

# HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## CORPORATION MEETING

### Minutes of the meeting held at Harlow College – Tuesday 16 July 2024 - 9.30am

Membership:	*Liz Laycock (Chair)	Vic Goddard	*Paul Taylor
	*Sonny Bazzoni	*John Godley	*Michael Travers
	*Caroline Betts	*Stephen Isherwood	*Dawn Tuner
	*Rod Bristow	*Ray Levy	*Ed Whittle
	*Hannah Cheesman	*Lily Lin	*Heather Wilson
	*Julia Fillary	*Karen Spencer	

\* denotes present

In attendance: Pauline Odulinski, External Reviewer – agenda item 3.1.1 only  
Will Allanson, Deputy Principal  
Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal  
Becky Jones, Vice-Principal  
Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance  
Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance

#### 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Vic Goddard due to work commitments.

#### 2 Declaration of Interests

Michael Travers declared an interest in agenda item 12.1 – Health, Safety and Environment Committee reports as he is the College’s Health, Safety and Estates Manager.

#### 3 Search and Governance Committee Reports

##### 3.1 Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee – 26 June 2024

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 26 June 2024.

##### 3.1.1 Item 1 – External Governance Review

The Corporation received and considered the External Governance Review, presented by Pauline Odulinski, External Reviewer.

Pauline Odulinski thanked everyone for their commitment during the review and that it was extremely helpful how open everyone was.

Pauline Odulinski highlighted the following statement which is the best judgement a college can get: *“Overall, College governance is proficient*

*and effective with the Board demonstrating a very positive impact on College outcomes.”*

The Corporation was informed that it is rare that colleges ask for the review to cover suggestions of best practice seen in the sector. Pauline Odulinski reported that this demonstrates openness and transparency and that the College has an ambition to become outstanding.

Pauline Odulinski highlighted the three recommendations arising from the review and report that they are enhancements to what is already being done.

Recommendation 1: Governors to independently verify and triangulate information they receive by the Corporation having its own form of stakeholder engagement plan. How can Governors look independently at its customer base and informally find ways of asking questions about their opinions of the College, such as at business meetings? There is a huge amount of employer engagement being undertaken by the College and this recommendation is for Governors to do this independently and verify it.

Recommendation 2: Governor visits are taking place however the emphasis of all visits and Governor interaction at events should be centred around the student experience. Governors should ask what this means and lead to strategic questions to think about, such as how the information given to Governors collates to what Governors see and hear in the College, for example are the right amount of resources available for students?

Recommendation 3: Succession planning for Governors should include a future focus on curriculum developments when recruiting new Governors and how the Corporation plans longer term for Governors in line with its strategic intentions.

A detailed discussion by Governors was held at the end of the meeting about how these recommendations could be addressed – please see agenda item 16 below.

A Governor asked if there was any best practice from other colleges on how Corporations appraise their own effectiveness. Pauline Odulinski reported that this is through the Corporation’s own review of effectiveness, having their own action plan and reviewing its own practices. This links back to stakeholder engagement and having market intelligence of their own that Governors have received. It works best when Governors are critical, open and honest on where they think the Corporation is and what they contribute individually as Governors.

A Staff Governor thanked Pauline Odulinski as the questions discussed in his meeting with her gave him a wider view point of his role.

The Chair of the Corporation thanked Pauline Odulinski for undertaking the review which was a positive experience for the Corporation.

The Corporation noted the External Governance Review and approved for the Executive Summary to be published on the College's website.

### **3.1.2 Item 2 – Membership of Harlow Education Further Education Corporation**

The Corporation received and considered the Search and Governance Committee's recommendations for membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation,

The Search and Governance Committee recommended the reappointment of Ray Levy as a Governor of Harlow College Further Education for a period of four years, commencing on 11 October 2024.

