

**HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION**  
**CORPORATION MEETING**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Harlow College –  
Thursday 7 July 2022 - 9.30am**

|             |                        |                     |                   |
|-------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Membership: | * Liz Laycock (Chair)  | Ya'Eesh Ghodiwala   | * Brian Spencer   |
|             | * Sotirios Adamopoulos | * Eddie Johnson     | * Karen Spencer   |
|             | * Paul Bartlett        | Brian Keane         | * Paul Taylor     |
|             | Jon Bouffler           | * Ray Levy          | * Michael Travers |
|             | Rod Bristow            | * Lily Lin          | * Dawn Turner     |
|             | * Julia Fillary        | Maksymilian Peikert |                   |

\* denotes present

In attendance: Will Allanson, Deputy Principal  
Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal  
Becky Jones, Vice-Principal  
Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance  
Sallyann Abdelmoula, Assistant Principal (agenda item 12 only)  
Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Jon Bouffler and Rod Bristow, due to work commitments, Brian Keane, due to personal reasons, and Maksymilian Peikert, due to being on holiday.

## **2 Declaration of Interests**

Michael Travers declared an interest in agenda item 10.1.2 – Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Policy as he is the College's Health and Safety Manager.

## **3 Search Committee Update**

### **3.1 Minutes of the Search Committee Meeting – 21 June 2022**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 21 June 2022.

### **3.2 Membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation**

The Search Committee recommended the appointment of Dawn Turner from Price Bailey, as a Governor of Harlow College Further Education for a period of four years, commencing on 7 July 2022. Dawn Turner will be a member of the Audit Committee.

The Search Committee recommended the appointment of Rachel Miller from Stansted Airport Ltd, as a Governor of Harlow College Further Education for a

period of four years, commencing on 1 August 2022. Rachel Miller will be a member of the Resources Committee.

The Search Committee recommended the reappointment of Lily Lin, as a Governor of Harlow College Further Education for a period of four years, commencing on 1 August 2022.

The Corporation noted that a director of a local SME is joining the Stansted Airport Advisory Group and is interested in finding out more about the role of a Governor.

Liz Laycock thanked the Student Governors and Paul Bartlett for their contribution to the Corporation as this was their last meeting.

The Corporation unanimously approved the Search Committee's recommendations and Dawn Turner was appointed as Governor of Harlow College Further Education for a period of four years, commencing on 7 July 2022, Rachel Miller was appointed as Governor of Harlow College Further Education for a period of four years, commencing on 1 August 2022 and Lily Lin was reappointed as Governor of Harlow College Further Education for a period of four years, commencing on 1 August 2022.

Dawn Turner joined the meeting and introduced herself to the Corporation.

#### **4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2022 were approved by the Corporation as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

#### **5 Matters Arising**

##### **5.1 Strategic Development Fund Application (minute 6 – Principal's Report refers)**

The Corporation was informed that the College has received a letter of intent for the Strategic Development Fund. The revenue funding has been approved and the capital funding is going through the final assessment process.

##### **5.2 HMRC Guidance (minute 7.1 – Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting – 10 May 2022 refers)**

Deanne Morgan reported that the HMRC guidance on charging for electric car charging has not yet been published.

##### **5.3 Corporation and Committee Meetings Next Academic Year (minute 12 – Dates of Future Meetings refers)**

Ruth Lucas reported that Governors were comfortable with the proposed mix of face-to-face, virtual and hybrid meetings.

#### **6 Principal's Report – Feedback from the Strategic Planning Event**

Karen Spencer thanked Governors for attending the strategic planning event and reported that the next steps are to update the Strategic Plan and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and bring them to the Corporation meeting in October for approval.

Governors were comfortable with the new values and the strap line “not just courses, careers”.

Karen Spencer reported that a briefing statement on how the College engages with education, employer, civic and community stakeholders to address skills needs and priorities will be incorporated into the Strategic Plan. This aligns to the new Ofsted inspection framework being introduced in September 2022.

