminded how HCUC had continued to support learners throughout lockdown and management had provided governors with additional reports through the year for their assurance. Child protection meetings and Personal Education Plan meetings continued online and remote mental health support continued for students. Both Colleges worked hard to ensure that Student Wellbeing was supported during the period of closure. This included sharing materials and keeping students informed of how to keep themselves healthy and well at home and able to progress with their studies. A generic HCUC bursary agreement was in place to ensure vulnerable students continued to receive their weekly bursary payments and Free School Meal entitlement throughout term time and during holidays. The meeting sought confirmation on the level of bursary funding that HCUC had received in 2021/22 as this had been so important for learners during the pandemic. Group Director Finance and Resource Planning (SW) informed the meeting that there had been a significant reduction in bursary funding and the money was likely to run out earlier in the current academic year than in prior years. SW confirmed that all London Colleges had suffered a reduction to bursary funding for 2021/22 as the levelling up process nationally had taken place and money had been diverted away from London.

The Annual Safeguarding Report 2020/21 was RECEIVED.

14. Annual Human Resources Report 2020/21

The HR Director (IA) presented the Annual Human Resources Report 2020/21 to the meeting which had been considered in detail at the Resources Committee meeting on 15 September 2021.

Workforce Data: Governors noted that the total headcount at HCUC was now 743 (519 at UC and 224 at HC) this had increased very slightly from 740 at the end of the prior year 2019/20. The increase in the number of agency and casual staff at both Colleges was noted: agency staff now at 114 (compared with 79 in the prior year); and casual staff now at 141 (versus 82 in prior year). IA confirmed that this increase

MINUTES

in agency and casual staff was due to the additional Covid-19 related funding received for Lateral Flow Testing, classroom supervisors and the Small Group Work under the Tuition Fund. The meeting was reminded that this funding was to provide additional resources to address any learning gaps due to the pandemic. Staff turnover across the College group was 15% during 2020/21 which was below the AoC benchmark of 17.4%; the meeting was reminded that this benchmark was now a little out of date and IA had just been informed that the new AoC BM was 18.4%. The meeting discussed the higher turnover figure at Harrow College (19%) compared with Uxbridge College (13%) and noted that the higher turnover at Harrow was in the Support Staff category.

Workforce Equality Data: At HCUC 61% of the workforce were in the 45+ age group (compared with 60% in the prior year). HCUC female representation at the end of 2020/21 was 66%, this figure exceeded the GLA figure for females who were economically active in the London population at 46%. Females made up 77% of the workforce at HC and 61% of the workforce at UC. Governors sought, and were given, confirmation that the College complied fully with all Gender Pay Gap reporting requirements. The BAME representation at HCUC at 40% was a 4% increase on the prior year figure and also above the HCUC target of 36%. HCUC BAME representation was also above the GLA figure of 36% for BAME who were economically active in the London population. BAME representation at HC was well above the College target at 45%. At UC, the BAME representation was also now above the 36% target at 38%. At HCUC, the representation of staff with a declared disability was 9%, which was a 1% increase on the prior year and 4% increase on the figure from 2018/19 at 5%. IA confirmed that this was directly linked to staff declaring a disability at the start or during the Covid-19 lockdown. However, the HCUC figure of 9% was still below 12% which was the GLA figure for disabled persons who were economically active in the London population. Representation of disabled staff at HC was 8% and at UC was 9%. IA informed the meeting that he believed that there was still an element of under-reporting in HCUC data for disability; there was an ongoing need to review staff disability status since they had declared at the point of recruitment. More work would be undertaken on this issue and HR was mindful that a more proactive approach was required with HCUC job adverts being sent to disability groups. The meeting noted the recruitment data and that the performance of BAME applicants at the offer stage had increased by 18% since 2020; this was reflected in the higher BAME staff proportions discussed earlier in the meeting.

Governors (NK) sought additional detail on the level and type of positions that BAME applicants were taking up i.e. whether teaching, support, or management roles. IA confirmed that this data was reported to the College EDI committees with a breakdown by academic/ support/ management. The meeting suggested that this data for BAME appointees - as well as the same data in relation to gender - would be useful context for the Corporation.

It was AGREED that the data for type of appointment (support/ academic/ management) for gender and BAME characteristics of appointees should be included in future HR Annual Reports to the Governing Body to provide more fulsome context.