The Corporation unanimously approved the Search and Governance Committee's recommendation and Ray Levy was reappointed as a Governor of Harlow College Further Education for a period of four years

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2024 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 Plan 2024 – 2029 and Annual Accountability Statement 2024 – 2025 (minute 10 refers)**

The Corporation was informed that the Strategic Plan had been updated and published on the College's website and the Annual Accountability Statement had been published on the College's website and submitted to the ESFA in advance of the 30 June 2024 deadline.

## **6 Ofsted Report**

The Corporation received and considered the College's Ofsted report, presented by Karen Spencer, Principal and Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

The Corporation thanked Becky Jones for all her hard work as the College's Ofsted nominee and congratulated everyone who contributed to the successful outcome of the inspection.

Governors were informed that the actions arising from the report will be incorporated into next year's Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan. There is still some work to be done in some areas however Governors were already aware of this.

Karen Spencer reported that the College fed back some points of accuracy to Ofsted and the final report was amended accordingly.

Ruth Lucas thanked all the Governors for their input into the inspection.

The Corporation noted the Ofsted report.

## **7 Update from Student Governors**

The Corporation received a verbal update from the Student Governors, presented by Sonny Bazzoni and Hannah Cheesman, Student Governors.

Sonny Bazzoni and Hannah Cheesman reported on events they have been involved with, such as the Ed Miliband and Chris Vince visit, numerous Robert Halfon visits, interviews for ITV and Heart radio, careers fairs, open evenings and meetings with Ofsted inspectors.

Karen Spencer reported that Chris Vince has been elected as a Labour MP for Harlow. He has already visited the College and a further visit is scheduled for September.

Hannah Cheesman reported that she is mentoring the newly elected Student Governor and Ruth Lucas reported that a second Student Governor will be elected at the start of next academic year.

The Corporation thanked Sonny Bazzoni and Hannah Cheesman for all their commitment to the role of Student Governor, noting it is a difficult role to fulfil which they had done expertly and the perspective they brought to meetings has been invaluable.

The Corporation noted the verbal update from the Student Governors.

## **8 Standards and Curriculum Committee Reports**

### **8.1 Minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee Meeting – 27 June 2024**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 27 June 2024.

#### **8.1.1 Item 1 – Key Performance Indicators 2023/2024**

The Corporation received and considered the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2023/2024, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Governors were informed that the KPIs were discussed in detail at the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 27 June 2024.

Becky Jones reported that a few minor changes have been made to the KPIs following the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting, such as a wider breakdown of the English and maths KPIs.

Governors were informed that English and maths attendance has increased by 10% therefore an increase in overall achievement is expected.

Karen Spencer reported that the College does not have a robust mechanism of predicting grades 9-4 for English and maths and last year the English mocks were overinflated and the maths mocks underinflated.

Karen Spencer reported that a more robust way of predicting 9-4 grades will be a focus in the coming year.

A Governor asked if the College could correlate the attendance and results data to use as positive encouragement for students. Karen Spencer reported that progress by attendance for English and maths is contained within the data tables in the College's Self-Assessment Report.

Karen Spencer reported that there is an issue in which high needs funded students without EHCPs cannot be exempt from English and maths. A Governor asked if the College still receives funding for these students even though they do not have an EHCP. Paul Whitehead reported that the students are worked through on a case by case basis however the post-16 sector is seen as a lower priority and the College has to adapt and find a way to support these students, which it does.

A Student Governor reported that particularly post-Covid people are believing that they do not need qualifications to succeed and this is a culture which needs tackling, which could be part of the College's tutorial programme. Paul Whitehead reported that the messaging that goes out to schools could be more focused around what qualifications can do for you as a student. A Governor reported that the current economy is showing an increase in higher-skilled roles whereas the need for lower-skilled roles remains the same, therefore gaining qualifications will be future-proofing students. A Governor reported that students cannot be what they cannot see and that Essex County Council is looking at technology and AI to bring the employer space into the student space. Karen Spencer reported that this links to the Greater Essex Local Skills Improvement Fund project. Paul Whitehead agreed to look at the tutorial programme as a mechanism of addressing these issues raised.

