

Minutes
Strategic Transformation Committee
HRUC Governance

Date	22/09/2025	
Time	17:30 - 18:30	
Location	Microsoft Teams Meeting	
Present	Paul Miller (PM) Niran Mothada (NM) Susan Kingman (SK) Jo Swindells (JS) Divya Menon (DM) Keith Smith (KS) Dylan McTaggart (DMc) Jo Withers (JW) Tim Hulme (TH) Shane Woodhatch (SW) Susan Evans (SE) Alex Denley (AD) Yaseen Akhtar (YA) Jan Newbould	Chair Vice-Chair Governor Governor Governor (in attendance) Ex-Officio, CEO Group Executive Principal Chief of Business Strategy Chief Operating Officer Chief Financial Officer Interim Chief Financial Officer Chief Technology Officer Managing Director – IoT-Business Growth-Skills and Partnerships Managing Director – Partnerships
Clerk	Clare Mitchell	Interim Director of Governance
Absent	Amanda Priem (AP)	
Note Taker	Nataliia Tymkiv	

Minutes

1 - General Disclaimer at the Start of the Meeting

The meeting was recorded for the purpose of minuting. No objections were raised.

2 - Apologies

The Committee noted the absence of AP who was taking a short period of absence from her Governor role.

The Chair thanked staff for the quality of the meeting papers. The order of agenda items 7 and 8 would be reversed.

3 - Minutes of the meeting on 4 July 2025

The Committee received the draft minutes. The minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

Resolution: The minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2025 were approved.

4 - Action List

The Committee received the updated list of actions from the previous meeting.

The actions were either complete or would be covered as part of substantive items later in the agenda. AD would give an update on discussions with Pearson about digital content during the meeting.

5 - Committee Self-Assessment

The Committee considered the arrangements for its annual self-assessment. This exercise would form part of the overall Board effectiveness self-assessment for 2024/25.

It was proposed that a questionnaire be circulated to members to gather views on the Committee's effectiveness, the appropriateness of its terms of reference, and any areas for improvement. The outcomes would be collated and presented at the next meeting. The Committee agreed to this approach.

The Committee queried whether the terms of reference had been shared with everyone, and it was confirmed that they had been approved by the Corporation in November 2024. The terms of reference would be circulated with the committee self-assessment questionnaire, which would be sent out in the first or second week of October.

Action: Finalise the committee self-assessment questionnaire and circulate to members for feedback with the committee terms of reference - CM

6 - Apprenticeships

6.1 - Apprenticeship Growth Business Plan

The Committee received a comprehensive update on the Apprenticeship Growth Business Plan, which had been further developed following the initial presentation in July and discussions with the Committee Chair. The plan now provided a more detailed strategic overview of projected growth, delivery models, employer engagement, and investment priorities to 2030.

The College's apprenticeship provision had been structured into three categories – Technical, Professional Services, and College delivered apprenticeships – to better align with identified growth sectors and inform targeted planning. Technical provision comprised longer-duration, higher-value programmes such as engineering and building services, Professional Services covered leadership, accounting and HR programmes delivered centrally through employer services, while College-delivered apprenticeships focused on curriculum-based areas such as dental nursing, hairdressing and early years.

The updated business plan demonstrated significant growth potential. Delivery models were being reviewed to improve efficiency and maximise contributions without compromising quality. Performance in 2024/25 had exceeded expectations, with enrolments above target and recruitment remained strong. A strong employer pipeline provided further confidence in the College's ability to deliver sustained growth over the coming years.

JW highlighted that strategic investment would be critical to delivering this ambition. In particular, the development of a more robust learner management system was identified as essential, with a number of options under consideration. The potential to establish off-site skills centres in key areas was also under review to address capacity constraints on existing campuses. Further investment in staffing and compliance capability would be required to maintain quality, regulatory compliance and delivery standards at scale.

Partnership development was a central pillar of the strategy. The sales team had successfully established new relationships with a number of major employers, which would support long term growth, while tendering activity continued to expand the College's reach. Existing partnerships were also being strengthened, including work with the NHS, which represented significant potential for future growth. Quarterly monitoring would provide oversight of delivery against key success indicators.

The Committee questioned whether there was a risk that rapid growth could outpace the College's capacity in terms of staffing, estate provision and/or quality assurance. The Executive provided assurance that while there were potential risks in some areas, particularly within technical provision, proactive workforce planning and careful phasing of investment were mitigating factors.

The Committee challenged whether sufficient account had been taken of potential shifts in labour market demand and changes to the future world of work over the period to 2030. The Executive provided assurance that horizon scanning, industry engagement, integration of Local Skills Improvement Plans and ongoing analysis of Labour Market Information would ensure the apprenticeship offer remained agile and responsive to emerging trends.

KS highlighted that apprenticeships was an area that was very highly regulated and lacked flexibility. The impact of potential regulatory changes on the potential for growth in this area, including the move from the Apprenticeship Levy to a new Growth and Skills Levy, were being closely monitored as part of ongoing risk assessment.

