

**HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
CORPORATION MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 07 December 2017

Membership:	* P Taylor (Chair)	* J Breen	* R Levy
	S Adamopoulos	* C Chatt	* M Prodger
	* C Alexander	* C Christofides	* B Spencer
	* P Bartlett	A Durcan	* K Spencer
	* J Bedford	* E Johnson	* J Turrell
	* J Bouffler	* L Laycock	

* denotes present

In attendance: M Stokes, Deputy Principal
L Turner, Deputy Principal
W Allanson, Vice-Principal
S Abdelmoula, Assistant Principal (agenda items 2053 onwards)
D Morgan, Executive Director – Financial Services
P Whitehead – Executive Director – Information, Data and Support
D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation
R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation

A minute's silence was held at the start of the meeting in memory of Keith Knapman, one of the College's IT Managers, who had recently passed away.

P Taylor informed Governors that this meeting was M Prodger's and C Christofides' last meeting and P Taylor paid tribute to them, thanking them for their support and dedication to the College over the years.

2043 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from A Durcan.

2044 Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

2045 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes and the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 01 November 2017 were approved by the Corporation as a true and accurate record, subject to two typographical changes, and were signed by the Chair.

2046 Matters Arising from the Minutes

2046.1 Group Structure (minute 2036 refers)

D Morgan informed the Corporation that the Directors have agreed to strike off the subsidiary companies.

2046.2 Institutes of Technology (minute 2038 refers)

K Spencer informed Governors that an Institute of Technology prospectus has been produced by Government and there will be an eight week window in the new year to submit an application. Governors were also informed that Harlow College was the only further education college to get a specific mention in the Government's recently published Industrial Strategy.

2047 Membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation

2047.1 To Welcome Callum Alexander, Student Governor

The Corporation welcomed Callum Alexander, the newly appointed Higher Education Student Governor and C Alexander introduced himself.

2047.2 To receive an update from the Clerk on the appointment of the second Vice-Chair of the Corporation

The Corporation noted that the appointment to the vacant Vice-Chair position would be made at the Corporation meeting on 15 March 2018. At this meeting, appointments to both Vice-Chair positions will be made.

2047.3 To appoint a Search Committee

D Sheridan informed the Corporation that a Search Committee needs to be appointed. E Johnson and B Spencer offered to join K Spencer on this Committee. The appointment of E Johnson, B Spencer and K Spencer to the Search Committee was unanimously agreed by the Corporation.

2048 Self-Assessment Report 2016-2017 and Quality Improvement Plan 2017-2018

The Corporation received and considered the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2016-2017 and the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2017-2018, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

L Turner informed Governors that the SAR had previously been considered by the Corporation and the Standards and Curriculum Committee at their meetings in November 2017.

A discussion was held around the SAR and Governors noted the following:

- There has been a decline of approximately 1% in the College's overall achievement rate; however the College remains above national benchmarks. The decline has been analysed and the College is aware of the key issues relating to the decline. The decline is particularly in the College's 16 – 18 offer.
- Level 3 students have historically been enrolled for two years. This year however the College is enrolling these students one year at a time. There are many reasons why students may only study the first year of a two year programme, such as securing employment, moving into an apprenticeship or changing courses. By enrolling students one year at a time, the College's achievement and retention rates will not be affected if the students only complete one year of their course.
- Some students are struggling sitting exams.
- The College has a transient population, especially with its ESOL students.
- English and maths is in a stronger position, with significant improvements in

GCSE English pass rates.

- The Free School Meals deprivation measure highlights that these learners have not achieved as well as other learners. The biggest category of learners who fall into this measure are ESOL learners.

Governors were informed that the key points from the SAR have formed the basis of the QIP.

P Bartlett asked if there was extra funding allocated to those learners in receipt of Free School Meals. The Principal informed Governors that there is no additional funding. This was the first year that the College had received the data. The disadvantaged factor funding is different to the Free School Meals measure and this is calculated on postcode and GCSE English and maths results. The College's funding for disadvantaged students has reduced by approximately £260k, as students are being classed as "less needy", however they are actually becoming more needy. Governors agreed that the Free School Meals data was useful to have and agreed it would be good to lobby Government to get support for these students into the FE sector.

P Taylor asked if the Apple Distinguished School logo be added to the SAR and it was agreed this would go on the back cover.

P Taylor asked if paragraph 3 on page 7 be reworded and if "school" could be added in on page 8 where it refers to those not achieving English and maths.