The Corporation noted the Key Performance Indicators 2023/2024.

### **8.1.2 Item 2 – Quality Improvement Plan 2023/2024**

The Corporation received and considered the Quality Improvement Plan 2023/2024, presented by Becky Jones, Vice-Principal.

Governors were informed that the QIP was discussed in detail at the Standards and Curriculum Committee meeting held on 27 June 2024.

The Corporation noted the Quality Improvement Plan 2023/2024.

## **9 Finance and Resources Reports**

### **9.1 Resources Committee Reports**

#### **9.1.1 Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting – 03 July 2024**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 03 July 2024.

### **9.1.2 Item 1 – Management Accounts for the Period 1 August 2023 – 31 May 2024**

The Corporation received and considered the management accounts for the period 1 August 2023 – 31 May 2024, presented by Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance.

Governors were informed that the management accounts were discussed in detail at the Resources Committee meeting held on 03 July 2024.

Deanne Morgan reported that key financial indicators are being met, including the bank covenants and good financial health.

All income streams will be scrutinised and forecasts will be updated, where required.

The Corporation noted the management accounts for the period 1 August 2023 – 31 May 2024.

### **9.1.3 Loan Repayment Information**

The Corporation received and considered the loan repayment information, presented by Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance.

Governors were informed that the loan repayment information was discussed at the Resources Committee meeting held on 03 July 2024 and the Corporation agreed for the College to explore the options and impact of repaying one of its loans.

Governors were informed that a single agenda item Corporation meeting will be called if required to discuss this further.

The Corporation noted the loan repayment information.

## **9.2 Two Year Financial Forecast 2024 – 2026 and Draft Budget 2024 – 2025**

The Corporation received and considered the two-year financial forecast 2024 – 2026 and draft budget 2024 – 2025, presented by Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance and Paul Whitehead, Vice-Principal.

Governors were informed that the figures were discussed in detail at the Corporation meeting held on 13 June 2024. The underlying figures remain the same however the way in which they are presented are now in the format required by the ESFA.

Governors' attention was brought to the commentary which is presented as per ESFA guidelines.

The Corporation approved the two-year financial forecast 2024 – 2026, the draft budget 2024 – 2025 and the commentary and approved for Karen Spencer to sign them in her capacity of Chief Accounting Officer, prior to submission to the ESFA in advance of the 31 July 2024.

## **10 Audit Committee Reports**

### **10.1 Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting – 03 July 2024**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 03 July 2024.

#### **10.1.1 Item 1 – Internal Audit Plan 2024 – 2025**

The Corporation received and considered the internal audit plan for 2024 – 2025, presented by Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance.

Deanne Morgan reported that Scrutton Bland, the College's internal auditors, has considered the College's risk register and has set out audit proposals for the following academic year, based on this and discussions with management. Annex G audits for the DfE sit outside of this audit plan.

The Corporation was informed that the plan was considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting held on 03 July 2024 and that the Audit Committee recommends its approval.

Governors were informed that the College's auditors are flexible and changes can be made to the plan throughout the year if required.

A Governor asked about the proposed governance audit and if it is required. Karen Spencer reported that Governors decide what is included in the plan. The auditors have noted that governance could be included in the 2025-2026 plan however this is just a suggestion.

The Corporation approved the internal audit plan for 2024 – 2025.

#### **10.1.2 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 Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance.

The risk register was taken as read and Governors noted that the risk register will be further reviewed and updated in September 2024.

The Corporation was informed that the risk register was considered in detail by the Audit Committee at its meeting held on 03 July 2024.

Deanne Morgan informed Governors that the Risk Management Policy has been revised to reflect current practice in the College. The

Corporation noted that the Risk Management Policy was considered in detail by the Audit Committee at its meeting held on 03 July 2024 and that the Audit Committee recommends its approval.