Resolution: The Committee endorsed the Apprenticeship Growth Business Plan and recommended that the plan, along with supporting presentation materials, should be submitted to the Corporation on 7 October 2025 for approval.

Action: Apprenticeship Growth Business Plan to be submitted to the Corporation for approval - JW

7 - West London Institute of Technology

The Committee received a report which covered two actions from the previous meeting. Firstly, an update on the funding received by the IoT, what the return had been and the added value the IoT brought to HRUC and secondly, the impact of the 13% decline in L4/L5 enrolments in 2024/25.

The IoT had received an initial investment of £8.6 million, with an additional £1 million contribution from HRUC, which had been directed towards the development of the I Block, enhancements to facilities in W Block, and the acquisition of specialist engineering and digital equipment. Additional income had been secured through a £220,000 Higher Technical Qualification grant, contributing to an overall IoT income of £2.9 million against expenditure of £9 million. Based on current trends, the Department for Education grant payback period was estimated at 8.5 years, with the IoT currently in year seven of this cycle.

A total of 1,089 HE students had enrolled at IoT between 2019 and 2025, representing 42% of overall HE recruitment at HRUC. The Committee noted that while HE enrolments and therefore income had been below target in 2024/25, apprenticeship delivery had exceeded target, particularly in engineering. International engagement had grown significantly, although a small decline was recorded last year due to wider global market conditions. Investment in engineering equipment had enabled the launch of new courses, resulting in

Level 3 FE enrolments increasing significantly between 2021/22 and 2022/23, which resulted in a substantial rise in HE enrolments in the following year.

The Executive Team highlighted that the IoT brand continued to provide strong international and employer-facing value. The brand was the only HRUC identity directly associated with London and had contributed to the attraction of international partners and learners. The brand was also a recognised quality marker in technical education and a key criterion in T Level applications. Partnerships with Brunel University and collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) were also cited as examples of the brand's strategic reach and influence. HRUC was licensed to use the IoT brand until 2034.

The Executive reported that three strategic options for the IoT's future had been considered. The recommended approach was to retain the IoT brand in the background, deploying it strategically where it added value. IoT status would be key to future TEC applications and enable HRUC to benefit from future funding opportunities.

The Committee noted the current brand value of the IoT and queried whether there were risks in reducing its prominence too quickly, particularly given the uncertainty of future government priorities. It was reported that the brand continued to have significant recognition and market influence, but that repositioning its purpose to align with the College's strategic priorities would maximise its value and differentiation in a competitive sector.

During the discussion, governors raised broader strategic considerations. The Committee questioned how the positioning of the IoT might influence curriculum development decisions and applications for TEC status.

The Committee's view was that a hybrid approach would offer the greatest strategic advantage, retaining the IoT name but clearly redefining its purpose and market position. This approach would support ongoing differentiation, ensure readiness for future funding or policy developments, and create a platform for accelerated repositioning within the technical education landscape. The future positioning of the IoT brand, and its relationship to curriculum planning, should be considered in a dedicated discussion.

The Committee also emphasised the importance of progressing this work at pace, with initial outcomes to be presented to the Corporation for further consideration.

Resolution: the Committee agreed to recommend a hybrid approach to the Corporation, retaining the IoT brand, deploying it when needed while repurposing its application to align with the College's wider strategic priorities and curriculum ambitions.

Action: Executive Team to develop a repositioning plan and marketing strategy at pace to maximise the IoT's brand value and ensure its strategic deployment.

8 - Curriculum Transformation and Growth

The Committee noted that priority growth areas in the paper aligned to the new Curriculum Strategy 2020–2030. Three priority growth areas were identified as follows:

1. Health, which was a strong platform for expansion into new disciplines and deeper employer–university partnerships. HRUC already had good facilities in this area, and it was probably the most straightforward area to grow. The government might also seek to establish a TEC in this area.

2. Construction. This was an area of strong employer demand. However, growth in this area was currently constrained by staffing capacity, estate suitability and the age/fit of specialist facilities. Targeted investment, modernisation and clearer choices between modern methods/green technologies and traditional trades
3. Aviation, which was reported as embryonic but promising, with positive learner and employer traction through relationships with Heathrow.

The IoT was discussed as part of agenda item 7 above.

DT sought strategic guidance from the Committee on which growth areas should be further explored before further work was undertaken to develop these proposals.

The Committee challenged how the proposed transformation would translate into measurable learner outcomes, particularly around progression and employment. It was reported that destination data, achievement rates, and employer satisfaction metrics were now embedded within curriculum review processes and were regularly reported to senior leadership and Governors.

The Committee questioned whether workforce capacity and expertise were sufficient to deliver the scale of transformation envisaged, particularly in construction and technical areas. It was reported that workforce planning, targeted recruitment, and staff development programmes were underway to strengthen capability and build capacity.

