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Directorate: Corporation

Minutes of: HCUC Governing Body

Date: Tuesday 29 March 2022 **Time:** 4.30pm

Venue: A004/005 Uxbridge campus

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Present:

Nicholas Davies	Governor (<i>Chair of Governors</i>) (part attendance)
Simon Boulcott	Governor
Steve Cochran	Governor (<i>Vice-Chair</i>) (<i>online attendance</i>)
Tracey Critchley	Harrow Staff Governor (<i>online attendance</i>)
Sharon Croxon	Uxbridge Staff Governor
Darrell DeSouza	Governor (<i>Group CEO and Principal</i>)
Nasim Khan	Governor (<i>Acting Chair</i>)
Alasdair MacLeod	Governor (<i>online attendance</i>)
Johanna Morgan	Governor (<i>online attendance</i>)
Amanda Priem	Governor
Mariann Rand-Weaver	Governor

Apologies:

Shaliny Lingeswaran	Uxbridge Student Governor
Alexandra Postar	Harrow Student Governor
Ketan Sheth	Governor

In attendance:

Dylan McTaggart	Deputy CEO and Principal Uxbridge
Jo Withers	Principal Harrow
Shane Woodhatch	Group Director – Finance & Resource Planning
Gavin Hughes	AP Learning Support & Safeguarding (<i>item 13 ONLINE</i>)
Andy Miller	Exec Director Corporate Services (<i>item 18 ONLINE</i>)
Tracy Reeve	Director of Governance

Governors' pre-meeting

As the Chair of Governors (ND) was not available for the start of the meeting, Nasim Khan stepped into the role as Acting Chair for the meeting until ND arrived. NK received confirmation that there were no specific items that any of the Governors wanted to raise outside of the formal meeting.

1. Presentation

1. The Corporation Members received a presentation from the HCUC AP Learning Support and Safeguarding (GH) which gave Governors a mid-year update on the HCUC Safeguarding Report 2021/22. (Report and discussion minuted at item 13 below, page 5).

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Ketan Sheth and the student governors. The Acting Chair welcomed Sharon Croxon to her first Corporation meeting since being elected as Staff Governor for Uxbridge College.

3. 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.

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

No specific interests were notified.

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5. Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 7 December 2021

The Minutes were APPROVED as an accurate record and would be taken as signed by the Chair.

6. Matters arising from Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 7 December 2021, which were not agenda items.

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- **Prayer Rooms** (*item 5 page 3*)

The Acting Chair asked for an update on whether any progress had been made on identifying a regular space for a multi-faith prayer room at Uxbridge College. The Principal UC assured the meeting that he had reviewed this matter and had received assurance that a prayer room was available on a daily basis although the room varied from day-to-day. Students could find which room was being used by asking at Reception or it was shown on the College App. NK highlighted that as Ramadan was fast approaching it would be important for learners to have a safe space to pray.

- **Ofsted Inspection February 2022**

The Acting Chair asked whether the SLT had reviewed the final Ofsted grades against the Self-Assessment Report 2021/22 to highlight why there was some variation in grades. DMcT confirmed that this would be picked up under agenda item 12 later in the meeting. The meeting sought confirmation on whether the SLT had understood how rigid the Ofsted algorithm was in generating an overall grade. DMcT – as Ofsted nominee – confirmed that the executive team had believed there to be a little more flexibility whereas it had come down to a ‘black and white’ formulaic decision which had generated an Overall ‘Good’ grade rather than ‘Outstanding’.

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

7. Chair and CEO's Update

As the Chair of the Corporation (ND) was not attending the start of the meeting this item was deferred.

CEO's Update

DDS informed the meeting that the agenda covered most of his recent activity. He reminded the meeting that the HR Director – Imtiaz Aziz – would be leaving HCUC at the end of the week and asked them to ‘sign’ the online leaving card.

DDS reminded the meeting of how well he believed the College had acquitted itself during the recent Ofsted inspection. Staff had demonstrated a wide set of strengths and excellent in Teaching and Learning. He also commended the very strong showing from governors which had fed the Outstanding grade for Leadership and Management. DDS asserted his pleasure in seeing such a united response from all four HCUC campuses which was a testament to the journey to excellence that HCUC had been on since the merger in August 2017. The Ofsted profile was noted as unusual with the Grade 1 for the Quality of Education being a very real accolade; this would be used extensively in marketing material moving forward. He had also been pleased to see Ofsted recognise the strong behaviour and attitude of learners.

Governors (SB) asked for a formal minute to record the thanks and admiration from the Governing Body for DDS's leadership and his impact on HCUC. The meeting agreed that they also recognised the very strong senior leadership team supporting the CEO and their ongoing influence on the culture and performance of HCUC.

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ITEMS FOR DECISION/ APPROVAL

8. Governance Matters

• Search Committee recommendations

The Director of Governance informed the meeting that this would be Johanna Morgan's (JM) last meeting as a Governor of HCUC as she would be resigning her position at the end of March 2022. Governors thanked JM for her contribution to the Governing Body at HCUC during the last 18 months as well as for her role on Quality Curriculum and Students Committee, as a member of the merger Joint Steering Group and as a member of the Harrow College Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committee. NK also cited JM's recent input to the Ofsted inspection which had been a valuable addition to the governance meeting. JM thanked the meeting for their commendations and highlighted that her time on the Corporation had been thoroughly enjoyable. It was noted that the replacement from Harrow Council would be Mark Billington who had previously served as a governor of Harrow College. His perspective working in local regeneration would be of real value to the Governing Body.