The College needs to sell itself better in the Strategic Plan. The Super 6 needs to be strengthened, achievement celebrated, employer links highlighted and sustainability embedded. The Quality of Education section needs reviewing, with the College’s Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy being integrated and embedded into it.

The Corporation noted the verbal Principal’s Report.

## **7 Standards and Curriculum Committee Reports**

### **7.1 Minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee Meeting – 29 June 2022**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 29 June 2022.

### **7.2 Item 1 – Key Performance Indicators 2021/2022 and Quality Improvement Plan 2021/2022**

The Corporation received and considered the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2021/2022 and Quality Improvement Plan 2021/2022, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

The reports were taken as read.

Becky Jones provided the Corporation with the latest position on the following KPIs:

Overall achievement is 83% and this is the worst-case position. The College is going through the claiming process and expects achievement to increase once the claims have been completed. Each student is flagged green or red and a number still on red may convert to green before the end of the year.

Retention is currently at 93%.

Apprenticeship predicted achievement is 52% with a best-case position being 65%.

Adult achievement has increased by 1%.

Functional skills maths and English achievement is predicted to be 70% at year-end and there is still a high volume of achievement still to go through the system, with exams taking place daily at present.

Will Allanson highlighted that predicated apprenticeship achievement rates include functional skills and that teams flag each apprentice with achieving functional skills being included in the flagging.

Karen Spencer reported that there is no national progress data for GCSE maths and English however students at Harlow College have made significant progress compared to their peers and progress is looking strong for the College.

Paul Taylor asked about functional skills attendance and who are the students undertaking functional skills qualifications if they are not apprentices. Paul Whitehead reported that students on study programmes will undertake either GCSE maths and English or functional skills depending on their grades on entry.

Karen Spencer reported that part of the issue with apprenticeship achievement is that they can get the qualifications they need without gaining their functional skills qualifications and undertaking the end point assessment for their apprenticeship. Functional skills are now front-loaded at the start of the apprenticeship rather than end-loaded as had previously been the case.

Karen Spencer highlighted the national context with there being no published government data on achievement rates however withdrawal rates are published. If 50% withdrew from an apprenticeship during the pandemic, the highest possible achievement rate is only 50%.

Governors' attention was brought to the three amber areas in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

The health-check data has now been completed and updated and the College is working to close this year off. This action is now rated green.

The College received approval for the higher national in healthcare on 6 July 2022 and is looking to gain approval for Computing in England – a change from the planned Cloud Computing – by October 2022.

Engineering higher national satisfaction was at 64% in semester 1 however this has increased to 94% in semester 2, with an overall higher national satisfaction rate across the College's higher national provision of 86%.

The Corporation noted the Key Performance Indicators 2021/2022 and Quality Improvement Plan 2021/2022

### **7.3 Item 2 – Student Voice**

The Corporation received and considered the report on student voice, presented by Laura Wedgbury-Glew, Assistant Principal.

The report was taken as read.

Governors noted the pleasing results from the latest student satisfaction survey and that two new student governors will be appointed before the next Corporation meeting.

Liz Laycock highlighted that there is a lot of effort going into student enrichment with a new programme being offered from September 2022.

The Corporation noted the report on student voice.

## **8 Finance and Resources Reports**

### **8.1 Resources Committee Reports**

#### **8.1.1 Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting – 21 June 2022**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 21 June 2022.

#### **8.1.2 Item 1 – Management Accounts for the Period 1 August 2021 – 31 May 2022**

The Corporation received and considered the management accounts for the period 1 August 2021 – 31 May 2022, presented by Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance.

Deanne Morgan informed Governors that the Resources Committee received and considered the management accounts up to 30 April 2022 and that the latest accounts show an improved overall position. This is due to apprenticeship performance being stronger as increased achievement rates lead to an increase in funding. All the key indicators remain the same, bank covenants are forecast to be met and financial health is forecast to be good.

Karen Spencer highlighted the realism of achieving £3m of Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding by the end of the year. Community Learning funding and Learning Support funding are included in the AEB allocation however this is reconciled at year-end. Next year's accounts will be amended to allow this to be monitored on a regular basis and the income will be profiled on a monthly basis.

