

**HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION  
CORPORATION MEETING**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 May 2018**

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

\* denotes present

In attendance: M Stokes, Deputy Principal  
L Turner, Deputy Principal  
W Allanson, Vice-Principal  
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

**2074 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from P Taylor, C Chatt, A Durcan and J Turrell.

**2075 Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared beyond those already made known to the Board.

**2076 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2018 were approved by the Corporation as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

**2077 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

**2077.1 Harlow College Higher Education (minute 2068 refers)**

The Principal informed Governors that the College has received the formal QAA report with a judgment of “confidence” in the College’s HE processes and procedures. There are some minor actions resulting from the report which the College will address. The Corporation thanked L Laycock and C Alexander for being the Governor and student representatives through the process. The Corporation also thanked all staff involved, particularly B Jones, Assistant Principal, who led on the review.

**2078 Management Accounts for the Period 1 August 2017 – 31 March 2018**

**2078.1 To receive the management accounts for the period up to 31 March 2018**

The Corporation received and considered the management accounts for the

period 1 August 2017 – 31 March 2018, presented by D Morgan, Executive Director – Financial Services.

Governors were informed that the forecast end of year surplus is £140k which is lower than originally forecast. All income lines have been realistically forecast and adjusted accordingly.

The College is experiencing spiralling premises costs and action plans have been developed to look at ways of reducing these costs, however any savings will not be realised until next financial year at the earliest. The College is closely monitoring the cash reserves and maintaining them at the current level. Pay costs are on budget and include the staff costs for Stansted Airport College.

A business case for special growth has been submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency to fund learners at Stansted Airport College in-year. The College is anticipating a response to the business case in June 2018. The College is reasonable confident that it will be successful however there is a risk that the business case could be declined.

Governors noted that the cash flow has been extended in the April management accounts to show a longer term position over eighteen months, the balance sheet includes all Stansted Airport College capital expenditure and that capital expenditure is on target.

Governors' attention was drawn to the treasury section in the report which details the lease arrangements the College has in place. Governors noted that no new leases are being entered into.

In relation to key financial indicators, Governors noted that the year-end forecast is for the College's financial health rating to be good, the performance rating is lower than anticipated however the current ratio is better. The bank covenants are currently being met and are forecast to be met quarterly going forward.

P Bartlett asked what the negative £100k contingency figure was in the consolidated income and expenditure spreadsheet. D Morgan confirmed that this relates to savings that the College plans to make across all areas by way of the spending freeze which has been introduced.

D Morgan updated Governors on the subsidiary companies. All five applications for the companies to be struck off have been received by Companies House and are in the process of being dissolved. The process takes approximately two months. D Morgan confirmed that all assets will be transferred to the College with a legal document drawn up confirming this along with the settlement agreements. The Corporation noted that the striking off of the companies are only for the subsidiaries and not for Harlow College. The Corporation agreed that it the College should write to its suppliers and contracting organisations to inform them of this in order to avoid any confusion.

The Corporation approved the management accounts for the period 1 August 2017 – 31 March 2018.

## **2078.2 To receive and discuss the letter from the Education and Skills Funding Agency dated 14 March 2018**

The Corporation received and considered the letter from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), presented by M Stokes, Deputy Principal.

Governors noted that the ESFA has confirmed the College's financial health rating as good for 2016/2017 and that the College is predicting to be good for 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. The Corporation noted that the College has retained and will continue to retain a strong hold on its finances despite the current funding pressures in the sector. It was noted that in January 2018, over 50% of colleges were posting deficits.

P Bartlett asked if the dashboard indicated that in 2018/2019 more colleges will have outstanding financial health. K Spencer highlighted that there are ways to achieve outstanding health however this is not something the College is aiming for.

The Corporation noted the letter from the Education and Skills Funding Agency dated 14 March 2018.

## **2079 Key Performance Indicators**

The Corporation received and considered the report on key performance indicators (KPIs), presented by K Spencer, Principal, and L Turner, Deputy Principal.

Governors were informed that there is a lag between the KPIs and the figures in the management accounts however the figures will be updated. The College's priority for finance is to maintain its good financial health rating. There is a risk with the funding for the Stansted Airport College learners as detailed in agenda item 2078.1 above however the ESFA has confirmed that the College submitted a robust business case.

There was a slight decline in pass and retention rates for 16 – 18 learners last year. Retention rates for this academic year are looking positive and individual students are being flagged to address the decline in pass rates.

English and maths remain the College's biggest challenge, including attendance at English and maths classes. Governors were informed that the target set is challenging and that there has been an improvement in attendance rates. The English and maths teams are stable and strong and there have been some significant improvements in delivery. Functional skills are delivered by the vocational teams however there are challenges with this, particularly in relation to delivering Level 2 functional skills.

More students are attending English and maths classes however attendance is still an issue. The teams have more contact with parents and this has had mixed success. Employers have talked to students about the importance of English and maths and the benefits of having them, particularly in relation to their next steps in employment, education or training.

A detailed discussion was held around the issue of attendance at English and maths classes. L Laycock highlighted that attendance is good on vocational programmes

and asked what happens and why English and maths attendance is lower. Managers responded that many learners simply do not stay at College for the classes. Changes have been made to the delivery model, with changes to when English and maths are timetabled and where they are delivered on campus, however this has had little impact on the attendance figures. The College will have a dedicated senior manager for English, maths and functional skills from next academic year.

L Laycock asked for an analysis of the level of study and the main programme of the learners with low attendance and asked for this to be considered by the Standards and Curriculum Committee. The Principal reported that this analysis had been completed internally and there is no clear pattern. L Laycock highlighted that low attendance would have an impact on success rates. The Principal reported that national pass rates are 21% and 27% and the College's pass rates are above these averages however the College is not satisfied with its current rates.