The appointment of Mark Billington as the Harrow Council representative was APPROVED (from 1 April 2022 for a four-year term of office).

9. Policies to Approve

• Health & Safety (H&S) Policy

The meeting considered an updated H&S Policy which had been reviewed following a recent Audit of H&S at the College. The meeting was given confirmation that the audit of H&S and the revised policy had been considered by Audit Committee on 10 March 2022. The Exec Director Corporate Services (AMi) highlighted the front page on the policy the H&S Statement of Intent which was now signed by the CEO and the Chair of Governors as required.

The revised H&S Policy was APPROVED as presented.

• Fees & Charges Policy 2022/23

The GDFRP presented the HCUC Fees and Charges Policy for 2022/23 which had been considered in detail by the Resources Committee on 16 March 2022. It was confirmed that changes to the policy (shown as 'tracked changes') had been made in light of funding guidance from the ESFA and the Office for Students; consideration had also been given to market forces and the fees and charges made by other providers. Governors were assured that there was no significant change to the content of the policy but was reminded that the fees and charges were now common across all campuses of HCUC. The meeting noted the Table of Fees, the following changes were being proposed:

- The College registration charge to be raised to £45 (from £40) for full-time students and to £35 (from £30) for part-time students across HCUC. Parking fees to be increased to £200 for full-time and £100 for part-time students (£190 and £95 in current year). ID card charges to increase to £11 (currently £9) and the cost of a replacement ID card to remain at £10. The Administration charge for a withdrawal and refund request would rise to £45 from £40
- Fees for 19+ learners on level 3 courses and above (providing it was not their first level 3 courses) would be set at a funding value listed by the ESFA and the maximum loan amount available for all first year entrants. These would be available on the College website.
- HE Fees as shown in the Appendix to the fees policy. The meeting was reminded of the £6,000 cap imposed by OfS as HCUC did not want to implement a full Access & Participation Plan.
- A range of fees for international students: FE £7,300 (prior year £6,900) and HE students not eligible for OfS funding would be raised to £7,700 (from £7,350). The registration fee would rise to £115 from £110.

Governors noted the categories of learners highlighted in the policy and the level of discounts and remissions that they received; they sought clarity on any other areas of hardship that the College

considered. It was confirmed that the College offered bursaries for other cases of hardship. The meeting discussed the current cap on HE fees at £6,000 which would remain in place unless HCUC moved to establish a full Access and Participation Statement as well as signing up for the Teaching Excellence Framework. These two changes would be very resource intensive in terms of staff time and expertise. However, the Group Director Finance & Resources confirmed that at some stage the College should look at a 'cost-benefit-analysis' of moving to situation where fees could be set above the £6,000 cap. DDS concurred that this needed careful thought as the meeting noted that the cost of a full Access and Participation Statement along with all the associated quality/ enrolment/ progression targets was as high as £6m per year in some of the universities. Page | 4

MRW highlighted some technical wording changes that needed to be made to the policy:

- **Remove all references to HEFCE**
- **The footer needed updating to reflect 2022/23**
- **EU Fees on page 21 of the policy needed to reflect how HCUC was treating learners with settled status rather than 'overseas learners'.**

Subject to the amendments highlighted above, the Fees & Charges Policy 2022/23 was APPROVED as presented as RECOMMENDED by the Resources Committee.

[The Chair of Governors ND joined the meeting.]

10. April 2022 Governors Training and Planning Day

The CEO outlined the main themes for the Governors' Training and Planning Day which would be held at Denham Grove on Wednesday 27 April 2022. The programme for the day would include an update on: finances, in-year learner achievement and quality of TL&A, Inspection findings, Higher Education/ IoT strategy, and the merger with RuTC. Much of the day would be spent looking at Strategic Planning priorities 2022-23 including the context of HCUC provision within the West London educational and economic landscape. DDS informed the meeting that David Pack, from the West London Alliance would be attending during the middle part of the day to allow Governors to focus on this aspect of the College's stakeholder engagement. The meeting noted that the Chair of Governors and the Interim Principal from Richmond Upon Thames College (RuTC) would be attending the strategy day and all of the Non-Executive Advisers from the SSCs had also been invited for the whole day.

The programme for the Governors' Training Day, 27 April 2022 was APPROVED as presented.

11. Merger with Richmond upon Thames College

The meeting was reminded that the RuTC Phase 2 Capital build had continued to present challenges in relation to planning conditions, following ongoing review by Richmond planning council. This in turn had impacted the ability and timeliness for RuTC to access funds from Clarion (Housing development company) for the Phase 2 build. As a result, financial assurances were sought by HCUC prior to agreeing a revised merger date. The assurances sought by HCUC had been captured within the risk management reports that were presented to the merger Joint Steering Group (JSG) distilled into a series of five related 'gateways'. The HCUC Corporation Members noted the current position against these gateways and the current assessed risk. Governors (AP) asserted her view that the 'amber' status of risk 3 in relation to the build of the STEM building was overly optimistic; the likelihood of a large rise in the contract cost was very real. DDS confirmed that RuTC and their Project Managers (Fusion) continued to meet regularly with Clarion and Richmond council to progress matters and input was also being sought from the DfE and local MPs. The Chair (ND) highlighted that the JSG had agreed that HCUC's 'specialist property consultant' (RD) should be used to try and move forward the Section 106 discussions. The meeting was assured that HCUC senior post-holders and Governor representatives continued to work constructively with RuTC colleagues, within the JSG. ND confirmed that the college Chairs were in regular contact. DDS also had weekly 1:1 update meetings with RuTC interim Principal (JJ). The meeting noted that the Workstream activity was still ongoing with meetings on a monthly basis to ensure that momentum was maintained in advance of a final merger date being agreed. The meeting

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discussed the recommendations which had been taken to the recent meeting of the JSG to try and progress the situation.

