

# MINUTES

**Directorate:** Governance

**Minutes of:** Quality Curriculum and Student Committee

**Date:** 18 March 2021      **Time:** 4.00

**Venue:** Remote access via Zoom

**Present:**

|                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mariann Rand-Weaver (MRW) | Governor (Chair)          |
| Melissa Bridge (MB)       | Staff Governor            |
| Darrell De Souza (DDS)    | CEO/ Principal & Governor |
| Johanna Morgan (JM)       | Governor                  |
| Amanda Priem (AP)         | Governor                  |

**Apologies:** Paul Walker (PW) Governor

**In attendance:**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Pat Carvalho (PC)      | Deputy CEO/ Principal                                  |
| Dylan McTaggart (DMcT) | Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality                  |
| Tracy Reeve (TR)       | Clerk to the Corporation                               |
| Judith O'Neill (JO'N)  | Director Vocational and HE <i>(item 10 only)</i>       |
| Neil Brayshaw (NB)     | Interim Dir – Employment & Skills <i>(item 7 only)</i> |
| Gavin Hughes (GH)      | Director SEND and Safeguarding                         |

1. **Apologies for absence**  
Apologies had been received from Paul Walker. The meeting was reminded that Paul Walker would be leaving the Corporation at the end of March 2021 when he moved away to take on a new job.  
**NOTED**
2. **Notification of any urgent items members may wish to raise under Any Other Business**  
There were no items of additional business notified.
3. **Notification of Interests Members may wish to declare relating to any item**  
There were no interests declared.
4. **Minutes of the QCS Committee meeting held on 19 November 2020 at Uxbridge College**  
The minutes were approved as presented and would be signed by the Chair. The Chair commended the very comprehensive minutes.
5. **Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting, 19 November 2020, not on the agenda**  
There were no matters arising that were not already on the agenda.  
  
The Chair suggested that due to the very long agenda all 'key points to note' in the reports should be covered off at the start of each agenda item.

## 6.0 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Covid-19 College Response

#### Delivery of Learning 2020/21:

The meeting noted a detailed report which gave Governors an update on all aspects of learning delivery at HCUC during the ongoing pandemic. Governors were assured that the College continued to respond to evolving government guidance. The meeting was reminded that the three-tiered system in place since September 2020 (the College was open and was employing School Bubbles

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and Covid19 mitigation onsite) was replaced on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 by a fourth national lockdown. DM confirmed that from this date the significant majority of Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA) moved back to a remote mode. The most recent guidance had allowed all students to be able to return to on-site education from 8<sup>th</sup> March, and it was now intended that every 16 to 18 student would undertake the majority of their planned hours on site.

DM highlighted that there was a recognition that the college would need to stagger the return of student groups to meet logistical challenges (eg. opportunities for Lateral Flow Testing (LFD) which remained voluntary but was strongly encouraged). Adult learners were also allowed to return on site and SLT were mindful of the need to continue to judge the right balance between on-site and remote delivery for adult students. The overarching principle would be to reducing the number of contacts between students and staff. This would be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining distance between individuals. It was strongly recommend that, as a minimum, the college kept 'year groups' (or for HCUC 'schools') separate from each other during the day but there was no set requirement to make cohorts smaller than normal class size. Masks would also be required to be worn by all including whilst in classes. Governors were assured that the social distancing mitigations and other Covid-19 protocols would not prevent the delivery of a full curriculum offer. The meeting also noted that the College would be required to test staff and students on return using LFD tests; three onsite tests would be followed by an ongoing programme of home testing. The meeting noted that to date there had only been 6 positive LFD tests out of thousands conducted across the college campuses. In only 1 case had this led to a whole class being required to self-isolate. In a conversation earlier in the week DfE had confirmed that they were pleased with HCUC progress with implementing the Covid testing.

DM confirmed that during the period 5<sup>th</sup> January to 8<sup>th</sup> March HCUC pivoted to remote education for the majority of students, with the exception of vulnerable & children of critical worker who were allowed to attend. Lessons were live and provided students with a full timetable. Governors noted the data which demonstrated that HCUC had performed well against the DfE criteria for a strong offer. The Areas for Improvement (AFIs) had been clearly identified and were now included in a College Remote Delivery Checklist/ Action Plan; the governors commended this clear RAG rated assessment of the remote delivery which would be of use in any further lockdowns.

Quality: The meeting noted that HCUC had completed 150 formal observations from September until December 2020 during the School Bubbles onsite window – presenting a TLA profile of 92% (against a target of 86%). DM highlighted that although this evidenced a high volume of strong delivery it needed to be read with a note of caution as it was a significant increase on 2018/19's 85% and had not been externally validated. Management were currently completing a round of ungraded remote-observation drops in which would report strengths and AFIs by school. The meeting took the RAG rated TLA Report as read. Retention remained very high and above the prior year - by 2.5% (UC) and 2.0% (HC). The meeting also noted that the College had completed a remote TLA student survey in February 2021 which presented a positive response though noted several AFIs, (see details in agenda item 6.2).

Access to learning: Both colleges had completed new kit pilots and purchased the *plug in and go* new headset & web-cameras required for mixed model delivery; CPD was provided to support their launch in January 2021. The meeting noted that student *digital poverty* remained a national challenge – HCUC was quick to audit student access to kit and employ a considerable sum of its own funds, bid for and secured money through the College Collaboration Fund to support this need. In January 2021, the College was informed it would receive 613 laptops provided by the DfE; these had just arrived on Monday 15 March. HCUC was proud to have been able to lend 674 IT kit items.

Closing student knowledge-gaps: DM informed the meeting that all vocational areas had developed 'baseline knowledge-gap assessments' to capture the priority gaps in student knowledge

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and the College continued to apply the as much of the £961,000 '16 to 19 tuition fund' as the available staffing resource would support; £190,000 had been used YTD).