Recruitment:

Harrow College: The meeting noted that during the period 1st August 2020 to 31st July 2021, there were 626 applicants from 56 recruitment campaigns.

- 36 candidates were offered roles. Of the 36 offered, 22 were from BAME groups (61%).
- 78% of appointments were female.
- 50% of all appointed were in the >41 age group.
- There were 11 promotions in this period; of these, 5 were from BAME groups (46%).

Uxbridge College: In the same period, there were 1878 applicants from 138 recruitment campaigns.

- 140 candidates were offered roles; 69 of these were from BAME groups (49%).
- 38% of appointments were male, and 62% were female.
- 51% of all appointed were in the >41 age group.
- There were 18 promotions in this period; of these, 10 were from BAME groups (57%)

Sickness absence: The Sickness absence rate at both Colleges and across HCUC was below the HCUC target of 5.4 days or less (AoC benchmark). In addition, it was noted that the 2020/21 absence rate for HCUC of 5.2 days was lower than the published benchmark (BM) figures from the CIPD Health and Well-

MINUTES

14

Being at Work Survey which reported Public Sector as 8.5 days and the Non-Profit Sector as 7.3 days. The meeting was reminded that there was likely to be a variation in this BM as remote working meant that people recorded less sickness absence.

Training: The Training and Development Budget 2020/21 across HCUC had been £283,000, which was broken down as follows.

- £150,000 allocated to teacher training (£90,000 at UC and £50,000 at HC).
- 34 staff undertook the teacher training course during 2020/21
- All individual staff training and development requirements had been met within the budget.
- 99% of established staff completed the Safeguarding and Prevent online training.
- The Whole College Training Days (WCTD) held during the year at the end of each term were very well planned and executed with all courses being evaluated after the event by participants.

IA informed the meeting that HCUC had now purchased LinkedIn training for the current academic year – as a one-year trial - which would be fully implemented by October half-term. This would give staff access to approximately 20,000 training courses via online delivery. The new system would allow HR to track utilisation of the training and report on its impact. The meeting was pleased to note that the LinkedIn platform contained many resources on Wellbeing which would be key for staff

Appraisals: Governors noted the data on completed performance appraisals for 2020/21; this had been discussed in detail at the June and September 2021 Resources Committee meetings. The meeting noted the work undertaken on staff training around descriptors to increase uniformity. MRW sought confirmation on whether HR had looked at outcomes by gender and **whether there was a gender difference in how people were judging or been judged. IA confirmed that as there was a consistent appraisal system and training, he did not believe this to be the case, but he would review the data to make sure there was no gender bias.**

- **Employee Relations**

IA confirmed that the significant increase in this area of HR work during 202/21 was due to the pandemic and a large proportion of the total cases had been related to Covid-19. IA commended the HR Team who had dealt with staff concerns and ongoing cases; they had maintained a positive attitude and effectively supported staff. HR had also completed numerous risk assessments for vulnerable staff during the pandemic which probably saved a further 50 HR cases. The Chair sought additional clarity on the number of disciplinary/ capability cases and IA confirmed that the majority of these were in relation to ongoing sickness absence

Staff Focus Group Feedback: The meeting noted the summary feedback from Staff Focus Groups held during 2020/21. These had involved 75 staff in total, and were conducted in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms remotely via MS Teams. The first groups involved lecturing staff (3 November 2020) whilst the second comprised a range of Managers (25 January 2021), the final group was support staff (5 May 2021). The meeting was reminded that the purpose of the focus groups was to use the forum to discuss issues that were assisting or hindering an effective work environment and work practices, with a view to addressing action that could lead to improvement or advise staff about the College's stance on the matter. Comments were not attributable to individual members of staff, and the focus groups had been supplemented with an anonymous questionnaire that broadly mirrored the topic areas covered. The range of topics that had been covered during the year were noted. The meeting was reminded that detailed reports had been presented to Senior Leadership Team, Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees as well as Resources Committee throughout the year. At each of these meetings the management response and resulting action plan had been discussed.

The CEO (DDS) highlighted the work underway during the current academic year which was focussing on filling 'hard to fill' vacancies; hybrid working and Wellbeing.

MINUTES

15

Hard to fill vacancies: The meeting was reminded of the ongoing issue with filling specialist roles in engineering which had to some extent limited enrolment numbers. DDS assured the Governors that a working group was looking at implementing creative solutions to recruit specialists.