Governors were informed that a system of assessing and diagnostic testing is being used and the way in which points are calculated was explained. P Whitehead provided further detail on how enrolments are aligned with grades and this could be discouraging learners to attend English and maths classes. Furthermore if learners do not believe they need English and maths for their future careers then it is difficult to ensure they attend the classes. J Bedford reported that, as an employer, low attendance is not good preparation for the workplace.

L Laycock highlighted that the issue is the appropriateness of the qualification. The Principal reported that there is no single answer to this issue, it is resource-intensive and the College receives no additional funding for this.

Governors asked if students had been asked why they do not attend. L Turner reported that no specific trends were identified. J Breen highlighted the importance of student voice and asked if employers could do anything more to help. The Corporation agreed that Governors have confidence in the College and that the College is fully aware of the situation, with strategies in place to address this issue. It was suggested that softer strategies be looked at along with inviting more employers in to speak to students about the importance of English and maths.

Governors noted that all other KPIs are in progress and that student satisfaction should be graded as red and that the KPI linked to the Institute of Technology is now not applicable as the College decided not to submit an application to develop an Institute of Technology.

The Corporation noted the report on the key performance indicators.

## **2080 Employment Contract Changes**

The Corporation received and considered the report on employment contract changes, presented by M Stokes, Deputy Principal.

Governors were informed that the report detailed a new employment contract clause which will be incorporated into the contracts for all new members of staff, the privacy notice for existing staff and the privacy notice for job applicants. These are all required in order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which comes into force on 25 May 2018. Governors noted that there had been one minor amendment to the privacy notice for job applicants.

Governors were informed that all staff have undertaken GDPR training, relevant policies are in the process of being finalised and a section on the College's website for data protection has been designed and is being populated.

The Corporation approved the employment contract changes as detailed in the report.

## **2081 Governor Training and Development**

A digital student ambassador gave a presentation to the Corporation on the use of digital learning from a student perspective. Governors were given the opportunity to ask questions and find out more about the successful scheme which has been rolled out across the College.

At the end of the meeting, Governors attended a detailed training session on Safeguarding and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

## **2082 Governance Issues**

### **2082.1 To receive and note the letter from the Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills to the Further Education Commissioner**

The Corporation received and noted the letter from the Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills to the Further Education Commissioner and noted that the letter highlights the role of the Further Education Commissioner.

### **2082.2 To receive and sign the Harlow College Governor Privacy Notice in line with GDPR Requirements**

The Corporation received and considered the Harlow College Governor Privacy Notice in line with GDPR Requirements, presented by R Lucas, Deputy Clerk. The requirements of the privacy notice were explained and Governors noted that two additional paragraphs had been inserted.

The Corporation approved the Harlow College Governor Privacy Notice and signed to give consent for the College to use their photographs.

## **2083 Sir Charles Kao UTC**

The Corporation received and considered the report on Sir Charles Kao UTC, presented by K Spencer, Principal.

The Corporation was informed that the College has received a letter from the UTC's Chair of Governors officially requesting the reassignment of the lease from Sir Charles Kao UTC to Burnt Mill Academy Trust (BMAT).

The Corporation agreed in principle to the deed of variation (which is still subject to contract) and subject to a licence being entered into by both parties, to assign the lease dated 20 April 2015 between Harlow College and Harlow UTC to the new tenant Burnt Mill Academy Trust. The Corporation also noted the update on Sir Charles Kao UTC and agreed the actions proposed in the paper.

## **2084 Reports from Committees**

### **2084.1 Standards and Curriculum Committee –13 March 2018**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 13 March 2018.

L Laycock highlighted that the main focus of the meeting was English and maths and the QAA Review. The Power of 3 presentation was also highlighted and Governors were informed that presentation will be given to the Corporation at a future date.

### **2084.2 Search Committee – 15 March 2018**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Search Committee meeting held on 15 March 2018.

### **2084.3 Resources Committee – 10 May 2018**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 10 May 2018 and the following areas of discussion were highlighted:

#### **VAT Refund:**

Governors were informed that Essex County Council's decision on the VAT refund is due at the end of May and that the money is included as a liability within the management accounts as no decision has been made yet by Essex County Council.

#### **Stansted Airport College:**

W Allanson, Vice-Principal, provided Governors with an update on Stansted Airport College. Governors noted that there is currently a project £90,800 overspend in the budget however £42k of contingency is being held and being released pro-rata and that savings can be realised from the furniture, fixtures and fitting budget lines.

A small hangar is to be located on the site, however the costs of the hangar have not been included in the current scheme costs.

Governors were informed that the College has been offered a private jet which would provide a number of excellent training opportunities in different areas of the curriculum offered at the College.

#### **Princess Alexandra Hospital:**

The Corporation received an update on Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH), presented by W Allanson, Vice-Principal. The Corporation noted that PAH are looking to relocate their training and development team to the Harlow College campus by the end of May 2018.

A lease agreement is being drawn up between the College and PAH and the

College could allow them use of the facilities under a licence to occupy for a maximum of two months whilst the lease is being finalised. The cost of the lease will be £XXk per annum plus any additional service charges.

The Corporation agreed to progress with the relocation of Princess Alexandra Hospital's training and development team onto the Harlow College campus and Governors gave their approval for W Allanson to draw up and approve the lease document and B Spencer offered to support the College with this.

## **2085 Any Other Business**

There were no items of any other business.

## **2086 Dates of Future Meetings**

Summer Term	Thursday 19 July 2018	08.30am
	<i>(please note the change in date of this meeting)</i>	

## **Governor Training and Development**

Governors attended a detailed training session on Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.