## Assessment

DM confirmed that GCSE & A-Levels summer exams 2021 were cancelled, as were Vocational Technical Qualification exams from January to March 2021. However, limited January exams were allowed to continue if the college judged it right to do so; this was important for occupational competence VTQs which could only be fulfilled through practical assessment, 'such as an electrician'. The meeting noted that HCUC had provided a robust response to the two joint DfE-Ofqual consultations on assessment methods for 2020/21. However, the consultation was now complete and the College was concerned that some elements would cause learners to be disadvantaged. Teacher assessed grades for A levels, GCSE and the majority of VTQs would be undertaken in a rigorous and robust fashion – as had been the case in the prior year. However, the decision to continue formal assessments –exams - for ESOL and Functional Skills learners was not supported by HCUC. These learners were some of the most disadvantaged in the college, most likely to be subject to digital poverty and could be very likely to have knowledge gaps due to college closures in 2020/21. DM confirmed that the college continued to lobby on this decision as in a worst case scenario it would limit progression for up to 900 learners. Governors sought confirmation on whether they could do anything to help with the lobbying as this was clearly an unjust situation. DDS confirmed that the critical mass of FE colleges was getting behind the case so there would be little else to do.

Safeguarding learners: Governors were given assurance around this important area from the Director Send and safeguarding (GH). The College teams continued to attend Child in Need, Child Protection Conferences and Looked After Children PEP meetings during lockdown. They shared general wellbeing materials via the College App and VLE with links to relevant materials and support agencies as well as internal support mechanisms as well as dedicated email addresses for students to contact appropriate staff. The College had also delivered tutorial sessions focused specifically on making good progress during lockdown and Mental Health Awareness, coinciding with Children's Mental Health Week. During the lockdown, the Colleges had again worked to ensure that a generic HCUC bursary agreement was in place to ensure vulnerable students continued to receive their weekly payments and Free School Meal entitlement both during term time and half terms. Governors were assured that the staff had prioritised the highest risk students based on attendance, engagement and external factors for those who are deemed as needing regular contact from both Student Services and Curriculum during this period to ensure that they were appropriately supported, chased and monitored. Vulnerable students had been invited into College for support when deemed suitable and also students without ICT resources, or where there was a specific risk to the learner by being at home. The majority of High Needs students had preferred to work remotely during this lockdown.

Enrolment and College Calendar: The meeting noted that through the Ofqual consultations, DfE Results-Days had shifted forward; the meeting was reminded that the usual date would be circa 18<sup>th</sup> August. The date had now been set at 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021 for A levels and 12<sup>th</sup> August for GCSEs; this was to allow time for the volume of appeals that the well-publicised Teacher Assessed Grade appeals process will initiate to be resolved in advance of the beginning of the new academic year. DM highlighted that an unintended but significant consequence of this would be that the GCSE results day would trigger college full enrolment, during what is traditionally the middle of staff leave. DM assured governors that the College aimed to resolve this through a transparent balance between two critical objectives: (i) staff wellbeing and a deserved break given the academic years' challenges, and (ii) the acute need to be open and well prepared for full enrolment in response to a 2020/21 dip in learner numbers within a competitive college context. DDS informed the meeting that plans were being made to allow some staff to take leave earlier in the summer to mitigate any negative impact. Governors commended the largely positive response from staff who were prepared to change their leave window to accommodate the changes. The Whole College Training Day in July would be

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brought forward and limited staff would be able to take leave from 12<sup>th</sup> July so that could be back on site earlier than usual.

The meeting noted that the 2021/22 enrolment would be delivered over four phases:

1. April: advanced enrolment of external offers to *better guarantee* enrolments and ease results day pressure. Some changes of course may be required once results were published.
2. May onwards: enrol internal progressing students
3. From 10<sup>th</sup> August Results Days: a skeletal curriculum team rota supported by agency staff to be in College.
  - 19<sup>th</sup> Aug: full return of All Staff not already returned.
4. 23<sup>rd</sup> August: full enrolment would begin

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Governors commended the flexibility of staff and their willingness to adapt to this last minute change. The Chair sought confirmation on whether the college was expecting to have to do additional work with learners due to gaps in learning arising from the pandemic lockdowns. The CEO (DDS) confirmed that the College would use flexible tuition funds to put additional sessions on where necessary. Rigorous baseline assessments at enrolment would also be very important. Governors also noted that the College was thinking of doing some early work online with learners before term started to try and keep them engaged. The Chair asked SLT to consider the impact of the change within HE applications with a move planned to Post Qualification Applications (PQA). The meeting suggested that this change might suit HCUC as it could be dynamic and respond quickly due to the relatively small number of HE learners.

***It was AGREED that the impact of the change to PQA for Higher Education on HCUC should be considered (JO'N).***

## • **National Skills Funding**

The meeting noted a paper presented by the Deputy CEO (PC) which looked at the likely impact of the recent DfE White Paper, 'Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth'. The focus for this White Paper was clearly on level 3 and above with employers steering skills and qualifications – in relation to skills for jobs - in partnership with the FE sector. The paper outlined the key aspects that would have an impact on the current year as well as planning for 2021/22. The Deputy Principal (PC) informed the meeting that this item had been considered in detail at the recent Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees at each of the colleges.

Local Skills Improvement Plans would be led by accredited Chambers of Commerce or equivalent recognised organisations and other stakeholders (e.g. local authorities and in west London West London Alliance and West London Business). PC highlighted that since the publication of the White Paper the DfE was now emphasising the role of mayoral combined authorities as well as the Chambers. Additional clarity would be needed on the definition of 'local' - was it at the borough or sub-regional level. Governors were assured that HCUC had strong relationships with its Boroughs, and Chambers (Hillingdon) less so in Harrow (covers both Harrow and Brent). It had also built up a good reputation with West London Alliance and with West London Business. Institutes of Technology are also seen as part of the future higher skills landscape with the current Wave 2 applications now underway in 'blackspot' areas across England.