DDS highlighted the current work being undertaken at RuTC to amend overly-generous (against sector benchmarks) T&Cs for lecturing staff; the union was currently balloting for strike action. Governors discussed the possible impact of the recent quality issues at RuTC on any future Ofsted Inspection of the combined college post-merger. However, Governors agreed that a merger with RuTC still offered a great deal in terms of assets and access to a new geography (warding off local competition from other London colleges). However, the meeting did agree that HCUC would need to agree a baseline level of 'debt/ costs' that it would be prepared to incur to make the merger happen; the original merger was to be a 'cost-free' option for HCUC. The meeting also noted the impact of the 'purdah' period in advance of local government elections in May which would slow down any activity at Richmond Council around section 106 and planning. The meeting agreed that the long-term prize of a merger with RuTC was still offering significant benefits but Governors were mindful of the ongoing delay and distraction on both college's management teams.

The merger update was NOTED.

12. Ofsted Inspection feedback

The meeting noted the draft Ofsted report from the full inspection which had taken place in February 2022. The meeting commended the 'good' grade for Apprenticeships which had recovered well since Covid. Governors sought clarity on the other two categories which had been graded 'Good' rather than 'outstanding' – Personal Development and High Needs Provision. These two grades had produced a limit on the overall grade of 'Good' based on a purely formulaic approach as discussed earlier in the meeting. Governors were assured that HCUC had discussed the report with inspectors who had agreed that it was a 'very unusual report' with the Grade 1 for Quality of Education. As a result, it had gone to the highest level moderation board at Ofsted. DDS confirmed that it had become apparent that there was little to be gained – and much to be lost – by further challenge. Governors commended the outstanding report with comments reflecting the passion and effort shown by all HCUC staff over a protracted period. The very strong wording contained five examples of 'excellence', 4 'exceptional' and 1 'exemplary'. However, the frustrated mindset of management was noted by the meeting.

Governors thanked DMcT as nominee who had been ably supported by AP Gavin Hughes. They also congratulated Principal Harrow (JW) on the massive progress in Work Based Learning which the inspection had confirmed. DDS also cited a vote of thanks for the strong governance input during inspection which had supported the grade for Leadership and Management.

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ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

(The meeting took the following detailed reports as pre-read and the report authors took questions by exception.)

13. Safeguarding Report: Mid-year update 2021/22

The Director of Student Services (GH) joined the meeting; GH was the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with responsibility for child protection and safeguarding at Uxbridge College. The meeting was reminded that Nasim Khan was the governor Safeguarding Champion for HCUC with responsibility for safeguarding and prevent. The meeting was also reminded that on an individual college level a member of the Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committee (SSC) at each the colleges had a specific remit for safeguarding. Members considered the mid-year report which gave an overview of the Safeguarding and Child Protection issues raised during the first half of 2021/22.

Safeguarding Registers: The number of learners on the Safeguarding Register was noted.

Uxbridge: Members noted that 31 students (28 new cases in the current year and 3 carried over cases)

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during the first half of the academic year had required a serious safeguarding response (compared with 48 at the same point in 2020/21). Issues during the current year had included sexual exploitation (2), neglect (2), mental health (4), domestic violence (8), missing from home (2), sexual conviction/ allegation (1), victim of sexual assault (2), knife crime / stabbing (2), criminal conviction (4), immigration status/ poverty (1). Unlike the previous year there had been no cases in relation to forced marriage, involvement in gangs and county lines, nor Female Genital Mutilation. GH informed the meeting that 9 of the 31 were on a Child Protection Plan (7 in prior year), and 18 were on a Child in Need Plan (26 last year). The retention rate for these learners on the Safeguarding Register was at 90% (same as prior year). The number of students on the secondary 'at risk' register was at 1,029 (compared to 921 in the prior year) of which 241 had declared mental health issues. The meeting noted that there were currently 236 'looked after' (LAC) students (206 in prior year).

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Harrow: Members noted that 20 learners (including 3 carried over from the previous year) had required a serious safeguarding response and or close work with social services or other external agencies (17 at the same point in 2020/21). The current retention rate for students on the Serious Cases Register was very strong at 95%. Issues during the current year had included domestic violence (4); neglect (3); serious mental health concerns (2), at risk of criminal exploitation (1), linked to knife crime (1), physical abuse (4), emotional abuse (1), forced marriage (1), victim of sexual assault (1) and one learner going through a gender change. GH informed the meeting that 3 of the 20 were on a Child Protection Plan, and 6 were on a Child in Need Plan. There were also 93 students being supported on the secondary safeguarding register; retention of these students was 96%. The meeting noted that there were also currently 274 LAC students at HC (compared with 210 in 2020/21) and this number would be likely to increase as ESOL learners were still being enrolled. The meeting noted that Harrow currently had 996 learners in receipt of a financial bursary.

Staff Training and CPD: The meeting was assured that the HCUC staff training and development programme in relation to Safeguarding and the Prevent Agenda met all statutory and good practice guidelines. Details of the specific training provided at each of the colleges were noted by the meeting. GH confirmed that 99% of all permanent staff had now completed the required face-to-face training on Safeguarding and the Prevent Agenda.