Julia Fillary asked about the cash flow forecast and whether an overdraft will be required. Paul Whitehead reported that the dip in the cash budget line is because the ESFA's financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March. Payments are aligned to this rather than the College's financial year. In previous years, the College has been close to needing an overdraft however due to now having cash reserves, an overdraft is not required. Deanne Morgan reported that the cash budget line is set at the start of each year and the cash forecast line is reforecast on a regular basis.

The Corporation noted the management accounts for the period 1 August 2021 – 31 May 2022

## **8.2 Joint Resources and Audit Committee Reports**

### **8.2.1 Minutes of the joint Resources and Audit Committee Meeting – 21 June 2022**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the joint Resources and Audit Committee meeting held on 21 June 2022.

### **8.2.2 Item 1 – Two Year Financial Forecast 2022 – 2024 and Draft Budget 2022 – 2023**

The Corporation received and considered the two-year financial forecast 2022 – 2024 and draft budget 2022 – 2023, presented by Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance.

Deanne Morgan reported that these papers were considered and discussed in detail at the joint Resources and Audit Committee meeting held on 21 June 2022.

Governors noted that there is a deficit position in 2022 – 2023 due to the Corporation approving a pay award for staff, which has now been agreed with the unions, with recovery to a small surplus in the following year.

The College is not generating as much cash as it has done previously however there is still cash available to invest in the campus and staff.

The bank covenants are forecast to be met and the financial health is forecast to be good.

The main area of risk remains the AEB funding. Smaller plans for the funding have been agreed with managers, with plans in place for it to be closely monitored throughout the year.

Karen Spencer reported that when the financial forecasts and budget were drafted, the outcome of the College's £2.75m Strategic Development Fund application was unknown. The College has since been issued with a letter of intent however the funding will not be confirmed until a grant funding agreement is signed. The College's budget cannot be changed to include this funding however a note will be added into the commentary submitted alongside the forecasts and budget and then the College will reforecast its income in the autumn.

Paul Taylor asked if the College is acting as the lead partner for the Strategic Development Fund and Karen Spencer reported that it is and the partnership consists of five colleges and the Essex Provider Network. There are three strands to the project – a capital programme which needs further assessing which makes timescales tight as the funding needs to be spent by 31 March 2023, a teacher development

strand and an employer engagement strand. Will Allanson reported that this links to the Essex Local Skills Improvement Plan application which the College is hopeful will get approved. The process for claiming and managing the Strategic Development Fund is not yet known as the grant funding agreement has not yet been received.

The Corporation approved the two-year financial forecast 2022 – 2024 and draft budget 2022 – 2023.

## **9 Audit Committee Reports**

### **9.1 Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting – 21 June 2022**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 21 June 2022.

### **9.2 Item 1 – Internal Audit Plan**

The Corporation received and considered the internal audit plan for 2022 – 2023, presented by Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

Paul Whitehead reported that Scrutton Bland, the College's internal auditors, look at the risk register and set out audit proposals for the following academic year. Some audits the College is required to have, such as Annex G funding audits and learner records audits. The single central record and safer recruitment audit will be beneficial to the College prior to an Ofsted inspection and an exams audit is critical given the volume of exams. There are also some contingency days in the plan which will be used for the Strategic Development Fund or any other project audits which need to take place.

The Corporation approved the internal audit plan for 2022 – 2023.

### **9.3 Item 2 – Review of the Risk Register and Risk Management Policy**

The Corporation received and considered the risk register and Risk Management Policy, presented by Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

The risk register was taken as read.

Liz Laycock asked about the impact a grade 3 Ofsted rating would have on the College's ability to secure project income. Paul Whitehead confirmed this would have an impact and agreed it should be made more explicit in the risk register.

Scrutton Bland had reported to the Audit Committee that the mental well-being of senior leaders is quite often now seen on other colleges' risk registers and the College reported that this would be monitored.