National Skills Fund: The meeting noted an initial update on the following proposed initiatives to take forward skills development post Covid-19:

### i) Adult Entitlement

This will start from 2025 and provide adults with the equivalent of 4 years funding over their life-time. The DfE intends to explore modularisation/ flexible delivery and how it can be funded in the future e.g., credit based system and blended/ online delivery. This should have a significant impact on adults being able to do substantive/modular qualifications to retrain/upskill.



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## ii) Level 3 Offer

This specific offer was to provide adults aged 24+ with the opportunity to study substantial programmes (Award to Diploma) in specific sectors. There was currently 400 approved qualifications. Funding would commence from April 2021 until March 2022. HCUC was currently investigating what might be feasible from April but would plan for more significant delivery from September.

## iii) College Business Centres (CBC)

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The concept of the CBC is to create Centres that would focus on specific sector/s acting as demonstrator centres for innovation for employers as well as building up local market intelligence and providing other business services to employers e.g. signposting to training either within its own college or other colleges. There would be a small number of pilots to develop CBC before a wider roll out. Pilots were likely to start July this year after a tender process. For HCUC this would be a good opportunity to support industry digitisation which would enable HCUC to support SMEs across a wide range of sectors. The CEO highlighted that this focus on digitisation of all industries would suit HCUC and its curriculum but the work would have a long lead time. This CBC concept also aligned well with the WLIoT and would strengthen the position and reputation of this IoT in west London. PC confirmed that discussions on this subject had already commenced with the West London Alliance about being involved in the pilot project.

## iv) Strategic Development Fund: pilot projects for IoTs

DfE indicated that will be supporting ring-fenced projects for IoTs. The first of these was a pilot project led by High Value Manufacturing Catapult to work with employers and develop modules to meet skills gaps in targeted sectors. DfE funding for this project would be £1m between now and November 2021. Another project will be an opportunity for IoTs to deliver shorter programmes for in-work adults. This is based on research DfE has done with employers who are saying will upskill employees rather than recruit. The total value of the project would be £10m. Potentially, one of the outcomes will be to test a credit based model. There was potential for capital spend but it was unclear if any of this will be ring-fenced to IoTs. The meeting agreed that the explicit focus on the IoTs within the White paper was a positive thing; they would be a central plank to all the employer-focused collaborative work moving forward. The meeting noted that College SLT and Brunel University staff had met recently to look at the curriculum development for the IoT.

## v) GLA – AEB Good Work for All Opportunities

There were two bids that HCUC would be involved in. The first as a delivery partner in the bid to deliver green skills using the Mayor's Construction Academy as the partnership. The second would be led by HCUC on behalf of the North West London Health and Care Partnership covering Health and Care and Digital. One option is to establish an 'Academy' representing a hub and spoke model. This would be both virtual using FE college campuses and within Trusts. All still to be discussed.

The meeting agreed that the new focus on establishing local collaboration and solutions would bring more meaning to the offer for learners. DDS highlighted the rich data available to drive this work forward and the way in which the IoT Employer Advisory Group were adding real value in the work to shape the curriculum.

### • **Partnership and Projects Report**

The meeting took this report as read; it would be discussed at the Governing Body meeting on 30 March 2021. PC highlighted the ongoing high activity, especially in relation to the level 4 and 5 curriculums. However, employer hesitancy continued around the programmes for the unemployed and the College was behind targets for this work but working to catch-up. The meeting also noted that a detailed presentation on this area of work and the White Paper would be on the agenda for the 28 April 2021 Governors Strategy & Training Day.

***The Covid-19 Update Report was RECEIVED***

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## 6.2 Spring 'Remote Delivery' Learner Survey

The Director SEND and Safeguarding (GH) presented this paper. As previously discussed in the meeting the Remote Learner Survey had been issued to all students at HCUC in order to capture their experiences in relation to their remote lessons during the January/February 2021 lockdown. This was an in-depth survey allowing the college to capture feedback on a number of aspects of remote learning provision including: How learners accessed lessons; Systems used to access lessons; Support provided by their teachers; and Students' overall satisfaction with their remote learning. The survey had taken place between January 25<sup>th</sup> and February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and there were a total of 3,571 FT responses, (1,143 from Harrow and 2,428 from Uxbridge). This was the first in-depth analysis of remote learning at HCUC as last year the College undertook its Annual Spring Survey where there were some questions in relation to remote learning provision.

The meeting noted that the survey showed that the majority of HCUC learners (58%) used laptops to access their remote lessons. However, a significant number of learners used their mobile devices to access lessons (33%), with the rest use Chromebooks. Approximately 2% of participants stated they had difficulty in accessing their IT equipment, as discussed already this was being addressed by the College's IT department and Schools. In relation to systems used across HCUC there was a split between the use of Zoom (45%) and Google Meet (48%). However, there was a clear difference between Harrow and Uxbridge in relation to proportionality of the systems used. GH highlighted the positive results which had emerged; 94% of learners said that the resources provided by their teachers were helpful. In relation to progress within lessons, 89% of learners said they made progress in their lessons via question and answers (despite lockdown) and 84% via classroom discussions. 98% of learners said they knew they had to complete their studies so they can achieve their qualification. Slightly less positive and flagged for ongoing action, 77% said they found that the feedback they received was helpful and 80% were happy with interactions with their teachers and their peers. This clearly indicated that students had missed coming onto campus. The Chair commended the strong response rate to a remote survey and the positive feedback; it was a really good reflection of all the hard work put into online delivery by the HCUC staff. Governors sought any benchmarking data from other colleges and were informed that HCUC had delivered a higher proportion of live lessons than many other London FE colleges. The meeting discussed the ongoing impact on staff of remote delivery and the need for them to change their lesson preparation. Staff Governor (MB) informed the meeting that the desire to deliver excellent lessons online meant that there was an impact on time available for marking but staff had stepped up to this. MB asserted that during the second recent lockdown staff were much better prepared to deliver interactive lessons online as they were more proficient with the technology. It had been hard work but staff feedback had been that they to some extent enjoyed the challenge of developing a new skillset.