Hybrid working: HR was currently drafting a College Working from Home Policy. This would need to make it very clear to manage staff expectations as there was an ongoing need to run face-to-face delivery across HCUC which required a strict 'staff: student' ratio. AMi highlighted that this consideration of hybrid working was tying in with the HCUC Estates Strategy. IA raised what he saw as two important points in relation to hybrid working; the pandemic had raised people's expectations about working from home; and it was now a selling point in job adverts. There was some evidence that the wider FE sector and some other colleges were moving towards hybrid working to some extent. However, he was also mindful that a College was different from an office environment and could not deliver fully remotely. Governors were reminded that the DfE expectation was that all delivery was face-to-face and the focus for these considerations would have to remain as the learner; if they were well catered for then SLT could consider how to take this forward. IA assured the meeting that the College would remain flexible in order to respond to any changing position e.g. changed DfE guidance to work from home if Covid infections increased.

Wellbeing: IA highlighted, that as previously discussed the additional work to drive forward the Wellbeing agenda. The meeting agreed that to some extent Wellbeing would also be linked to the Home Working Policy.

- **Covid HR data**

The meeting noted the Covid metrics and the vaccination rate data was noted by the meeting. The meeting noted that of 445 responses to a recent survey, 92.8% of staff had now had at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccination (compared with 85% in June 2021), and 87.64% had received two doses. The meeting also noted that just under 4% of the remaining 7.2% stated that they had not had the vaccine due to personal choice. IA also confirmed that no staff were currently furloughed.

The meeting noted that there had been four positive test results within the staff body since the start of term. The current College protocol was following all PHE and DfE guidance if someone was classed as a close contact of a positive case. The meeting noted that an online HR Newsletter for staff had been developed during the pandemic which was proving popular for staff; **it was suggested that a copy of this newsletter should be circulated to Governors for information.**

The meeting RECEIVED the annual Human Resources Report 2020/21.

15. Annual Health and Safety (H&S) Report 2020/21

The Exec Director Corporate Services (AMi) presented the comprehensive report which updated governors on all aspects of H&S across HCUC during 2020/21. The workload for H&S staff had been massively increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the College Health and safety Adviser visited all campuses on a regular basis until the second lockdown in January 2021. AMi confirmed that during 2020/21, Risk Assessments - at college and individual subject level - were continually being updated to reflect new Covid-19 guidance and the emerging situation. The H&S report covered the following items:

- Health & Safety Action Plan 2020/21 which arose from the internal audit of the Health and Safety Management System conducted by an external consultant from SQR Group in May 2021. The meeting noted that the quality of the audit report had been very poor, but it had made several useful recommendations. The overall grade of 'meeting requirements' was disappointing and had been discussed in detail at the Audit Committee on 15 September 2021.
- External Environmental Management System report by QMS – February 2021 (certification noted as valid until March 2022).
- Health and Safety Committee

MINUTES

16

- Health and Safety Audits
- H&S Compliance assessments
- First Aid Arrangements
- Accident and Incident Statistics
- Fire safety and M&E Inspections
- Health & Safety Training
- Risk Assessments, including Fire Risk & Asbestos Risk
- Workstation Assessments
- Covid-19 preparedness

The meeting was assured that good progress in all aspects of Health and Safety across HCUC continued to be made during the last year. All items on the 2020/21 H&S Action Plan had either been completed or were on track for completion by the end of 2021/22. The meeting sought and was given clarification on the COSHH recommendation. AMi informed the meeting that the College Health and Safety Adviser (HSA) had left HCUC at the end of the 2020/21 academic year and his deputy would also be imminently leaving. A replacement HSA was starting in October 2021 and AMi assured the meeting that adequate interim cover for this key role was being arranged.

Health and Safety Committee: Health and Safety Committee meetings were due to be held once a term at each of the Colleges during 2020/21 but had been affected by the lockdown. The H&S Committees were comprised of senior managers and union representatives. Meetings had been held as planned in term 1 at each College and were chaired by the Executive Director of Corporate Services; a joint meeting for HCUC was held in term 3. The meeting noted the name change of this group for 2021/22 to reflect common practice; it would now be known as Health Safety and Welfare Committee and the HR Director would be a standing attendee.