Karen Spencer reported that staff are making life style changes following on from the pandemic and that the sector average turnover is currently at 15% whereas the College's is at 9%.

Paul Bartlett asked if there is more focus on the impact of the menopause across the College. Karen Spencer reported that there has been awareness training for all managers and Liz Laycock highlighted that it is covered in the College's HR policies. The College has a higher proportion of female managers therefore this issue will be faced by many. It was suggested that a wider session for Governors and all staff could be delivered. Sotirios Adamopoulos reported that it is an important issue for everyone to recognise and be discussed at the top level in the College, demonstrating that from discussions, actions will follow.

Paul Whitehead highlighted the College's risk appetite as stated in the Risk Management Policy and reported that risks scoring 25 are classed as intolerable however they could be risks which are out of the College's control.

The Corporation noted the risk register and approved the Risk Management Policy.

## **10 Reports from Committees**

### **10.1 Health and Safety Committee – 8 June 2022**

#### **10.1.1 Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee – 8 June 2022**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 8 June 2022.

It was reported that risk assessments have been signed off and are in place however some are not on display. Will Allanson reported that the College is extremely vigilant where there are areas of non-compliance and an action plan is put in place.

#### **10.1.2 Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Policy**

The Corporation received and considered the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Policy, presented by Michael Travers, Health and Safety Manager.

Michal Travers reported that minor changes have been made to the Policy in relation to manager responsibilities. There has also been a change in reference to the First Aid and Sudden Illness Policy as this is now a procedure rather than a policy and is appended to the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Policy.

The Corporation approved the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Policy.

### **10.2 Safeguarding Committee – 14 June 2022**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Safeguarding Committee meeting held on 14 June 2022.



Liz Laycock reported that the main focus of the meeting was data, trends and looking at the mental health aspect of safeguarding.

The Corporation noted that the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy was approved at the Standards and Curriculum Committee rather than the Safeguarding Committee therefore it had not been presented to the Corporation for approval. In future years, it will be presented to the Safeguarding Committee and the Corporation for approval.

### **10.3 Equality and Diversity Committee – 23 June 2022**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Equality and Diversity Committee meeting held on 23 June 2022.

It was reported that there is a need to ensure that the Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity Committees are not covering the same items. There is a tendency for the Committees to be an information sharing body rather than a strategic committee. It was agreed that there should be a review of how these Committees are working and that the minutes should be in the same format as the Corporation and Committees.

## **11 Governance Issues**

### **11.1 Standing Orders 2022 – 2023**

The Corporation received and considered the Standing Orders for 2022 – 2023, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

Ruth Lucas informed Governors that the Standing Orders have been reviewed and the following change was proposed:

- Section 5.2 – the word “email” added in to accurately reflect practice.

The Corporation approved the Standing Order for 2022 – 2023 subject to the change outlined above.

The Corporation received and considered the Committees’ Terms of Reference. Ruth Lucas informed Governors that each Committee had reviewed their Terms of Reference and amended them where required. The proposed amendments are as follows:

- Page 17 – Standards and Curriculum Committee Terms of Reference – bullet point (b) has had some additional wording inserted.
- Pages 18 and 19 – Audit Committee Terms of Reference – bullet point (a) has had some additional wording inserted, bullet point (b) is new and bullet point (g) has had some additional wording inserted.

The Corporation approved the Committees’ Terms of Reference for 2022 – 2023.

The Corporation received, considered and approved the Scheme of Delegation for 2022 – 2023 without amendment.

The Corporation approved the Standing Orders 2022 – 2023, the Committees' Terms of Reference 2022 – 2023 and the Scheme of Delegation for 2022 – 2023 as outlined above.

### **11.2 Office for National Statistics Review of the Classification of Colleges**

The Corporation received an update from Karen Spencer, Principal, on the Office for National Statistics Review of the Classification of Colleges.

Appendix 1 is the letter which the College received about the review and Karen Spencer highlighted that there is not much that colleges can do about the review and nothing can be pre-empted.