Student Involvement: Details of the varied provision and student involvement in each of the colleges was noted. These included Prevent and British Values tutorials, anti-bullying week, knife crime awareness week and a number of health and mental health initiatives.

Local Safeguarding Children's Board: The meeting was reminded of the College commitment to this important local authority committee; it was confirmed that GH as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for UC remained a full member of the Hillingdon Board and the DSL for Harrow was a member of the Harrow LCSB Learning and Development Committee and also attended the monthly Harrow Serious Incident Group and the termly Harrow Borough Designated Safeguarding Leads meeting.

Prevent: The meeting was given assurance that HCUC attended the London HE/FE Regional Prevent Meetings, and the Regional Coordinator regularly reviewed the College's Prevent Risk assessment/ Action Plan. Both Colleges used 'key word' detection on all computers to identify students accessing inappropriate websites etc.

Uxbridge College: The meeting noted that there had been 4 new cases for referral to the police or Channel Panel under the duty so far in 2021/22 (compared with 0 cases at the same point in the prior year). Governors sought clarity on whether these 4 learners had been retained. GH informed the meeting that 2 of these were current students (one of whom was low risk and one medium risk).

Harrow College: The meeting noted that there had been no new cases for referral to the police or Channel Panel under the duty so far in 2021/22. The last Prevent referral from Harrow College had been during 2017/18.

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Ofsted Safeguarding Inspection February 2022: GH reminded the meeting that a full review of HCUC Safeguarding arrangements was part of the recent Ofsted inspection. Verbal feedback from Ofsted had been brief but wholly positive:

'Safeguarding was very strong, students say they feel safe, they understand prevent & safeguarding and arrangements are very effective. Students know how to report sexual harassment. Safeguarding arrangements at HCUC are effective.'

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The meeting was reminded that there was no grade given for safeguarding in an Ofsted report. GH confirmed that he had discussed cases and trends with the lead inspector and had shared the latest annual report that governors had seen and a paper on how the College dealt with sexual harassment. The meeting was pleased to note that this reporting to governors and the audits reports to the Audit Committee were seen as key strengths.

Audit actions: The meeting noted that there were still two outstanding actions from the external audit of Safeguarding undertaken in March 2021 which were not yet complete:

- All staff to have updated their DBS within the last 3 years to bring HCUC in line with best-practice. GH confirmed that this was now a much-improved picture, but still circa 3% (improved from 10% as stated in the report) of staff still needed to update their DBS.
- Complete 'shelter in place' drills with the students. GH confirmed that students had received the tutorial input on lockdown (now known as 'shelter in place') and did know what to do in the event of a dangerous intruder on campus. However, SLT were still sourcing the technology to provide an alarm system (separate from fire alarm) to provide an alert for this at the Uxbridge and Hayes campuses. GH confirmed that this would be actioned as soon as possible and the technical equipment would be installed before the Easter break.

The meeting thanked GH for the concise presentation and commended the very comprehensive Mid-Year Safeguarding Report. The Chair of Governors (ND) thanked GH and the Safeguarding Teams at both colleges for their crucial contribution to the successful Ofsted inspection.

The meeting asked GH for an update on any review or actions taken since the fatal stabbing of an HCUC student off-site earlier in the year (November 2021). GH confirmed that the police presence in Uxbridge town centre had increased since the event and a new police unit was now patrolling and regularly liaised with the HCUC Security Team. The Deputy Chief Commissioner of the Met Police had also contacted the college to offer support. There was now a regular weekly dialogue and college staff were invited to police meetings. DMcT highlighted the corridor surveys undertaken by SLT asking learners if there was anywhere on campus that they did not feel safe; the only area identified as a possible issue had been the park adjacent to the Hayes campus. As this park belonged to HCUC, SLT had instigated extra security staff to patrol the park and also additional CCTV cameras would be installed. There was also a very good initiative at the Hayes Campus 'Coffee with a Copper'. Governors sought – and were given – confirmation that a full review of the fatal stabbing had been undertaken within HCUC and a 'serious case review' had been conducted by the local social services. Indications were that although tensions had been high between rival groups the victim had not previously been involved so was in some sense a surprise target.

DDS informed the meeting that the College had suffered a further loss of a student. The meeting noted the very sad news that an ESOL learner at Harrow College had passed away during the previous week; suicide was suspected. The meeting was assured that a similar review would be undertaken by social services and the college safeguarding team would be fully involved. Governors were assured that the College had offered support to all those affected by this death, staff, other students, and friends/ family of the deceased. GH confirmed that the Safeguarding lead governor (NK) would be copied on the report once it was finalised.

The Safeguarding Mid-Year report was NOTED and RECEIVED.

14. Partnerships Report (including GLA and WLIoT update)

The Principal Harrow (JW) presented this report which gave the meeting an update on employer engagement and partnership activities for HCUC for the year-to-date 2021/22. Governors commended the wide range of activities and partnership development work across HCUC. JW highlighted the progress in Apprenticeship work which Ofsted had confirmed. There was now an ongoing drive to get this provision to Outstanding status. The detailed report was taken as read but Governors noted the key points as follow:

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Apprenticeships: Recruitment was positive at 65% of target (+20% on the prior year figure). Predictions for achievement were in the range 63.1%-72.3%. New national average benchmarks were about to be published which were likely to have fallen (due to the impact of the pandemic). However, HCUC was currently predicting to be circa 6% above the current benchmarks. JW also reminded the meeting that the Kickstart programme would finish soon which in some ways had distracted from Apprenticeship recruitment.