Staff and Student Injuries: The meeting noted the injury statistics for staff and students and was pleased to hear that there were no major incidents reported at any of the HCUC campuses. There were 44 student/ visitor injuries across all campuses (63 in prior year) and 18 workplace injuries for staff, agency workers and contractors. Slips, trips and falls were still the most common cause of injury to students and proportions were consistent with the prior year. The overall reduction in student injuries reflected the lockdown. The meeting noted that there had been no RIDDOR reportable incidents during the year (compared with 1 staff RIDDOR incident in 2019/20). The Chair highlighted the differences in numbers of incidents between the HCUC campuses and AMi confirmed that the curriculum at each College with PMLD learners based at Harrow.

Student Governor (SL) suggested that the College might look at encouraging students to become first aid trained; **the meeting AGREED that this was a good idea and asked management to look at possible implementation.**

The annual Health and Safety Report 2020/21 was NOTED and RECEIVED.

16. Partnerships Report

The meeting received an update report on employer engagement and partnership activities for HCUC presented by the Principal Harrow College (JW). The meeting noted that new projects and opportunities were now coming through that continued to address the London recovery post-pandemic and also to support the technical skills agenda. HCUC was seeing a buoyant recruitment to apprentices in the engineering and building services sectors and high levels of vacancies in other sectors as employers were keen to benefit from the enhanced incentives. However, JW also highlighted the research conducted by the International Public Policy Observatory (IPPO) which had found a 46% reduction in the number of young people engaging in apprenticeships and evidence of a decline in the awareness of apprenticeships during the pandemic among potential new students. This was possibly due to a lack of Information and Guidance in schools during the last eighteen months. JW informed the meeting that the Sector Work-based Academy Programmes (SWAPs) were working well. These were FE & HE groups

MINUTES

17

led by the West London Alliance to focus on priority sectors within West London. JW highlighted the value of bringing FE and HE providers together to look at progression. Governors noted that this new initiative would be discussed in more detail at the October 2021 Governors' Training Day.

Apprenticeships: The meeting noted that recruitment remained challenging, but HCUC had recruited 73% of the profile for the first quarter 2021/22. Engineering and building services were recruiting well with health and care sectors seeing some challenges with the suitability of candidates. Minimum predicted achievement for 2020/21 was 70.5% which was 7% higher than the prior year QAR and 6.3% above the national average. The meeting was reminded of the new Technical Apprenticeship School put in place at HCUC to raise quality in the building services, engineering, motor vehicle and IT curriculum areas. The successful appointment of a new Assistant Director would now drive this work forward.

Employer Partnerships and Employability Programmes: New employer partnerships included Sheraton Skyline, Bull Hotel, Heathrow based retailers and hospitality employers. Targets had now been set for the formal creation of Employer Advisory Boards in 2021/22 to inform the College Curriculum Plans and support the co design and delivery of study programmes.

Successful tenders: JW highlighted that HCUC had been awarded a secondary provider contract following a rigorous tender process for Thames Water for a very complex engineering apprenticeship delivery (90+ apprenticeships on a regional basis).

Subcontracting: The meeting noted that due diligence was currently being carried out for the five new subcontractors delivering on the Good Work for All project; these were four colleges and one training provider as detailed in the report. HCUC also continued to work with Swiss Time Services who were delivering the Watchmaking apprenticeship for five apprentices.

West London Institute of Technology (IoT): The meeting was reminded that key risks remained in relation to learner numbers and employer engagement; this had been heightened by the pandemic, College lockdown and a lack of any national advertising for the IoTs. JW confirmed that as requested an Action Plan had now been submitted to the DfE to detail how the IoT recruitment gap against targets would be closed. DfE feedback and any possibility of amending historic recruitment targets and 2021/22 numbers was still awaited. DDS confirmed that the next IoT Project Board would be held later in the week and a key aim was to sharpen up the input of employer advisers who were open to this challenge. The meeting noted the positive activity that was taking place within the IoT and were pleased to see that a member of the Senior team at HCUC (JO'N) would chair the national IoT curriculum sub-group for 2021/22. The strong partnership work was noted including the continued involvement in the DfE funded High Value Manufacturing Catapult; the work with Brunel to create and deliver HE digital; and work with Pearson to develop top up progression routes including a Level 6 in Electronic Engineering.