Finally, in relation to satisfaction with remote learning, 80% said that they were satisfied with remote learning. Analysis of the Survey across the curriculum areas showed variations in terms of learner satisfaction. Upon close analysis of the data, HC had a greater number of Entry level and Level 1 learners (18%) of the sample size in comparison to UC (12%) of sample size and there were higher satisfaction rates within this cohort. Both HC (59%) and UC (60%) had a similar percentage of Level 3 respondents and they had lower satisfaction rates as their courses were more demanding as were their learners' expectations. In addition, learners undertaking practical subjects e.g. Construction, EngME and EngTI had missed practical components of their courses and this was reflected.

***The results of the Spring 2021 Learner Survey were NOTED.***

## 6.3 Technical Levels/ Capacity Development Fund (CDF)/ Transition & related projects

- T Levels update

Uxbridge College: Governors were pleased to note that the two T Levels groups recruited in September 2020 had retained all learners to date (Digital 11, Early Years Education 13). Curriculum teams had developed schemes of work and resources but delivery was being impacted by both the

current lockdown and not having the full employer engagement which the qualification design intends. DM highlighted the issue around work placements: three placements had been secured for Digital but these were unable to start as the DfE would not sanction the use of remote placements; eight further placements needed to be secured. In Early Years five Significant Industry Placements (SIPs) had started, with a further five ready to start once lockdown restrictions were lifted; three placements still needed to be secured. The meeting noted that a significant proportion of the placement hours for both T Levels would need to be delivered in the second year of the programme. Governors noted the ongoing lobbying being undertaken to shift the exams into Year 2 along with the majority of placement hours; this would be pedagogically undesirable and highly stressful for learners. The meeting noted that preparations were underway for the second year of T levels at Uxbridge. There had been 12 applications for the second Digital cohort starting in Sept 2021 and 17 applications to Early Years. The meeting discussed the ongoing issue around SIPs and governors expressed concern around the lack of control that the College had over employer decisions. The Deputy CEO highlighted the work being undertaken to have clear structured conversations with employers around their vision of demand e.g. Thames Water.

Harrow College: Full specifications for Digital and Science had now been approved by Ofqual and released. Example Schemes of Work (SoW) had been published by NCFE for Science but not Digital, this was expected in February. Curriculum teams at Harrow had been given remission to start developing resources; a provisional SoW has been developed for the Science T Level.

The meeting was pleased to note that 3 placements had been secured for the next two years for Digital with 12 left to secure. Three of the placements were in Hospital Medical Libraries for Science, but commercial lab experience was needed. The meeting was assured that the T Level Implementation plan was on track and regular T Level meetings were being held with curriculum staff and the T Level Implementation group. A T level page had also been created on the Harrow College website which contained a bespoke advertising video created for HCUC.

- **Capacity Development Fund (CDF3)**

It had now been confirmed by the DfE that there would be no clawback of CDF2 funds (c £187k) and that an interim return in March 2021 was not required. As remote placements had not been permitted during the lockdown period, the CDF3 funded staff were focused on supporting a wide range of activities to maintain employer engagement and develop students' employability skills. (There is a strong link here with cross College study programme work experience). The meeting was reminded that over 500 students (311 at Uxbridge and 192 at Harrow) were now involved with the CDF, all had received at least 8 hours of 'student readiness' training which prepares them for a SIP. The DfE target had been 499 learners. Where safe and appropriate, CDF students had been able to continue placements during the pandemic and had been given additional COVID safe training.

- **Transition Programme update**

The meeting was reminded that two Digital Transition Programmes and one Early Years Transition programme were running during 2020/21. The focus had been on enhancing both academic and pastoral elements of existing Level 2 programmes to support transition to T Levels; DfE had now confirmed that T Level Transition Programme students won't be included in the Qualification Achievement Rates for academic year 2020 to 2021. Transition programmes in Engineering (Uxbridge), Business (Harrow) and Science (Harrow) had been planned and staff had attended initial training from ETF. An implementation plan for the T-Level Transition Programme was being developed for each area with first actions starting in March 2021.

- **Study programme Work Experience (WEX)**

The meeting was reminded that Covid-19 had meant that flexibilities surrounding Virtual WEX (VWEX) had been introduced for study programme work experience. This had actually allowed large numbers of students (often 100+) to work with high quality employers at the same time and had given

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HCUC students opportunities that could not easily be accessed through 'normal' WEX. Governors commended the expansion of VWEX at Harrow beyond the CDF groups; all L3 Business students were being offered a week of VWEX with companies such as GE and Citi bank and Level 1 and 2 Business students would do a half day of Barclays Life-skills. Approximately 41% of 16-18 HCUC students were expected to complete some form of WEX. The data by College was noted as follows:

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| College      | Total WEX placements recorded | Current %  | Planned     | Current Projected % | 16-18 Enrolments |
|--------------|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------|
| HC           | 64                            | 4%         | 950         | 62%                 | 1532             |
| UC           | 578                           | 14%        | 1385        | 34%                 | 4135             |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>642</b>                    | <b>11%</b> | <b>2335</b> | <b>41%</b>          | <b>5667</b>      |

The Chair (MRW) commended the range of activity that the College was seeking to be involved in; she highlighted the ongoing commitment for the SLT to ensure that the College seized every opportunity. However, MRW also cautioned against SLT spreading resources too thinly in what was currently a challenging environment. Other governors agreed that HCUC was showing its dynamism and ongoing commitment to always looking for new opportunities and not standing still. NB highlighted the need for HCUC to stay ahead of local competition in gaining access to new initiatives.