Employer Partnerships: Excellent second Job Fair of the year held during February half-term.

Employability Programmes: 14 SWAPs now delivered during 2021/22 (12 at HC and 2 in UC); 54 learners completed leading to 25 job starts and 6 NHS placements.

WLIoT: JW informed the meeting that the new IoT Project Manager – Mark Byerley – would attend the Governors Strategy day in April 2022. Current activity focussed on drawing together a 3-5 year curriculum plan for the IoT. Key risks remained in relation to learner numbers, particularly at levels 4, 5 and 6 against the original DfE targets. The process of rebasing these targets, due to the lower recruitment at lower levels during the last two years of the pandemic, was still ongoing with the DfE.

The Partnerships Report was NOTED and RECEIVED.

15. Academic Report

The meeting considered a report which covered the following: KPI Dashboard for in-year monitoring; Higher Education (HE) update report; an Ofsted Inspection Update; and a summary report on progress against Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs). This report was largely taken as read with Governors asking questions where they sought additional clarification.

KPI Dashboard for in-year monitoring

The meeting noted the summary dashboard which provided year-to-date (YTD) performance 2021/22 for HCUC, HC and UC for the following metrics: Retention, Work Based Learning (WBL) updates, FT Attendance, Employability, Lesson Observations, Complaints and Disciplinarys. The meeting noted that this dashboard had been presented at each of the Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees (SSC) and in combined format at Quality, Curriculum and Standards (QCS) Committee. Governors commended the clear 'RAG' rated format which enabled them to identify any areas of under-performance very easily. DMcT highlighted the following aspects of performance:

- Attendance: Full Time 16-18 was just on the year-end target at 86% (90% with authorised absences) but was likely to fall below target by June 2022. The Chair of Governors (ND) suggested that management look at other colleges where attendance was a particular strength to seek good practice and drive up performance in this area. DMcT confirmed that Attendance Co-ordinators were now being used across HCUC (funded through the small group tuition fund) which appeared to be having a very positive impact.
- Punctuality: 16-18s was holding at 4-5% and was on target.
- Retention: 16-18 retention at 96.0% was well-above NA (91.0%) and above YTD 2020/21. Retention for the 19+ cohort was also strong at 97.0% (NA 93.5%). This would be closely monitored via the Corporate Goals. HE retention was also high at 98%.

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- Weaker courses 2020/21 were performing well in 2021/22 YTD with 97% being above NA (93 out of 96 courses).
- Teaching Learning & Assessment: Learning walks were now back on track after the pandemic.
- Work Experience (WEX): Governors were reminded that there had still been a delayed start due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on employer participation. Schools now had targets set for both WEX and Significant Industry Placements (SIPs) with staffing resource allocated to support the achievement. To date 24% had been achieved against the target of 80% and **DMcT confirmed that the RAG rating for this should be 'red' rather than 'Amber'**. However, it was noted that progress had been made since the Dashboard data was run – WEX was showing as being at 43% in the Corporate Goals report so progress was being made.
- Disciplinary: Number of stage 3&4 disciplinarys at 66 were above YTD 2020/21 (26) but this was expected as the previous year had included a long period of college closure and online learning. Exclusions at 49 were also above the prior year figure (13).
- Complaints: were higher than the prior year 31 compared with 16 but again this reflected the college closure in 2020/21. No complaints had resulted in legal action to date.
- Learner Satisfaction: HCUC Initial Impressions Survey had evidenced very high term 1 satisfaction at 92%. This was higher than the published AoC survey data.

Higher Education (HE)/ Access to HE Update

DMcT presented this report and took questions from the meeting. The meeting noted that both HC and UC SSCs had discussed HE updates and a combined HE report had been presented to QCS Committee (17/03/22). The meeting noted the progress against the key actions required in relation to Condition A of the Office for Students (OfS) registration:

- HE leaders had identified all Black students (25 across HCUC) on their programmes, and had held pastoral meetings with all and keeping closely in touch with those deemed at risk of not achieving their qualification this year.
- The College had allocated £15,000 to support HE learners facing hardship. To date 86 applications had been received and students have been given £100 - £250 depending on their circumstances

The meeting noted the summary feedback from the spring term HE student survey results. The meeting took the very detailed report giving them assurance on how HCUC was continuing to meet the OfS conditions of registration as read. A summary of the ongoing HE reporting to Governors was noted by the meeting. DMcT flagged the risk around the continuation data which fed into Condition B; there was a possibility that this might raise a flag for review with the OfS. MRW highlighted the new requirements within Condition B of the OfS which would come into place on 1 May 2022; these were more onerous than previously.

Student Protection Plan Update: The Group Director Finance & Resource Planning (SW) highlighted the paper within the Finance Directorate Report (agenda item 16) which gave Governors assurance around the Student Protection Plan. Governors were reminded that the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 required HEIs to maintain a Student Protection Plan to protect students' interest in the case of material change, e.g. programme changes, suspensions, closures or institutional closure. The meeting was given assurance that HCUC was fully compliant with this requirement.

The assurance around the Student Protection Plan (HE) was NOTED & RECEIVED

In-Year Progress against Quality Improvement Plans 2021/22

The meeting was reminded that the Areas for Improvement (Afls) had been identified through the detailed self-assessment analysis across HCUC for 2020/21. The in-year progress against the individual HC and UC QIPs had been considered in detail at the QCS Committee in March 2022 and at the relevant SSCs. A detailed report was taken as read by the Corporation meeting. This QIP and

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current progress had been fully reviewed during the Ofsted Inspection and feedback had indicated that inspectors believed that HCUC understood its key challenges.