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

## **11 Standing Orders, Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation 2024 – 2025**

The Corporation received and considered the Standing Orders for 2024 – 2025, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

The Corporation received, considered and approved the Standing Orders for 2024 – 2025. Ruth Lucas informed Governors that the Standing Orders have been reviewed and that there were no proposed changes.

The Corporation received, considered and approved the Committees' Terms of Reference for 2024 – 2025. Ruth Lucas informed Governors that each Committee had reviewed their Terms of Reference and amended them where required. Governors noted that the Remuneration Committee's terms of reference will have "oversight of Senior Postholders' appraisal" added in.

The Corporation received, considered and approved the Scheme of Delegation for 2024 – 2025 and noted that amendments were proposed in line with the updated Terms of Reference.

The Corporation approved the Standing Orders 2024 – 2025, the Committees' Terms of Reference 2024 – 2025 and the Scheme of Delegation for 2023 – 2024, subject to the addition to the Remuneration Committee's Terms of Reference.

## **12 Reports from Committees**

### **12.1 Health and Safety Committee – 12 June 2024**

#### **12.1.1 Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee – 12 June 2024**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 12 June 2024.

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

The Corporation received and considered the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Policy, presented by Will Allanson, Deputy Principal.

Will Allanson reported that the Policy is reviewed on an annual basis and that minor changes have been made to the Policy, including procedures being embedded as appendices in the Policy.

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

### **12.2 Safeguarding Committee – 14 June 2024**



The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Safeguarding Committee meeting held on 14 June 2024.

Governors noted that the College's safeguarding arrangements were judged as effective by Ofsted in May 2024. This is the best judgement a college can receive.

### **12.3 Equality and Diversity Committee – 21 June 2024**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Equality and Diversity Committee meeting held on 21 June 2024.

Will Allanson reported that the College has commenced work on Investors in Diversity accreditation and this will involve Governors going forward. An induction day has been held and the assessor is producing an action plan for the College. This will be presented to the Corporation at its meeting on 24 October 2024.

### **12.4 Stansted Airport Advisory Group Meeting – 10 July 2024**

The Corporation received and noted the minutes of the Stansted Airport Advisory Group meeting held on 10 July 2024.

Karen Spencer reported that a feasibility study for Phase 2 of STAC, as per the College's Strategic Plan, has been commissioned and there is a need to identify capital funding for the project. Meetings have been planned with Essex County Council about the next stage of development.

The Corporation noted that Robert Halfon has been asked to chair the Group.

A Governor raised that student voice at STAC had highlighted the request for a microwave and Will Allanson confirmed that this could be considered for Phase 2 however at present neither students at Harlow or at STAC have access to a microwave.

A Governor asked about the disparity between the EV charging at STAC and at Harlow and Will Allanson confirmed that the College is looking to move STAC over the same system that Harlow has.

## **13 FE Commissioner's Summer Newsletter 2024**

The Corporation received, considered and noted the FE Commissioner's Summer Newsletter 2024, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

Ruth Lucas highlighted the ETF's Governance Development Programme and encouraged Governors to access the training available to them. Karen Spencer suggested areas for training could be included in Governor self-assessment.

## **14 Any Other Business**

A Governor asked if there were any concerns from the College's point of view with the King's Speech tomorrow. Karen Spencer reported that she is attending a meeting this

afternoon with the Association of Colleges however they are not expecting anything particular relevant to the FE sector being included in the King's Speech.

## 15 Dates of Future Meetings

Autumn Term 2024	Thursday 24 October 2024	9am
	Wednesday 27 November 2024 (self-assessment reviews)	9.30am
	Thursday 19 December 2024	9am
Spring Term 2025	Thursday 26 March 2025	9am
Summer Term 2025	Thursday 22 May 2025	9am
	Thursday 10 July 2025	9am