***The report was NOTED***

## 7. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

### 7.1 Higher Education (HE) Report

#### • HE Spring Report

The meeting noted the detailed HE Report which contained details of OfS compliance requirements as well as in-year performance data. Jo'N who was the senior manager responsible for HE joined the meeting.

#### Conditions of OfS Registration

The HE report provided a clear overview of what would be required for OfS compliance purposes so that HCUC could remain on the Register of English HE Providers. The meeting took the detail of action against each of the 8 conditions of registration as read. The schedule of reporting to Governors in order to meet the conditions of registration was noted by the meeting.

#### Progress against OfS Conditions

This meeting noted an in-year summary of progress against the Office for Students (OfS) conditions of registration.

#### **Condition A - Access and Participation**

Progress towards meeting College Access and Participation Statement 2020/21 actions was noted as follows.

- HE leaders had identified all Black students (25 across HCUC) on their programmes, have had pastoral meetings with all and keeping closely in touch with those deemed at risk of not achieving their qualification this year.
- HCUC has been allocated £23,343 by the OFS to support HE learners facing hardship due to Covid-19; 61 students have made an application to the HE Covid hardship fund.
- A meeting had been held to further enhance marketing of the IOT (STEM) HE courses to female students. Actions agreed included: a focus group with female staff teaching on STEM across HCUC and a promotional video.
- Remote HE Fair planned for April 2021



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- College hosting Industrial Cadet –STEM event Tuesday 26 May, for local year 10 and 11 – female students particularly encouraged to attend.
- Due to COVID, most schools had postponed their careers fairs and were offering a limited online opportunity for the college; to date 7 events were scheduled. Working with marketing the IAG team has sent out a virtual flyer with online links to HCUC courses & resources for students to all schools in Hillingdon and Ealing areas

## **Condition B- Quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students**

### **Condition B1**

#### Complaints

There had been no formal HE complaints received to date. .

#### Student feedback

The meeting noted the summary feedback from the remote learning survey. The following points were highlighted to QCS governors:

- Harrow ICT, Hayes and Uxbridge Computing, Uxbridge Travel consistently high scores throughout. Their strength is support provided by staff during and outside timetabled sessions.
- Uxbridge Business and Engineering had some lower scores. Students indicated some staff less responsive than others.
- Uxbridge Construction consistently low scores throughout - prioritised for early return to onsite delivery
- Scores for quality of feedback and interaction similar across most - but rated 100% by Harrow HND Computing. This good practice would be shared at a forthcoming HEPC.
- 17% overall accessing via mobiles. This is being followed up to see if this has caused any issues. High spec laptops which are able to run specialist software have been issued to approximately 30 HE students and also some staff who required them.

Feedback from HE student reps had included:

- Almost all HE students understood that they must complete all of their units and assignments this year as currently there was no option for calculated or teacher assessed grades
- Almost all accept that remote delivery for some of this year had been the only possible approach
- A large minority think that completing work remotely is more difficult - there are a variety of reasons for this - so they should get some consideration for this (e.g. more time)
- Most want to return to face to face delivery as soon as it was safe to do so and so want clear and timely messages about this

### **Condition B2 & B3**

The meeting was reminded that Conditions B2 and B3 related to support for all students from admission to progression (B2) and outcomes for all students (B3).

Retention to date: HC Higher National (HN) 100%, UC HN 98% HCUC HN 98%, TT 100%, HCUC overall 98%

There has been close attention paid to the delivery of programmes during remote learning. Feedback received via the remote survey, from student reps and direct to tutors was being responded to as far as circumstances allowed.

In order to ensure learning points were clear through remote sessions, an additional “seminar” type session had been made available linked to each HN assignment to ensure any lost learning and/or questions can be addressed.

### **Condition B4 & B5**

All teams had been informed of their Pearson External Examiner allocation and were in the process of agreeing visit dates and samples.

### **Condition B6**

No update – awaiting Government response from review of TEF.

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## Condition C

The Office for Students (OfS) contacted all HE providers in January 2021 to request that the College undertook a self-assessment of our compliance with consumer protection law. JO'N confirmed that a review of the areas outlined by the OfS has been undertaken (the meeting noted the assessment of compliance at appendix one to the HE Report). The meeting noted that on 16 March SLT had reported to the Resources Committee of the Corporation - which oversees Condition C - that Governors could be assured that the College has continued to be compliant with consumer protection law during this period. ***It was AGREED that this assurance from Resources Committee in relation to condition C1 would be taken to the Governing Body on 30 March 2021.***

### • HE Programmes Committee activity and Developments

The meeting was reminded that there was now one HE Programme Committee for HCUC with Harrow colleagues joining the Uxbridge group for meetings. This was enabling good practice to be shared across the group for HE. Governors noted that recently the group had focussed on:

- Strategies to improve outcomes for Black students
- The allocation of bursary and Covid 19 hardship funding
- Understanding the impact of Brexit on EU students'/applicants' status to ensure they are eligible to study HE at HCUC.
- Ensuring the quality of HE remote delivery
- Marketing and applications for 21/22

### • HE Curriculum Development

The following new HE courses were planned for 2020/21:

- ENGTI - Civil Engineering (IOT)
- ENGME – General Engineering HND (IOT)
- CIT – Cyber Security HND (IOT)
- CIT – Cyber Computing HNC (IOT)

### • Access to HE Retention and Predicted Achievements

The meeting noted the detailed learner progress and performance on this programme area which had been considered in more detail at the local SSCs. The current retention rate was 96% across HCUC with predicted achievement within a range of 83-87.5%. Governors were assured that HC and UC had been closely monitoring learner progress and performance on these programmes. Action to maximise both retention and achievement of retained learners had been discussed and agreed and was now being implemented.