The Academic Report was RECEIVED.

16. Finance Directorate Report

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16.1 HCUC Management Accounts

The GDFRP (SW) presented the composite HCUC management accounts to the end of February 2022 which had been considered in detail at the Resources Committee meeting on 16 March 2022. The meeting noted an historical cost surplus for the period ending 28 February 2022 of £1,005,000 compared to a forecast surplus of £714,000 giving a favourable variance of £291,000. Governors sought, and were given, confirmation that the main reason for this variance was timing of expenditure with schools spending later than planned. The significant variances were highlighted as follows:

- Income of £27.010m against a budget of £27.687m (adverse variance of £677,000). This was due to the timing of GLA contract payments and lower High Needs Element 3 funding than forecast.
- Expenditure was showing a favourable variance of £1.056m against the budget of £33.716m. Staff costs of £21.505m compared to the budget of £22.213m, (favourable variance of £709,000 due to vacant posts within Academic and Support staff). Members were reminded that the budget assumed all posts would be filled for the whole year.
- Other Operating Expenses: a positive variance of £139,000 against the budget of £8.734m. This was noted as mainly being due to timing issues.
- Balance Sheet remained strong with a healthy cash balance.
- All ratios were healthy: cash days in hand at 221(budget 195); and current ratio at 2.44 (forecast of 2.70). Staffing as a percentage of income was at 68% compared with the budget of 70%. Reserves as a percentage of income was at the forecast level of 154%.
- The ESFA assessed financial health grade was at Outstanding with the maximum points score of 300. EBITDA was also strong at 10% against a sector average of circa 6%.

The HCUC Management Accounts to 28 February 2022 were RECEIVED

16.2 Mid Year Forecast Update

➤ Revised Mid-Year Forecast 2021/22

The Group Director Finance & Resource Planning (GDFRP) (SW) presented the consolidated revised forecast 2021/22 and revised plan 2022/23 which was being recommended for approval by the Resources Committee, (having been considered in detail at their meeting on 16 March 2022).

The historical cost surplus for 2021/22 was now forecast at £50,000 compared with the previous forecast surplus of £250,000; an adverse variance of £200,000. The meeting noted a detailed narrative giving clear explanation for any variance and reforecast on a line-by-line basis. Significant variances were highlighted for governors. It was noted that under the reforecast the College's financial health as assessed by the ESFA would remain at 'Outstanding' for 2021/22 with a score of 300 (against a maximum point score of 300) in line with the budgeted 300 score.

Plan Year 2022/23

The GDFRP presented assumptions for the plan year, based on the original 2021/22 budget and the revised forecast. It was confirmed that the plan year had been adjusted to allow for known factors such as the ESFA and GLA allocations, increases in pension contributions and NI, and capital expenditure. The plan year showed a historical cost surplus of £500,000. The cash balance for the plan year was forecast at £30.968m and Reserves would be at 158% of income.

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Income assumptions were based on the following:

- 16-18 allocation – funding for 2022/23 based on the 5,775 students (current year 5,708 students) including T level provision.
- 19+ allocations – no increase assumed.
- ESFA ALS Funding – Funding would be lower as it would be based on a lower student number of 520 (558 in current year).
- WBL (Apprenticeship) – an increase of 5% for both ages (levy only) assumed for each of the plan years.
- Institute of Technology – Income for the plan year was based on the income shown on the Business Plan agreed with the DfE to maintain a prudent approach; this assumed 5% growth in HE and Apprenticeships.
- Short courses – 5% growth assumed.

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The plan assumed no salary increase due to the current income projections and no further pension increases for LGPS or the Teachers' Pension Scheme during the period. The meeting was reminded that LGPS was now fixed at 23.4% for a further two years and TPS at 23.68% for the same period. The staff costs assumed that all posts were filled for the whole of the plan year; the meeting was assured that the annual zero-based staff budgeting exercise was already underway throughout the College to generate a realistic budget for 2022/23. Pay efficiencies of £1,988,000 had been included in the plan year. SW confirmed that there was a contingency provision of £100,000 in the plan year, a further contingency of £200,000 to allow for restructuring costs in the plan year, and a provision of £100,000 had also been included for holiday pay accrual. The plan also included a provision for the apprenticeship levy of 0.5%. Expenses in the plan year had been reworked to reflect adjustments made in the forecast 2020/21 and Non-pay inflation was assumed at 5%; energy cost inflation was assumed at 35%. A provision for efficiencies had not been included in this element of the financial plan. Capital expenditure had been included in the plan year at £5m but it was noted that the final capital strategy would not be agreed by Governors until the final budget for 2022/23 was approved in July 2022. Depreciation had been recalculated to reflect the timing of the current projects and assumed future projects. SW confirmed that no new loans were assumed in the plan year.

The KPIs for the plan year were noted: Cash days in hand were shown as 232.7; Current Ratio was shown as 3.02; reserves as a percentage of income were shown as 158%; and the EBITDA figure would be 12%. The meeting also noted that staff costs as a percentage of income would be 68% in the plan year. SW assured the meeting that staff costs had been fully reworked to annualise all authorised posts included in the forecast for 2021/22 and assumed all posts were filled for the whole year but there was actually a substantial vacancy factor for the full year. Governors were assured that further work would be required including reviewing financial performance at school level and where intervention was required, possible restructuring would take place at school level to mitigate any shortfall.