If colleges move back onto the public balance sheet, it could remove the excessive tendering against private training providers and colleges could have more access to funding however this is still unknown.

Appendix 2 is a return that the College needed to complete as part of the review which was completed ahead of the deadline.

Paul Taylor asked if a move back to the public balance sheet would relieve the pension burden. Karen Spencer reported that it may give more security in terms of finances however it is unknown at present. The College could be eligible to reclaim VAT.

The Corporation noted the update on the Office for National Statistics Review of the Classification of Colleges.

### **11.3 Further Education Commissioner – Supporting the FE Sector**

The Corporation received a presentation on the Further Education Commissioner – Supporting the FE Sector, presented by Karen Spencer, Principal.

Governors were informed that there has been a change in the role of the Further Education Commissioner's team's role, with a greater focus on support and less on intervention. Support will include providing materials and practical advice and support. There will be a collaborative approach and sharing of effective practices, aligned more to the corporate side of college processes rather than teaching, learning and assessment.

The ESFA fit in with this around accountability and accountability measures are likely to be picked up by the ESFA.

Liz Laycock highlighted that the roadshows are interesting and worth Governors attending where possible.

The Corporation note the presentation on the Further Education Commissioner – Supporting the FE Sector.

## 11.4 Institute of Technology Legal Agreements

Will Allanson reported that the Institute of Technology (IoT) is at the post-application, pre-award stage and is nearing the end of the due diligence process.

The College has secured £3.17m in funding for its element of the Essex-wide IoT.

Will Allanson reported that a sub-licence for the use of IoT branding has been signed and a licence agreement for capital, use of “IoT” as a term and KPIs will need to be signed by two Governors using the College’s seal. The Corporation agreed to delegate authority to any two Governors to sign the licence agreements due to the urgency of getting them signed and with the summer holidays approaching.

**Post-meeting note: The DfE have confirmed that only the lead partner – South Essex College – needs to have their licence agreements signed and sealed. All partners can have their agreements signed by their Principal.**

## 11.5 Governor Training and Development

Liz Laycock attended the AoC session of changes to Ofsted inspections from September 2022 onwards, the student awards, the dance performance and the fashion show. Liz Laycock thanked everyone involved in these events. It was agreed that these dates should be circulated as soon as possible.

Ray Levy attended the AoC Finance and Audit Committee Chairs’ Network meeting.

Lily Lin attended the AoC Curriculum and Quality Committee Chairs’ Network meeting.

## 12 Safeguarding Policy

The Corporation received and considered the Safeguarding Policy, presented by Sallyann Abdelmoula, Assistant Principal.

Governors were informed that the Safeguarding Policy has been rewritten based on best practice from the National Association for Managers of Student Services and incorporates all the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance. Prevent has been kept separate and the Prevent Action Plan is reported into the Safeguarding Committee.

Liz Laycock reported that the Policy is more succinct and provides greater clarity.

Paul Bartlett asked whether the open College site has an impact on the Policy. Karen Spencer reported that the campus is closed, swipe access is required and it is more about preventing people accessing the campus than managing access. Will Allanson reported that this links to the College’s Business Continuity Plan which has developed a dynamic approach to respond to differing circumstances.

The Corporation approved the Safeguarding Policy.

### **13 Any Other Business**

Liz Laycock, on behalf of the Corporation and the College, thanked Paul Bartlett for over twelve years' service as a Governor and presented him with a gift.

### **14 Dates of Future Meetings**

|                  |  |        |
|------------------|--|--------|
| Autumn Term 2022 | Thursday 20 October 2022                               | 9.30am |
|                  | Thursday 01 December 2022<br>(self-assessment reviews) | 9.30am |
|                  | Thursday 15 December 2023                              | 9.30am |
| Spring Term 2023 | Thursday 23 March 2023                                 | 9.30am |
| Summer Term 2023 | Thursday 18 May 2023                                   | 9.30am |
|                  | Thursday 06 July 2023                                  | 9.30am |

All meetings will be held onsite at Harlow College.