The Committee also queried how the College intended to address estate constraints in construction and ensure that facilities were fit for purpose. It was reported that estate investment planning and curriculum redesign formed part of the next phase of work to support employer engagement and improve the learner experience.

The Committee asked for a timeline and governance route for the next stage of work. It was reported that the development of a detailed options paper, including cost modelling, workforce planning, estate requirements, and employer market testing, would require approximately two months of preparatory work. The paper would first be submitted to the Curriculum, Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (CSQE) for initial direction before returning to the Strategic Transformation Committee for further consideration.

Resolution: The Committee endorsed continued development of curriculum transformation across health, construction and aviation

Action: develop an options paper for curriculum transformation, including workforce requirements, estate planning, delivery models and employer market testing, for submission to CSQE before returning to STC. – DM

9 - Digital Transformation

9.1 - Immersive Content Options Paper

The Chair thanked Divya Menon, member of the Finance and Resources Committee, for attending this meeting. The F&R Committee had discussed the IT Capex budget for 2025/26 and the prioritisation of IT change projects at its meeting on 10 September 2025.

The Committee received an options paper outlining three investment scenarios and two delivery models for immersive learning. The investment scenarios ranged from continuing with low-cost, off-the-shelf content, purchasing bespoke materials or investing in a hybrid model combining externally sourced content from an established education sector expert

such as Pearson with internally developed materials to build capacity and enable scalability. Delivery could either be fully outsourced or through a collaborative model involving internal capability. To date the use of the immersive rooms at each campus had been limited to off-the-shelf content due to the absence of a longer-term implementation plan, sustainable funding model, and staff development strategy.

Despite the increase in the IT change capex budget for 2025/26 to £778k following the F&R Committee meeting, it was unlikely that sufficient funds would be available to make substantive progress on the immersive content project in 2025/26. An initial prioritisation assessment of all 16 IT change projects had been undertaken which had identified two higher priority investments (Cyber Security and Identity and Access Management), which combined exceed the available IT change capex budget. DM supported the prioritisation of these two IT change projects but noted that neither were transformational. DM's recommendation was that at this stage investment in immersive content should be the minimum required to demonstrate value. A decision could then be made on whether investment should be increased.

The Committee expressed concern about the limited use of the immersive learning rooms to date and emphasised the need for evidence of a positive impact on learner outcomes and experience as well as clear plans to implement immersive content in the curriculum and to up skill teachers to deliver this content. DMc reported that the use of immersive content was part of current CPD and that the immersive rooms were used for delivery between HRUC campuses and to enable guest to deliver content but not used sufficiently for AR/VR delivery.

The Chair noted that digital transformation was a key element of the Strategic Plan to 2025-2030 and that implementing digital transformation was a wider programme with immersive content being one element. The Chair proposed that the Committee should ask the Corporation to agree in principle to having a ring fenced capex budget for digital transformation that was separate from the IT change capex budget. This was supported by the Executive as a means of enabling proof of concept work, which could then be evaluated before being scaled up. A specific budget would be key to developing HRUC as a sector lead in areas such as AI.

Resolution: The Committee would recommend to the Corporation that a ring fenced budget should be established for digital transformation projects from 2025/26 onwards

The Committee noted that the amount of money that could be allocated to this ring fenced budget was likely to be low in 2025/26, but once established, it would be built into budget planning for 2026/27.

Action: Committee Chair to recommend to the Corporation that a ring fenced budget should be established for digital transformation projects from 2025/26 onwards

10 - Capital Projects Update - Project Ambition and Barra Hall

The Committee received an update from the COO on the progress of two capital projects: Project Ambition and Barra Hall. Project Ambition comprised a significant programme of refurbishment and conversion works at Uxbridge College to support growth in student numbers. Barra Hall was a Grade 2 listed building which was being converted into SEND provision. An update on all estates capital projects, including the financial position, had been provided to the Finance and Resources Committee and was appended to the paper.

An allocation of c£12.4m had been set aside to support three phases of work at Uxbridge College under the heading of Project Ambition. Phase one had been delivered over the summer break in accordance with the approved budget. However, the College had encountered a number of wider building problems and had used a DfE grant and revenue budgets to undertake other necessary compliance work during phase one.

Phase 2 of the project was currently under review. Given the current business risks and financial challenges, the Executive was now working towards a plan which reduced the investment sum by £3m.

The Chair noted that the role of the Committee was to consider the fit between capital projects and the Strategic Plan. Monitoring capital expenditure sat with the Finance and Resources Committee.

11 - Any Other Business

The Chair thanked everyone for attending, apologised for the meeting overrunning, and thanked the Executive Team for the excellent papers presented during the evening.

12 - Date of Next Meetings

The dates for the next meetings were confirmed as follows:

- 3rd November 2025
- 2nd February 2026
- 18th May 2026