The College would retain a financial health category of 'Outstanding' in the plan year with a maximum score of 300 points. SW highlighted that the key elements of risk in the forecast and plan centred around the assumed 5% growth in Apprenticeship income and the assumed income from the IoT. SW confirmed that the revised forecast had been submitted to the ESFA to meet the deadline.

The Revised Forecast for 2021/22 and Plan for 2022/23 were RATIFIED as APPROVED by the Resources Committee.

16.3 Risk Register

The meeting received the HCUC Risk Register that 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 took the Risk Register as read but noted the key 'red' rated risks and the mitigating actions that had been put into place:

- 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').

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- 1.09 Failure to recruit sufficient staff, qualified at the appropriate level. (Risk score still at 12 'red'). The meeting was reminded of the ongoing project work looking at innovative ways to recruit for hard to fill specialist technical vacancies as discussed at the Governors' Strategy Day in October 2021
- 1.12 Project Work fails to prepare College for T levels, CDF & Transition Fund. (Risk still at 15 'red')
- 1.14 College fails to retain Highly Trusted Status for international students (Risk score at 12 'red') Page | 12
HTS secured for the current year but this continued to be a high-risk area.
- 2.05 Inflexible delivery models for Apprenticeships could restrict growth (Risk score remains at 12 'red'). As previously discussed in the meeting 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.
- 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'). SW reminded the meeting that the bid for in-year growth funding had not been made for 2021/22 as enrolment had not been above the ESFA allocation.
- 3.12 Failure to secure and respond to large levy paying employers could impact on apprenticeship income (Risk score remains at 15 'red'). The College's Business Development Consultants (BDCs) had worked hard to stay in touch with employers during the Covid-19 business disruption.
- 3.19 16-18 and 19+ mainstream recruitment target not met, leading to a reduction in funding in current and future years. (Risk score remains at 12 'red'). The R04 funding return had been submitted on 6 December to confirm 2021/22 enrolment figures.
- 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.) The ongoing dialogue with the DfE around targets continued. As noted earlier, a decision would be taken by the DfE in February 2022 regarding whether to vary the existing targets for the 12 national IoTs.
- 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. Progress was being made but the risk score had not yet been reduced in order to maintain focus.
- 5.12 College loses IT capability and/ or data following a cyber-attack. (Risk score remains at 12 'red'). This risk was still very real despite IT Services using up to date security software and policies.
- 5.13 Operational impact due to Coronavirus (Covid-19). (Risk score held at 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 discussed the cost of living crisis and the ongoing upward pressure on pay; the meeting agreed that it would need careful review in 2022/23 to ensure that key staff were not leaving the college. SW confirmed that SLT were always mindful of ensuring that 'star teaching staff' were well remunerated but also had to try and maintain a budget with an acceptable level of staff costs as a percentage of income circa 65%.

The HCUC Risk Register was NOTED and RECEIVED.

16.4 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 required at the current time. Key current bids and projects were

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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 reminded the meeting that contracts had been exchanged during the first week of September but exchange had not yet taken place due to some complications around access. SW was hopeful that this would be finalised before the end of the term.

- Vacant land at Harrow Weald:

The meeting was reminded of the interest shown by the Heronslea Group Portfolio who had offered a cash sum subject to planning permission for some land at the Harrow Weald campus. As previously agreed, this would be considered within the wider HCUC Estates Strategy but current thinking was that this land would not be used for HCUC education purposes in the future. SW confirmed that he had commissioned a market review to ascertain whether the offer from Heronslea represented good market value and this had suggested that a higher price than currently offered could be commanded for this piece of land. SW confirmed that other property developers would now be approached to gain market force prices

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The Finance Directorate Report and Capital Update was RECEIVED.

ITEMS TO BE TAKEN AS READ

17. Corporate Goals 2021/22 – Update on progress

The CEO (DDS) provided an update on the Uxbridge College's and Harrow College's Corporate Goals YTD achievement. The meeting was reminded that the recent Ofsted Inspection had provided very current external validation for Governors on progress against many of the Corporate Goals and KPIs especially those in relation to Quality of Education and Learner Outcomes. The meeting was reminded that the front page now better reflected the emphasis on the '3 Is' within the Ofsted Education and Inspection Framework. The RAG rating system flagged up those items on the front page where progress in relation to a particular KPI or performance area had either faltered, prompting mitigating actions (amber rating), or stalled such that full achievement was now not possible (red rating). Governors were reminded that considerable further detail was provided within the body of the Corporate Goals reports about the amber rated items flagged on the cover pages.

DDS highlighted the following:

- The inspectorate style 'deep-dive' observation activity undertaken in the autumn term had been invaluable in identifying any areas which needed improvement in advance of the February inspection.
- The amber RAG ratings within the Finance section were in relation to High Needs Element 3 funding and HE fees still owing. Governors were assured that work was being undertaken to secure all of this income as soon as possible.
- Other areas RAG rated as amber had already been discussed within the meeting: T Levels and the IoT, and Work Experience.

The Corporate Goals Update report was NOTED and RECEIVED

18. Marketing Strategy Update, Digital Strategy/ Cyber Security Update and GDPR

- **Marketing**

Governors were reminded that Marketing was last discussed with Governors at the October 2021 Governors' Strategy day when the inter-dependence with the Digital and Estate strategies was noted. All three of these would support and drive the Curriculum Strategy. The meeting noted that a further factor had now been introduced by the DfE producing a draft Green Strategy which was due for final publication in April 2022; this had much more emphasis on connecting the curriculum with Green considerations.