K Spencer informed Governors on changes to the delivery of functional skills. The College will deliver function skills to students who are likely to follow an apprenticeship pathway. Governors noted that the performance measures give a higher weighting to GCSEs and the challenge getting learners to sit three exams. The College is pleased with its improved results but knows that there is more work to be done.

Governors questioned the significant change in adult enrolment figures and noted that this is mainly due to referrals from Jobcentre Plus. The size and funding values of the qualifications have changed and English and maths stepping stone qualifications are included. The learners undertake vocational training as well as employability training.

Governors were informed that every Grade 1 college team will be given £500 to spend on something related to their curriculum.

The Corporation approved the Self-Assessment Report 2016-2017 and the Quality Improvement Plan 2017-2018.

2049 Financial Statements for the period 1 August 2016 – 31 July 2017

2049.1 To receive and approve the Annual Report of the Internal Audit Service for the year ended 31 July 2017

The Corporation received and considered the Annual Report of the Internal Audit Service for the year ended 31 July 2017.

Governors were informed that the report details Scrutton Bland's work throughout the last academic year and Governors noted the outcome of the internal audits undertaken.

In relation to high needs funding and learners, Governors were informed that processes are being tightened up and tracking of support against the budget allocation is undertaken monthly. The College has 80 recognised high need learners with a £1.5m funding allocation. Half of the learners are in the Supported Studies area and it was noted that the team has performed well and Harlow College is seen as a good provider by Essex County Council and Herts County Council. The Corporation thanked S Abdelmoula and N Gibson for their work in this area.

Governors noted that, for the year ended 31 July 2017, it is the opinion of the Internal Audit Service that the College had adequate and effective risk management, governance and control processes and adequate and effective processes regarding efficiency and effectiveness.

The Corporation approved the Annual Report of the Internal Audit Service for the year ended 31 July 2017.

2049.2 To receive and approve the Annual Report of the Audit Committee

The Corporation received and considered the Annual Report of the Audit Committee for the period 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2017. Governors were informed that this annual report needs to be agreed and submitted to the funding bodies.

Governors noted that the report summarises the work of the Audit Committee and how it met its Terms of Reference.

Governors were informed that the report had been reviewed in detail by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2017. Governors' attention was brought to the opinion on data quality in section 12 and the list of audit opinions in section 13. It was noted that as part of the new Audit Code of Practice, additional opinions on effective and efficient use of resources, solvency of the College and safeguarding of College assets are required.

The Corporation noted the following opinion of the Audit Committee:

“It is the opinion of the Audit Committee, based on the reports it has received and considered, and drawing upon the knowledge and expertise of its members and its audit services, supported by the work and views of College management, that during 2016-17 Harlow College:

- *had adequate and effective systems of governance;*
- *had adequate and effective assurance arrangements;*
- *had adequate and effective risk management and control processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, solvency of the College and the safeguarding of its assets;*
- *had adequate arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness;*
- *had adequate and effective key internal controls;*

- had adequate and effective arrangements for data quality;
- had, overall, systems and controls that are adequate and effective for carrying forward the objectives of the college.

The Audit Committee met in private with the internal and external auditors on 30 November 2017 and no issues impacting upon matters of internal control were raised. RSM UK did not identify any matters of impropriety throughout their audit work to bring to the attention of the Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee considers that it operated effectively in 2016-2017 and that it met its terms of reference and the requirements of the Joint Audit Code of Practice.”

The Corporation approved the Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2016/17 and agreed for it to be signed by P Bartlett, Chair of the Audit Committee.

2049.3 To receive and approve the Audit Findings Report for the period to 31 July 2017 and the Letters of Representation

The Corporation received and considered the Audit Findings Report for the year ended 31 July 2017 and the letters of representation. Governors noted that the report had been considered in detail at the Joint Audit and Resources Committee meeting on 30 November 2017.

Governors were informed that the outstanding issues have been resolved as the final income reconciliation has been received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency and a pension query has been resolved.

The Corporation reviewed the letters of representation.

The Corporation approved the Audit Findings Report for the period to 31 July 2017 and the Letters of Representation for the Financial Statements and the Management Letter for the Regularity Audit for the year ended 31 July 2017 and agreed for them to be signed by the Chair and the Principal.

**2049.4 To receive and approve the Operating and Financial Review 2016/17
&
2049.5 To receive and approve the Financial Statements 2016/17**

The Corporation received and considered jointly the Operating and Financial Review and the Financial Statements for 2016/17. Governors noted that the Operating and Financial Review and the Financial Statements follow an SFA published model and further noted that the documents were reviewed in detail at the joint Audit and Resources Committee meeting held on 30 November 2017.