***The HE Report was NOTED.***

## 7.2 In-year HCUC KPIs

### • KPI Dashboard

The meeting considered the data dashboard for Governors which showed in year performance against the Key Performance Indicators for 2020/21 split by Student Progress, TL&A, and Student Experience. The meeting noted the summary dashboard which provided year-to-date (YTD) performance 2020/21 for HCUC, HC and UC for the following metrics: Enrolment, attendance and lateness, Retention, Work Based Learning (WBL) updates, Employability (work experience), Lesson Observations, Complaints, Disciplinarys and survey data. The meeting noted that this dashboard had also been presented at each of the Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees (SSCs). The meeting noted the following aspects of performance:

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## YTD performance against target for attendance 2020/21

- Attendance overall at 86% for 16-18 and 87% for 19+, against the 86% target; this was likely to fall further by year-end. Attendance during lockdown had held at 83%. There was variation within certain Schools, monitored at SSC/ SLT level and followed up on a weekly basis.
- There were significant strategies in place that were regularly reviewed and refreshed across HC & UC to meet underperformance. Despite these, 16-18 attendance at cross-college English (76%) and maths (77%) continued to be below that of the substantial vocational course provision.

## Retention YTD was high

- Retention across both ages was well above national average (NA) – 97.6% and 98.1% - and marginally higher than YTD 2019/20. This was being closely monitored within the Corporate Goals.
- HE retention was holding at 100% which was looking very positive.

## Teaching Learning and Assessment

- There had been 170 lesson observations (not externally validated) with 93% at Exceeds or Meets expectations (against a College target of 86%). As discussed earlier this figure need to be treated with a degree of caution.

## Complaints 2020/21

- A detailed complaints report had been presented at HC & UC SSCs.
- There had been 10 formal complaints in total to date at HCUC, 5 had been upheld. This was on a par with the prior year.
- The meeting was assured that complaints were being dealt with in a timely manner. It was highlighted that two complaints at Uxbridge were currently judged as posing a legal or financial risk to the institution.

## Disciplinary

- The meeting was pleased to note that the number of disciplinarys (45) was significantly below the YTD figure 2019/20 (72) and that exclusions (10) were also below the prior year figure (19).

## Learner satisfaction 2020/21

- Governors were reminded that a positive set of learner survey results were reported in spring 2021 with 80% overall satisfaction.

The meeting also noted the headline statements beneath the KPI Dashboard which provided additional detail. DMcT reminded the meeting that, where appropriate, the data feeding the dashboard would be supplied as 'optional reading' appendix papers. In this way, QCS members should be able to build a clear picture of how the College was performing against the targets set and progress in 2020/21.

## ***The KPI Dashboard 2020/21 was NOTED and RECEIVED***

### ***Spotlight on HCUC Work-based Learning (WBL) progress YTD***

Interim Director Employment and Skills (NB) joined the meeting to present the WBL progress report. The detailed data on new starts and recruitment was noted for each of the colleges. NB highlighted that recruitment was lower than the same time in the prior year due to the pandemic. Nationally, Apprenticeship starts were down by 27.6% for the first quarter. In total 105 vacancies had been withdrawn by employers or Apprentice withdrawals: the breakdown by area was Childcare/Dental 45%, Electric/Plumbing 13%, Accounting 11%, Engineering 10%, others 15%. Reasons cited had included Covid 19, lack of suitable candidates, chosen another provider, employers not responding, career change, unable to progress plumbing learners from full time course to an apprenticeship due to more than 50% prior learning. The College was working hard to maintain employer engagement during this difficult time and the meeting commended the ongoing activity which was detailed in the report. Governors were assured that the College Business Development Consultants were keeping in touch with their employers and supporting them with setting up DAS Accounts etc. NB confirmed

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that as the country was moving out of lockdown the apprenticeship opportunities were starting to come back. During April the College had secured more than 25 additional WBL opportunities that were not included in the pipeline; these were in dental, engineering and HR.

- **2020/21 Predictions**

The meeting was pleased to note that overall WBL retention was + 3.8% on this time last year. Uxbridge was 1% higher and Harrow was considerably higher at +19.8%. A lot of work had gone into the IAG for apprentices to ensure that they were on the right programme. NB highlighted that the predictions were subject to change, as furloughed Apprentices could face redundancy. Those made redundant were allowed 12 weeks to find an employer and/ or achieve their apprenticeship. Those who become unemployed would be withdrawn immediately and reinstated once another employer is found within 30 days. The meeting was reminded that the College would need to keep a close watch on this when the furlough scheme ended during the autumn term 2021. If they remained withdrawn, this would obviously have a negative impact on retention and achievement. Current predictions for HCUC were overall achievement Min 70.4% to Max 79.6% (the provider average – PNA - figure was 68.7%). Timely achievement was predicted at Min 48.3% to Max 71.1% (PNA at 59.6%). The meeting was pleased to note that the Minimum Standards threshold was not likely to be breached. The CEO sought and was given assurance that the WBL Team were monitoring every group on an individual basis to ensure that the minimum standard threshold would not be breached as there was no indication from DfE that any additional leeway would be given to reflect the negative impact of the pandemic .