Project updates: The following key projects were highlighted:

- The GLA's Good Work for All project in collaboration with the North West London Health & Care Partnership had launched on 16 September and focussed on lower level employment in the NHS. JW confirmed that although not high value (circa £450,000 across eight partners) this was an important and meaningful project.
- The successful bid under the College Collaboration Fund, supporting the Health sector to develop Work Experience, regional progression routes and mentoring programmes was being launched. This would need to be completed by March 2022.
- The London Mayor had extended the Skills Academy initiative across all the priority sectors in West London to support the economic recovery. These priority sectors were noted as Green, Digital, Creative, Health and Hospitality. HCUC were partnering with Ealing Hammersmith and West London College as a Hub partner on a submission to support the Green agenda which would build on the existing construction Hub and also on the Integrated Care System (ICS). This was being led by King's College to support the health sector and the submission deadline was 28 September. The meeting agreed that employer involvement would be key to the success of this initiative.

MINUTES

18

- The College was taking part in the New Challenge competition in partnership with Brunel. The work was to create flexible HE routes and make FE units more relevant to HE progression. Governors suggested that this work might be a distraction and a better use of resources would be to offer top-ups through the IoT. However, it was agreed that it was positive to make HE more accessible and the modular structure would be useful in the future.

The rest of the very detailed report was taken as read due to the weight of business the meeting was considering.

The Partnerships Report was NOTED and RECEIVED.

17. Academic Report

The meeting considered the HCUC Executive Summary and the detailed papers which sat behind this cover paper were taken as read. Much of this had already been considered under agenda item 10 earlier in the meeting. The Deputy Principal highlighted the KPI Dashboard which was considered by the meeting. The meeting also spent some time looking at progress against the QIP 2020/21 which would be considered in more detail at the October 2021 Governors' Training day.

The Academic Report was RECEIVED.

18. Finance Directorate Report

The Group Director Finance and Resource Planning presented the Finance Report.

18.1 Management Accounts July 2021

The accounts for HCUC had been presented to and reviewed by the Resources Committee on 15/09/21. Key performance indicators to 31 July 2021 were noted as follows: historical cost surplus of £2,087,000 (compared to forecast surplus of £1,055,000); cash days in hand 225 (forecast 182); current ratio 2.41 (forecast 2.42); EBITDA 13% (forecast 9%); and staff costs as a percentage of income 61% (forecast 65%). SW reminded the meeting that the sector average for EBITDA was 7% and many colleges did not achieve this. The meeting was reminded that this would not be the final position for the year; several adjustments were being made in preparation for the external audit and presentation of the financial statements. These adjustments would include accruals and prepayments, in addition to a provision in relation to any final adjustments relating to the funding claim. The July 2021 accounts would be reissued once the financial statements audit was completed, to highlight all adjustments.

Governors commended this very strong year-end result which was particularly admirable during the unusual year with all the effects of the pandemic.

The Management Accounts to 31 July 2021 were NOTED and RECEIVED

18.2 Interim Enrolment Report 2021/22

The meeting noted the enrolment report for 2021/22 on 15th September for each of the two colleges. The portfolio target (which was confirmed as the internal College target to allow for withdrawals during the initial 6-week period) for FT 16-18 year olds were noted as follows: Harrow – 1,786; Uxbridge – 4,453. SW informed the meeting that actual enrolment to date was noted as 91% of portfolio target across the group at 5,693 (1,521 at Harrow and 4,172 at Uxbridge). The Deputy CEO informed the meeting that this figure had been updated and was now sitting at 5,750 enrolled 16-18 learners. However, this did not include the current withdrawals of 191 (116 at UC and 75 at HC); the prior year withdrawal figure was noted as 272 at the same point (182 at UC and 90 at HC). The meeting noted that enrolment would continue until October half-term 2021. SW reminded the meeting of the ESFA agreement to provide in-year growth funding if the College secured at least 89 additional learners over the number in the baseline funding allocation. The meeting noted that 89 additional 16-18 learners could potentially generate an additional £490,000 for 2021/22; SW confirmed that this learner group were key to securing maximum future funding. The CEO highlighted the unprecedented level of scrutiny that was being used with all learners for 2021/22 and staff were working hard to mitigate any withdrawals. SLT were looking at

variations across School and had offered challenge to each Head of School to understand the classroom delivery as well as interaction with learners to minimise withdrawals. Principal Harrow (JW) highlighted the focus on knowledge gaps and the 3-week after enrolment case conferencing being employed to review any at-risk learners, (repeated at week 6).