The Executive Director Financial Services tabled a document which gave details of the proposed changes to be made to the final version of the financial statements. Governors noted that there were no changes to the surplus or balance sheet and that all the changes were minor or changes in

presentation.

Governors noted that the final surplus figure was £741k, that the College's financial health rating was good and that the bank covenants had been met in all four quarters for last financial year.

The Chair highlighted that this is a strong financial position to be in, given the current climate and it has allowed the College to expand and undertake major capital projects. The Corporation thanked the management team for their hard work to ensure the successful running of the College.

The Corporation approved the Operating and Financial Review and the Financial Statements for 2016/17 and agreed that they should be signed by the Chair and the Principal and sent to the Education Skills Funding Agency.

2050 Management Accounts for the period 1 August 2017 – 31 October 2017

The Corporation received and considered the management accounts for the period 1 August 2017 – 31 October 2017, presented by D Morgan, Executive Director – Financial Services.

Governors were informed that there will be some adjustments in the November management accounts when some income streams will be finalised. The College is still waiting to find out the outcome of the non-levy apprenticeship procurement exercise. An assumption has been made in the accounts that the College will receive the same amount of funding as last year and it was noted that the College had secured some apprenticeship growth funding for delivery up to 31 December 2017.

Governors were informed that while there has been a national drop in apprenticeship starts, Harlow College is currently experiencing the opposite. It is unclear whether the national decline is arising from the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy. Governors were informed that the College has been successful in an NHS tender for apprenticeship delivery.

Governors noted that after the first quarter, the College is meeting the bank covenants and financial health is good. The auditors have requested that the College forecast forward whether the bank covenants will be met on a quarterly basis and this will be done.

The Corporation noted that the Resources Committee has reviewed one of the College's loans and recommended to the Corporation agrees to a long term swap for the loan to 2027, with an interest rate fixed for the entire term of the loan.

The Corporation approved:

- the management accounts for the period 1 August 2017 – 31 October 2017;
- the long term swap of the loan with a fixed interest rate for the entire term of the loan;
- the Principalship to sign the loan documentation on behalf of the Corporation.

2051 Key Performance Indicators and Targets

The Corporation received and considered the report on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets, presented by K Spencer, Principal. Governors were informed that

the KPIs for 2016/2017 gave the final position for each target. There had been some capacity issues within the IT team therefore these targets will be refocused.

The Principal informed Governors that the 2017/2018 KPIs were developed following discussions at Corporation and at an internal managers' conference. They have also been developed in conjunction with the College's strategic direction and the SAR. K Spencer asked for feedback on the 2017/2018 KPIs and targets and asked if there were any omissions.

E Johnson asked if the number of KPIs had been reduced. The Principal confirmed that they have been sub-divided into twelve categories however the number of KPIs is comparable to the numbers in the previous two years.

P Taylor asked how the revenue funding target for Stansted Airport College will be calculated. W Allanson informed Governors that the College is looking to secure additional in-year funding from the ESFA for recruitment of learners at Stansted Airport College. A bid for an extra non-lagged 16 – 18 allocation will be submitted to the ESFA. This is normally awarded if a college is doing something significantly different therefore the College is confident it will receive this funding.

The College has a robust business plan for Stansted Airport College. The open evenings have been well attended and currently 88 applications have been received. Governors noted that there has been a lot of interest in Stansted Airport College from 18 year olds and adult learners who would take out learner loans to study there. The College is also increasing its apprenticeship delivery across the airport and there will be income from the Stansted Academy which the College will be operating from January 2018. The College is actively engaged with a number of business partners across the airport.

J Bedford asked if there had been interest from areas north of the airport. W Allanson confirmed that there has been interest as far north as Saffron Walden and as far east as Braintree. Governors were informed that the College is working with Colchester Institute to ensure provision is complementary and there is a differential between their offer and Stansted Airport College's offer.

P Taylor asked about the current ratio. K Spencer informed Governors that as part of the Area Review process, the College confirmed it would proceed with the current ratio of 0.9. This was the one area that the College did not get a "green" score on and the College was asked to change it to 1.0. The current ratio is now 1.4 however the College is comfortable with the 1.0 target as detailed in the KPIs.

C Alexander asked if students stress management could be included in the KPIs or the curriculum. S Abdelmoula outlined initiatives that the College is undertaking, including growth mindset and building resilience. Whilst staff training is required, there is increased awareness of stress-related and mental health issues. The College is working to support these learners however the biggest challenge is the use of social media. The Big White Wall was explained to Governors. L Laycock confirmed that these issues had been discussed at the recent Safeguarding Steering Group meeting.