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The meeting took the information on the various employability courses that had been run to date and the ongoing recruitment activity as read. Activity was down on the prior year at 20 courses (33 in prior year) and 150 learners (311 prior year). However, the college had now moved to an online blended model of delivery which better suited the adult learners; some learners were onsite and some remote. This flexibility was working well. The meeting discussed the impact of Jobcentre closures but was assured that the link were now stronger with Uxbridge and Hayes. The plans for 'sector based work academies' with interviews and work opportunities as a final step were noted. The Jobcentre Youth Hub work – for the 16-24 age group - would link into College Business Centres.

**The WBL Update Report was NOTED**

### 7.3 Proposed merger with Richmond Upon Thames (RuTC) College

The meeting noted a report from the CEO which gave an update on the key activities already underway as well as those which would be completed pre-merger.

- **Joint Steering Group (JSG) meetings** continued and had focused on the Public Consultation document, Workstream activity, Risk Register, Legal & Financial Due Diligence, the proposed Senior (Executive) structure and the process for establishing the governance structure.
- **Governors Vision & Culture workshop 1** brought Governors up to date on key the basis for the proposed merger, Workstream activity progress and critical timeline activity. DDS reminded the meeting that Workshop 2 (26 April 2021) would allow for more in-depth discussion.
- **Legal due diligence and Financial due diligence** was now completed and had been discussed by both Boards and at JSG – importantly, no critical red flags preventing merger. The risk areas had been considered at previous governing body meetings.
- **Public Consultation:** JSG and both Governing Bodies had approved the public consultation document for publication; this would be launched on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March. The consultation period would close on 3<sup>rd</sup> May and a response would be published by 14<sup>th</sup> June.
- **HCUC 'All Staff' Zoom meeting:** was scheduled for Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March and would be accompanied by a special bulletin focused on the merger and including FAQs.



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- **Student conferences:** at both Colleges were scheduled for w/c 29<sup>th</sup> March with a focus on merger and again will contain FAQs'; student responses would be fed into the consultation process.
- **Human Resources:** Letters confirming merger intent were due to be issued to the Trade Unions by Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March. **TUPE consultation** was scheduled to commence on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April and would be led by both Principals with HR directorate support.
- **Senior (Executive) Structure:** would be discussed at JSG and presented to HCUC Remuneration Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> March for approval. Recommendations would then be taken to the Corporation meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March. DDS confirmed that the planned schedule would see an internal (ring-fenced) selection process, early to mid-May and completed by the end of May, with successful candidates due to commence their new roles on 30<sup>th</sup> July to coincide with the planned merger date.
- **Governance and Stakeholder group structures:** Discussion and searches had commenced to agree the make-up of the new Governing body, with an intent to ensure critical skills sets were represented, and which also reflected the diverse and inclusive nature of the three Colleges and their communities. The meeting noted that 4-6 RuTC Governors were expected to be added to the current HCUC Governing body make up.
- A local **RuTC Stakeholder & Scrutiny Committee:** would also be formed to mirror HSSC and USSC and which will allow other current RUTC Governors to retain involvement in RUTC, as non-executive advisers (NEAs) along with other interested stakeholders.

Governors commended the progress made to date and the strong focus on the new college vision and culture post-merger. DDS confirmed that the fortnightly Merger Workstream meetings were bringing managers from each college together on a regular basis and were helping to build a new culture for the post-merger organisation. The meeting noted the current intent to share the development of ICT, STEM and engineering across the three colleges. Governors discussed any likely curriculum rationalisation but this would need to be tempered against the relatively wide geography of the new West London arc. DDS highlighted the focus on course viability and ongoing efficiency that was already in place across HCUC but would need to be extended into RuTC after merger. The meeting was pleased to hear that this matter would be discussed in more detail at the second combined Governors' Culture and Vision Workshop to be held in April 2021.

**The merger update was NOTED**

## 8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

### 8.0 **To receive FOR INFORMATION:**

*The meeting received the following detailed documents which were provided to give Governors full assurance around all aspects of underlying quality across HCUC. The reports were taken as read with QCS Committee Members given the chance to ask further questions or comment where appropriate.*

### 8.1 **Corporate Goals**

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 Corporate Goals progress reflected the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and also further alignment of common HCUC KPIs that each College was working towards. The detailed commentary now prioritised the HCUC joint perspective but with some flexibility to account for the local Harrow or Uxbridge context. The front page now clearly focussed on the '3 Is' within the Ofsted Education and Inspection Framework. DDS also highlighted the following factors:

- Quality of Education (previously TL&A) had been further refined to incorporate the rise in importance of remote learning delivery as a result of Covid-19. The latter would be gauged

mainly by learner survey with formal graded observations still being conducted when classes were run on-site.

- Until Ofsted Inspections returned, less reliance was being placed on external validation of observations. 'Drop-ins' continued as a further means of gauging and improving the quality of teaching and learning. DDS confirmed that although a full Ofsted Inspection for HCUC this academic year was previously thought of as not likely this had now changed and the College was being put back on high alert. Governors would be given additional briefing at the April 2021 Training and Planning Day.
- The Finance & Funding section was now amended to reflect the impact of the pandemic and additional sources of funding. The funding picture following enrolment 2020/21, was now clearer; this had confirmed the downward pressure on 16-18, HE and apprenticeship numbers this year. Governors noted that although current raised applications 2021/22 pointed to some level of recovery next year, there was clearly a need for cautious budgeting and sensible efficiency measures to be put into place.
- Under responsiveness and compliance, the focus was on Government backed projects. These being, Institute of Technology (IoT), T-level pilots and associated substantial Industry Placements, Mayor's Construction Academy (MCA) and activity linked to the newly available CV19 London economic recovery projects. Amber ratings relate to the adverse Covid-19 impact resulting in disrupted HE marketing and reduced employer engagement.