SW confirmed that the SLT were reviewing group sizes and staffing where enrolment numbers were lower than forecast; the pressure of static income but an increasing cost-base was noted. The CEO (DDS) highlighted the need to balance quality and resourcing. DDS confirmed that any school where enrolment was less than 80% of target was being reviewed to look at the teaching hours, class sizes and resource allocated. DDS also highlighted the impact of Covid-related grade inflation for GCSEs in schools for a second year which meant that more learners had been able to stay on in school and take A levels. Anecdotal evidence suggested that this negative impact on college based level 1 and 2 qualifications had been felt across many of the London Colleges. The 19+ enrolment was currently at 89% of the portfolio target. The meeting sought additional clarity on the vacancy factor used within the 2021/22 budget and was given confirmation that the 61% staff: income ratio included agency staff. The Chair sought, and was given, confirmation that the College was not in the position of carrying too many vacancies which would have a negative impact on quality. DDS confirmed that SLT were very mindful of the ongoing tension between resource and quality but were committed to maintaining the excellence in provision that HCUC was known for. He assured the meeting that SLT were looking at the portfolio on a school-by-school basis to ensure that any staff cuts or nested courses would have no detrimental impact on learners. Governors were assured that an update on enrolment numbers would be brought to the Governors' Strategy/ Training Day on 20 October 2021.

The meeting NOTED the Enrolment Update Report.

18.3 Risk Management Update

- ***HCUC Risk Register***

The meeting considered the HCUC Risk Register which reflected the agreed Corporate Goals. This had been updated by the Executive team, through a review of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 corporate goals, and projects coming on stream throughout the year. The meeting considered the thirteen 'red' risks and the mitigating action that was in place to defend against crystallisation of the risks.

- 1.08 *Insufficiently qualified and equipped staff to support the delivery of study programmes and quality outcomes for learners.* (Risk score unchanged at 12 'red').
- 1.09 *Failure to recruit sufficient staff, qualified at the appropriate level.* (Risk score still at 12 'red').
- 1.12 *Project Work fails to prepare the College for T levels, CDF and the Transition Fund.* (Risk remains at 15 'red')
- 2.05 *Inflexible delivery models for Apprenticeships could restrict growth* (Risk score remains at 12 'red'). DDS informed the meeting that the SLT were currently developing a five-year strategy to develop plans for growth in Work Based Learning (WBL), Institute of Technology provision, and commercial income. This would be discussed in more detail at the Governors' October Strategy Day.
- 3.02 *Insufficient enrolment on employability pathways for adult unemployed learners will reduce spend of ESFA contract.* (Risk score remains at 12 'red').
- 3.11 *Underachievement of funding targets* (Risk score still at 15 'red'). As previously discussed in the meeting.
- 3.12 *Failure to secure and respond to large levy paying employers could impact on apprenticeship income* (Risk introduced in June 2020 and still had a risk score at 15 'red'). This risk had become ever more of a threat during Covid-19 lockdown; the college had recognised this and the Business Development Consultants (BDCs) had worked hard to stay in touch with employers during the Covid-19 business disruption.

MINUTES

20

- 3.19 16-18 and 19+ mainstream recruitment target not met, leading to a reduction in funding in current and future years. (Risk score at 12 'red'). As discussed earlier DDS confirmed that enrolment was ongoing with daily updates and ongoing review by the SLT.
- 3.20 WBL non-levy 16-18 and 19+ apprentices target not met. (Risk score still at raised level of 15 'red'). Current WBL delivery against the ESFA allocation was being closely monitored but had been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.05 Failure to achieve IoT targets (Significant red risk with a score of 12.)
- 5.11 Compliance with GDPR and other data related regulation (Risk score remains at 15 'red'). As previously discussed by Governors at Corporation and Strategy days the SLT were still working to improve current HCUC practice on the destruction of obsolete data in a timely manner. The meeting was assured that progress was being made but the risk score had not yet been reduced in order to maintain focus. The ongoing work to strengthen IT security was also noted.
- 5.12 College loses IT capability and/ or data following a cyber-attack. (Risk score remains at 12 'red'). This risk was very real despite IT Services using up to date security software and policies.
- 5.13 Operational impact due to Coronavirus (Covid-19). (This new risk added in March 2020 was still deemed as a risk score of 12 'red'). The meeting was reminded of the measures in place and the ongoing adherence to all Public Health England and Government guidelines.