The Corporation agreed to include a new KPI focusing on the roll-out of growth mindset and the reshaping of the student ambassador programme, with Student Governors being involved with this.

The Corporation approved the close-down of the 2016/2017 KPIs and approved the KPIs and targets for 2017/2018, subject to the addition outlined above.

2052 Strategic College Improvement Fund

The Corporation received and considered the report on the Strategic College Improvement Fund, launched in October 2017 for Colleges graded 3 or 4 by Ofsted, presented by K Spencer, Principal.

The Corporation endorsed Harlow College's partnership with a College seeking support and noted the report on the Strategic College Improvement Fund.

2053 Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2016/17

The Corporation received and considered the Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2016/17, presented by S Abdelmoula, Assistant Principal.

Governors were informed that in the previous year there was a 7% achievement gap for students with learning difficulties. Their achievement rate now exceeds those without learning difficulties. This improvement is mainly due to the successful learning practitioners programme and the first year of the reshaped Supported Studies curriculum.

The Black African achievement gap has narrowed and there is no differential between the College's Black and Minority Ethnic learners.

There is a significant achievement gap with Free School Meals learners. The College is looking to identify these learners and put strategies in place to deal with the gap.

Two key successful projects that the College led were highlighted – the Prevent Project and the National Citizenship Service programme which focuses on integration and the promotion of social action projects.

Governors noted that counselling services are in demand, with 40 students accessing the services last year. The College has undertaken a significant amount of work with learners on Education Health Care Plans and its legal duties concerning special education needs and disability. Ongoing staff training is taking place, along with work on reporting systems and early identification of those in need.

The gender pay gap position was noted and the College is waiting on guidance from the AoC before it publishes the information as part of the College's statutory duty.

Governors were given the opportunity to ask questions.

P Bartlett asked for more detail on the achievement gap for those eligible for Free Schools Meals. It was reported that it was a mix of factors including retention and achievement rates. P Bartlett asked what the College is doing to address this. S Abdelmoula reported that the College is making sure staff are aware of these learners and understand the barriers the learners face. The Principal reported that meetings have been held with each team to look at students who are at risk of not succeeding and the range of issues associated with these learners.

L Laycock asked if the change in the staffing age profile was of concern. K Spencer

reported that staff are coming into teaching after a successful career in industry. W Allanson also confirmed that in difficult to recruit areas, younger people are being developed to enable the College to grow its own talent. L Laycock asked for this to be included in the report. J Breen highlighted that the College's age profile is no different to any other company and is part of strategic workforce planning. The Principal highlighted that this is an issue faced by the education system nationally across all sectors. Teaching apprentices are a powerful route and the College has a good CPD programme for aspiring and middle managers. L Laycock asked that there be an action on this.

The Corporation approved the Equality and Diversity Annual Report for 2016/2017.

2054 Safeguarding and Health and Safety Reports 2016/17

2054.1 To receive and consider the annual Safeguarding Report for 2016/17 and to approve the revised Safeguarding Policy

The Corporation received and considered the annual Safeguarding Report for 2016/2017 and the revised Safeguarding Policy, presented by S Abdelmoula, Assistant Principal.

Governors were informed that one member of staff is now trained to Level 3 in safeguarding. There has been an increase in the number of students referred to the Safeguarding Team, with the average of one referral per day. The Principal reported that schools are reporting an increase of safeguarding cases due to the impact of welfare and benefit reforms and cuts to external support services. The College can often be the safe place for vulnerable learners.

The College has implemented new systems which includes a self-declaration of any criminal or pending convictions on the enrolment form. For those learners, a risk assessment is undertaken, six of which were completed last year. P Taylor expressed his concern asking for the self-declaration to be completed. L Turner reported that it is not the College's intention to exclude these learners but provide support for them. There is also a need to safeguard the campus and support vulnerable young people. Learners can also choose not to disclose a criminal or pending conviction. L Laycock asked what the situation would be if a learner did not disclose something but then required support. K Spencer informed Governors that it depends on the individual case and the College reserves its rights in all cases. It is the College's intention to provide support whilst safeguarding all students and staff. C Christofides highlighted that there is lots of support available for 16 – 18 year olds therefore it is worthwhile for the College to ask this question.

Governors were informed that there had been no significant changes to the Safeguarding Policy however the Prevent requirements had been reviewed. L Laycock requested that proposed changes be highlighted on policies asking for Governor approval.