***The Corporate Goals Update was NOTED***

**8.2 TL&A Report**

This report was taken as useful background reading – much of the detail had already been considered earlier in the meeting

***The report was NOTED***

**8.3 QAR Tables HCUC March 2021**

These reports were taken as read as performance data – prior year and current year - had already been discussed in previous agenda items.

***The report was NOTED***

**8.4 2019/20 Final HCUC Self-Assessment Report (SAR) – published edition**

The meeting noted the final version of the HCUC Self-Assessment Report (SAR), as approved by the Corporation on 8 December 2020. DMcT confirmed that this had been uploaded to the ESFA portal and the Ofsted gateway so was now in the public domain.

***NOTED***

**8.5 2020/21 Subject Sector Area SAR Tier 2 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**

The detailed reports for each college which detailed summary grades and progress against areas for improvement (Afl) 2020/21 by curriculum area on 11 March 2021 were taken as read.

***The report was NOTED.***

**8.6 English and maths Report**

Taken as read

***The report was NOTED.***

**8.7 HCUC Student feedback**

The Student Council report was noted and taken as read – Student Feedback was previously discussed under item 6.2.

***The report was NOTED.***

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## 8.8 HCUC Equality & Diversity Report

The meeting took the report as read but was pleased to note that 4 of the 5 key areas being monitored were rated as green for progress and on track for completion by the year end. The amber action in relation to disproportionate number of 'Disciplinary – Black Caribbean/Black African learners'. DM highlighted the 'Supporting Black Caribbean student's project' which was aiming to bring Black Caribbean student's achievement in line with other learner groups. This project provided mentors for individual students. With the support of all mentors, the aim was to ensure that all BC students received the appropriate support in order to achieve good success/achievement. There were 18 mentors in place across HCUC, each supporting approximately 6 learners. All mentors had managed to complete action plans for those learners in each school whose attendance was less than 80% attendance. The meeting noted the current retention and attendance data for this learner group as: HC students was 99.2% (16-18), 96% (19+), attendance 82.9%; UC was 94.3% (16-18) and 96% (19+) and 79.4% attendance; and the College average retention was 98%, attendance 86.4%

***The meeting NOTED the report and commended the positive action plan.***

## 8.9 SEND Update

The QCS Committee took this detailed report as read; it provided the year-to-date information for 2020/21 for this growing area of provision. The CEO reminded the meeting of the importance and scale of this area of work at the College; HCUC now had 485 High Needs learners. Specialist Element 1, 2 and 3 High Needs funding for learners would be at £6.6m for 2020/21 at the College; this was estimated to remain the same in 2021/22.

***The report was NOTED***

## 8.10 Summary of Staff Focus Group Feedback

The meeting received the report which provided detailed feedback from the recent staff focus group which had been held on 25 January 2021 via MS Teams; 36 Managers from across both colleges had attended. The range of topics covered, were as follows: Time management and barriers to fulfilling the job role; Communications; Learner impact/ culture & ethos; Lesson observations; Teaching & learning hour; Study programmes, including English & maths; Ofsted Inspection; Student attendance & punctuality; People management; Career development; Staff training; E- learning; IT resources; Quality/Improving the quality of TL&A; Wellbeing, College values. The meeting took the detailed report outlining staff feedback as read. Areas where lecturers had provided positive feedback at each of the Colleges were noted as well as the areas that had been flagged as needing action or consideration. Governors were assured that an action plan was in place to address the areas for improvement and that this was being closely monitored by the SLT; this ensured that management was taking appropriate action in response to staff feedback. The meeting noted that this report had also been discussed at Resources Committee (16/03/21) with the HR Director present

***The report was NOTED.***

## 8.11 Ofsted preparations

DM presented an updated version of the Governors' 'Bite-Sized SAR' to enable Governors to prepare for any impending Ofsted inspection. It was noted that Ofsted Briefing would also be covered at the Governors' strategy day in April 2021.

***The report was NOTED.***

## 9. Minutes of Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees (SSCs), Harrow College & Uxbridge College

The minutes of the SSC meetings held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 at Uxbridge College and 3<sup>rd</sup> March at Harrow College were RECEIVED. Feedback from Governors, SSC Members and management asserted the ongoing success of the SSC meetings that enabled a focus on detailed performance data at each of the colleges.

***The minutes were RECEIVED.***

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## 10. To confirm and agree the dates and times of QCS Committee meetings for 2020/21

The dates and times of the meetings was noted as follows: Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 4.00pm

The venue for these meetings was likely to be remote access via Zoom but if access to campuses could be restored QCS would revert to meet at the Uxbridge Campus at Park Road.

**NOTED**

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## 11. Feedback to Governing Body meeting

The following items were agreed as highlights of the meeting:

- Governors should recognise the strength of the SLT and all staff in seizing all opportunities for HCUC to be better and to be involved in all new initiatives where they would serve the College and its learners well.
- Ongoing challenge of sourcing work placements for T Levels as the post-Covid recovery continued; the reliance on employers was proving frustrating.
- Learner survey had given a strong response; much of which was down to staff growing more proficient in the delivery of online learning.
- Staff had been selfless and flexible in agreeing to change their leave window in summer 2021 to accommodate the changed A Level and GCSE results days/ start of HCUC enrolment 2021/22.

## 12. Any other business

### • Departure of Deputy CEO/ Principal Harrow

Governors highlighted that they wished to formally thank Pat Carvalho for her input to HCUC, Harrow College and specifically QCS Committee and the Harrow SSC over the last 4 years. She would be missed when she left HCUC in May 2021 and all present wished her well in her new role as CEO of Birmingham Metropolitan College.

There was no other business. The meeting closed at 6.10pm.

Signed.....

Date.....