The meeting suggested that it would be useful for Governors if an additional column was added to this GDFRP summary report to include any known timeline where a 'red' risk was likely to be downgraded to amber or green. (Action: GDFRP)

18.4 Capital Projects Update

The meeting considered the Capital Update Report presented by SW; it was noted that this was for information as there were no decisions currently required. Key current bids and projects were noted as follows:

- House at Harrow Weald: The meeting was reminded that the second cash offer of £500,000 had been accepted at the end of February 2021. SW confirmed that contracts had been exchanged during the first week of September and exchange would take place on 8 October 2021.
- ESFA Further Education Capital Allocation (FECA): SW reminded the meeting that the deadline for completion of all the work had now been extended to September 2021. The total allocation from the ESFA had been £2.094m with HCUC also spending £698,055 (25% contribution). Governors were assured that work was all on track to meet the revised deadline. The spend to date was noted as £2,733,912 and works had been completed for Bronte, Fleming and C Block.

The Finance Directorate Report was NOTED and RECEIVED

ITEMS TO BE TAKEN AS READ

19. Resources Committee – 15 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting would be circulated as soon as available. The following key issues were highlighted by the Clerk in the absence of the Committee Chair (AMcL):

- The Committee approved the bad debt write-off for 2020/21
- The schedule of HE Fees for 2021/22 was approved.

NOTED

20. Audit Committee – 16 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting would be circulated as soon as available. Key considerations of the meeting

MINUTES

21

were noted as:

- Annual Risk Management Report 2020/21: Audit Committee received this and were recommending it to the Corporation for approval.
- Internal Audit Strategy 2021/22: The meeting was given confirmation of the ongoing benefit of sourcing specialist auditors for different internal audits e.g. safeguarding, health and safety. This strategy provided value for money and produced a more rigorous audit with more valuable recommendations for ongoing improvement. This methodology was included in the internal audit strategy brought to Governing Body for approval.
- External Audit: The meeting received an outline of the planned timetable from Cooper Parry. The external audit would commence in October 2021 and would be conducted entirely remotely.

NOTED**21. To confirm the dates and times of the meetings for 2021/22**

- Tuesday 7 December 2021 at 4.30pm (at Harrow on the Hill)
- Tuesday 29 March 2022 at 4.30pm (at Uxbridge)
- Tuesday 17 May 2022 at 4.30pm (at Harrow on the Hill)
- Tuesday 12 July 2022 at 4.30pm (at Uxbridge)

22. Items for Next Meeting

There were no items suggested. The Chair asked Members to feedback any ideas to the Clerk in advance of the next meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS**23. Any other business as previously notified**

There was no other business.
The meeting closed at 7.15pm.

Signed

Date.....

MINUTES

22

Minute Ref	Action	By who	By when
Presentation	COVID: Comparative case numbers 2019/20 and 2020/21 to be analysed	SLT	ASAP
5	Approved HCUC policies to be implemented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions Policy • Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy • Student Charter • EDI Policy 	SLT	Immediately
	Any future policy amendments to show tracked changes for Governor clarity	SLT Clerk	Ongoing
7	Determined number of Corporation to be set at 15 until merger with RuTC finalised.	Clerk	Immediately
9	Barclays LLP to be invited to attend HCUC Governors' Training & Planning Day.	GDFRP Clerk	20/10/21
12	Internal Audit Strategy 2021/22 approved subject to reviews being spread evenly across the academic year.	Exec Team	2021/22
14	HR Annual Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data for split of appointed staff by support/ academic/ management – by gender and BAME – to be included in future HR Annual Reports to Corporation. 	HR Director	September 2022
	HR Monthly Newsletter to be circulated to all Governors for information.	Clerk	December 2021
15	H&S Report: Management to consider whether students could be encouraged to undertake First Aid training	SLT	ASAP
18.3	Risk Summary Table in GDFRP Report to be amended to include any known timeline or target date for a 'red' risk to be downgraded to amber or green.	GDFRP	December 2021