The Corporation noted the annual Safeguarding Report for 2016/17 and approved the Safeguarding Policy.

2054.2 To receive and consider the annual Health and Safety Report for 2016/17 and to approve the revised Health and Safety Policy.

The Corporation received and considered the annual Health and Safety Report for 2016/17 and the revised Health and Safety Policy, presented by M Stokes, Deputy Principal. Governors noted that there were no significant changes to health and safety issues in this year compared to last.

Governors were informed that funding for the sexual health clinic has been withdrawn again and the College has written a letter of complaint.

The Health and Safety Committee has continued to meet termly. M Stokes thanked M Prodder for serving the Committee so well and informed Governors that a new Governor representative for the Committee is required.

Governors noted that there was one RIDDOR reportable incident and that a survey on staff training needs to be undertaken. The largest number of incidents was in the Supported Studies area. Governors noted that the College's Health and Safety Manager is now Michael Travers.

The Corporation were informed of the minor changes to the Health and Safety Policy.

The Corporation noted the annual Health and Safety Report for 2016/17 and approved the Health and Safety Policy.

2055 Property Update

2055.1 Stansted Airport College

The Corporation received an update on Stansted Airport College, presented by W Allanson, Vice-Principal. Governors received the notes from the Stansted Airport College Advisory Group meeting and noted that this group would be constituted.

Governors noted that work on site has commenced and that there has been no change to the budgetary challenges. J Bedford asked if the reservoir issue had been resolved. W Allanson informed Governors that Manchester Airport Group's property team has been working with Essex County Council on this issue.

W Allanson informed Governors that a Building Information Modelling model is being developed which can be shared and R Lucas offered to share regular Stansted Airport College updates with Governors.

P Taylor suggested taking Governors to see the site and to look at the possibility of holding a Corporation meeting at the Airport.

The Corporation noted the update on Stansted Airport College.

2055.2 Princess Alexandra Hospital

The Corporation received an update on Princess Alexandra Hospital, presented by K Spencer, Principal. Governors noted that the College is in discussion with the hospital and ARU and is looking at pathways into nursing and higher and degree apprenticeships.

The Corporation noted the update on Princess Alexandra Hospital.

2055.3 VAT on Buildings

The Corporation receive an update on VAT on buildings, presented by D Morgan, Executive Director – Financial Services.

Governors noted that an exercise on reclaiming VAT on the College's buildings had been undertaken. The College is reclaiming the VAT on HAMEC and is in discussion with Essex County Council on this.

The Corporation noted the update on VAT on buildings.

2056 Governor Training and Development

The Corporation reported on Governor training and development activities.

C Alexander attended a student governor induction session.

J Bedford has been involved in a review of apprenticeship schemes.

J Breen has undertaken a visit focused on business apprenticeships.

J Bouffler has been involved in strategic discussions with ARU, Princess Alexandra Hospital and the College.

M Prodger attended the Safeguarding Steering Group meeting and the Health and Safety meeting.

L Laycock attended the Safeguarding Steering Group meeting.

P Taylor attended the Stansted Airport College ground-breaking ceremony.

2057 Reports from Committees

2057.1 Standards and Curriculum Committee – 28 November 2017

The Corporation noted that the minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 28 November 2017 will be presented to the Corporation at its meeting on 15 March 2018.

2057.1.1 Higher Education Scholarly Activity Plan

The Corporation received and considered the Higher Education Scholarly Activity Plan, presented by L Turner, Deputy Principal.

Governors were informed that the Plan was considered by the

Standards and Curriculum Committee and some amendments had been requested. L Turner confirmed that these amendments had been incorporated into the Plan presented to the Corporation.

The Corporation approved the Higher Education Scholarly Activity Plan.

2057.2 Audit Committee – 30 November 2017

The Corporation noted that the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 30 November 2017 will be presented to the Corporation at its meeting on 15 March 2018.

2057.3 Joint Audit and Resources Committee – 30 November 2017

The Corporation noted that the minutes of the joint Audit and Resources Committee meeting held on 30 November 2017 will be presented to the Corporation at its meeting on 15 March 2018.

2057.4 Resources Committee – 30 November 2017

The Corporation noted that the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 30 November 2017 will be presented to the Corporation at its meeting on 15 March 2018.

2058 Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business.

2059 Dates of Future Meetings

Spring Term	Thursday 15 March 2018	08.30am
Summer Term	Thursday 17 May 2018	08.30am
	Thursday 12 July 2018	08.30am