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Websites: Recent work on the Marketing Strategy had included a revision of the college websites which had been undertaken with input from a specialist consultant. The meeting was reminded that, at merger, HCUC had retained websites for both Harrow and Uxbridge colleges to maintain local identity while also introducing exposure to the HCUC brand on both sites. The revised Uxbridge site had gone live on 14 March 2022 and would undergo snagging for the first two weeks. Once this snagging was complete the revamp of the Harrow website would follow. Two further websites - HCUC and WLIoT – would then also be reviewed and updated. The new UC site had attracted positive feedback and has been described as “looking more modern” and “easier to navigate”. Searches could now be conducted targeting careers as well as by course; Governors commended this strong focus on destinations.

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External review of HCUC Marketing Strategy: The meeting noted that the external consultant used for the website had been tasked to produce a paper by 28 February 2022 giving observations and recommendations on a college marketing strategy. This gave time for him to interview numerous members of staff ranging from the principalship to those with close contact with students and also those involved with apprenticeships, IoT and employers. The result was a detailed 10-page document which was received on 3 March 2022. This report was titled ‘Routes to Careers’ which again gave a key focus on destinations and end point employability, as required by the DfE Green paper ‘Skills for Jobs’ published in 2021. SLT were currently reviewing this report which contained a useful collection of information, observation and recommendations to move the marketing strategy forward at HCUC.

- **IT Services**

The meeting noted that work since returning from the summer 2021 had been dominated by Ofsted preparation with IT Services needing to react on a continuous basis to evolving needs in curriculum areas as a priority above all other tasks. Whilst working on the HCUC infrastructure the position regarding possible merger with RuTC had also remained a consideration.

Governors noted that the IT Services team restructure was now underway offering higher skilled roles, clear reporting lines, career progression and the opportunity to build a team structure to deliver a centralised support model. The College was currently at the staff consultation stage and if all timings remained on track the restructure would be completed by 1 June 2022. The new post of Director of IT and Digital Innovation (replacing the Head of IT role) would be advertised following the restructure.

The meeting took the remainder of the report as read in relation to increase internet traffic and governors were pleased to note the project tender to increase the Wi-Fi across the Hayes and Uxbridge campuses by nearly 400% with the project due for completion ready for the start of term in September 2022. The new Wi-Fi 6 network would eventually extend across all HCUC campuses delivering connectivity both inside and outside the campus buildings. The meeting was reminded of the stated aim of SLT to install a Wi-Fi network that enabled any space on campus to be turned into a teaching space. It was noted that feedback from students at Harrow on the Hill and Harrow Weald, where the new Wi-Fi network was installed last summer, had been positive.

The meeting discussed the new Digital Signage which had been installed across all four campuses with screens mounted in prominent positions at each college entrance and within the refectories. The screens were installed in time for the OFSTED inspection and allowed the delivery of branded consistent messaging to students. Governors (AP) suggested using the Digital Information Boards to ‘advertise’ employer opportunities – whether jobs or work placements. Principal Harrow took this suggestion as an action and asserted the need for even more digital boards across the four campuses.

Governors were pleased to note that with key projects completed or underway, and the OFSTED inspection completed, IT Services at HCUC would now focus efforts on achieving Cyber Essentials accreditation and the implementation of the ‘lock-down/ shelter in place’ Rapid Reach software.

The Marketing/ IT Update report was NOTED and RECEIVED.

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It was AGREED that the Marketing and Communications Strategy needed to review how information was best delivered via the digital information boards; this needed to be refreshed and should include 'advertising' opportunities with employers.

19. Audit Committee – 10 March 2022

The minutes of the meeting were noted. All items had been brought to the current Corporation meeting. Page | 15

NOTED

20. Resources Committee – 16 March 2022

The Chair (AMcL) confirmed that all matters raised in the meeting had already been considered during the meeting. The minutes of the March meeting would be circulated as soon as available.

NOTED

21. Quality Curriculum and Student Committee – 16 March 2022

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

MRW asked the meeting to consider a recommendation for every FE Corporation to have a member with a strategic focus on Information Advice and Guidance and who also championed employer engagement.

It was AGREED that this would be considered at the April 2022 Governors Strategy Day.

NOTED

22. Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees (SSCs)

The meeting received the minutes from the two college SSCs which had met on 1 March 2022 (Uxbridge SSC) and 2 March 2022 (Harrow SSC). The Principals (DMcT and JW) highlighted the key issues from each of the minutes which the SSC wanted to highlight with Corporation members.

NOTED

23. Feedback to Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees

The CEO reminded the meeting of this new agenda item to improve the flow of communication from the HCUC Corporation to the individual Colleges Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees. After consideration, the meeting agreed that the following key items would be fed-back to the SSCs in advance of the formal Corporation minutes becoming available to SSC members.

- The Ofsted Inspection feedback and subsequent discussions around the 'Good' grade.
- The Gateway updates in relation to the merger with RuTC.
- The strong in-year performance in relation to the KPI Dashboard with high retention. However, areas for improvement were focused on attendance (main programme plus English and maths), Work Experience.

The feedback to the SSCs was AGREED

24. To confirm the dates and times of the meetings for 2021/22

- Wednesday 27 April, Training and Planning Day, (at Denham Grove)
- Tuesday 17 May 2022 at 4.30pm (at Harrow on the Hill)
- Tuesday 12 July 2022 at 4.30pm (at Uxbridge College)

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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25. Any other business as previously notified

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

MINUTE END

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