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Directorate:	Corporation	
Minutes of:	HCUC Governing Body	
Date:	Tuesday 7 December 2021	Time: 4.30pm
Venue:	Remote access via MS Teams	
Present:	Melissa Bridge Simon Boulcott Tracey Critchley Nicholas Davies Darrell De Souza Nasim Khan Shaliny Lingeswaran Alasdair MacLeod Johanna Morgan Alexandra Postar Amanda Priem Ketan Sheth	Staff Governor (Uxbridge) Governor Staff Governor (Harrow) Governor (<i>Corporation Chair</i>) Governor (<i>Group CEO and Principal</i>) Governor Student Governor (Uxbridge) Governor Governor Student Governor (Harrow) Governor Governor
Apologies:	Steven Cochran Mariann Rand-Weaver	Governor (<i>Vice Chair</i>) Governor
In attendance:	Suba Dickerson Dylan McTaggart Andy Miller Tracy Reeve Jo Withers Shane Woodhatch	AP Student Aspirations and Projects (<i>Item 13 only</i>) Deputy CEO and Principal Uxbridge Exec Director Corporate Services (<i>Item 7 only</i>) Director of Governance Principal Harrow Group Director Finance & Resource Planning

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Mariann Rand Weaver and Steven Cochran. The Chair expressed his disappointment that the meeting had been moved back onto a remote format but confirmed that he had been consulted and it had been agreed as the sensible option with the surging Omicron cases in London and the Southeast. The meeting noted that Suba Dickerson would be presenting the Equality and Diversity Report at agenda item 13 as Gavin Hughes (AP Student Services and Safeguarding) was unavailable.

2. Notification of any urgent business Members may wish to raise under any other business, and any items to be taken as read that Members may wish to discuss

There was no urgent other business notified.

3. Notification of interests Members may wish to declare relating to any item

No specific interests were notified.

4. Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 21 September 2021

The Minutes were APPROVED as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

5. Matters arising from Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting held on 21 September 2021, which were not agenda items.

There were no matters arising that were not already covered by the agenda.

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Presentations:

i) Audit Findings Report

Nick Simkins (NS), Partner with the College's external auditors Cooper Parry LLP joined the meeting to present the Audit Findings Report for the 2020/21 HCUC Financial Statements audit. NS reminded the meeting that it was now a requirement of the Joint Audit Code of Practice that external auditors presented their findings directly to the full corporation as well as to Audit Committee members. NS informed Members that the audit had gone well. The Group Director Finance & Resource Planning (SW) and his team had made a valuable contribution to the audit; all requisite information had been readily available on a timely basis and had been shown to be robust and accurate. The audit had been undertaken on a predominantly remote basis for a second year running which had also gone well – NS confirmed that Cooper Parry were very used to working on a remote basis now. SW and VP agreed that the audit process had gone well from the College management perspective all the way from the planning stage to the completion of the audit. The meeting was pleased to note that the audit conclusion on all qualitative aspects considered was clean; NS also highlighted the unmodified regularity audit opinion.

NS informed the meeting that the numbers within the Financial Statements were now confirmed and he did not foresee any problems with sign-off in time to meet the current College deadline of 31 December for submission to the ESFA. The end year operating surplus of £1.731m was now confirmed (although this was masked by the nominal pension deficit in the final accounts). The meeting noted the generic FE key audit risks which had been a focus during the audit: income recognition; going concern; management override and bias; related party transactions; retirement benefits and the merger with Richmond Upon Thames College. The assurance from Cooper Parry LLP against all six of these risks had been 'green' with no issues identified during the audit. The Chair of Resources Committee (AMcL) sought confirmation on whether the identified key risks would vary for the next year audit but NS highlighted that as most of these risks were 'unrebuttable' - i.e. could not be presumed to be satisfied – so they would always be included. NS confirmed that there had been no significant deficiencies in internal control identified during the audit but there were three low level recommendations. The three recommendations had been accepted by management and NS confirmed that the audit team had been fully satisfied with the management responses and that remedial action would be taken where necessary. The meeting was also assured that Cooper Parry had looked at the prior year audit recommendations and three out of four had been resolved. One was still raised as an issue in the current year - one of the three referred to above - and was in relation to the issue of Salary Review Letters. Corporation Members were pleased to note that the audit had not identified any misstatements that required adjustment in the financial statements, nor any unadjusted differences. Governors also noted the positive assurances given by Cooper Parry around the risks of fraud and independence and related party transactions. See full minute in relation to the Cooper Parry Audit Findings Report at minute 10a on page 12 below. SW thanked NS for his report and for the positive audit experience with the Cooper Parry team.

The verbal update from the external audit partner was NOTED and RECEIVED

[Nick Simkins left the meeting.]

ii) 'You said, we did' – Student Learner Voice Feedback

The meeting noted a Learner Voice presentation from the Student Governors Harrow and Uxbridge.

Harrow College (HC):

The Student Governor Harrow (AP) presented the report to the meeting. The report highlighted the key actions and improvements made to date in 2021/22 as a result of Student Council feedback.

- The positive feedback on the 'amazing' and inclusive environment, student support, resources (including improved Wi-Fi), tutorials, support with UCAS applications and learners feeling safe was noted.
- The timetabling issues raised had now been resolved.
- Comments on catering would be dealt with by contractor Aramark who would be attending the next Student Council meeting.

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- The meeting considered the impact of the reduction in learner bursary and the fact that many learners did not have their full travel costs covered. The Chair of Resources Committee (AMcL) sought and was given – confirmation that this reduction in bursary was due to a cut in agency bursary funding. The CEO (DDS) confirmed that this was the case and assured the meeting that the College would continue to campaign for increased bursary funding for those learners that needed it. The reduction had occurred after a change to a postcode analysis driven system which was within the objective of 'levelling up'. In reality this had meant that all London colleges lost funding as it was distributed elsewhere in the country; HCUC had lost £167,000 in-year. DDS reminded the meeting that London Colleges had successfully lobbied to counter the suggested removal of the free Oyster Zip card. The meeting noted that HCUC was trying to support the bursary funding from College resources but there was a limit to what could be done.
- The feedback from the Sexual Harassment survey was noted and Governors were assured that this remained a focus for the College during 2021/22 to ensure that all learners were supported and knew where to go to report concerns. Governors were pleased to see that management were taking a proactive approach to dealing with this issue.

Uxbridge College:

Governors noted the 'You Said We Did' presentation from Uxbridge College Student Governor (SL) supported by the Principal Uxbridge which outlined the issues raised during the year and the action taken by College management. The meeting noted the following key points:

- Sexual harassment: a recent survey showed that about 40% of cases were unreported. Staff training had taken place and learners would be encouraged to report and take a zero-tolerance approach. There had been additional coverage at EPR sessions for learners and a link to an online portal for reporting had been put on the HCUC App.
- Bursary funding was again raised as an issue and the insufficiency to cover the cost of travel
- Timetabling gaps had been raised as an issue but were unavoidable in some cases; staff were reinforcing that learners should use these gaps for self-study and revision.
- Computers speed issues had been raised as an issue in some areas – this was noted as more prominent in D Block and M Block. DMcT confirmed that the IT Team were looking at any necessary upgrades where 'lagging' had been reported on specific machines.
- Apprenticeships: learners wanted more support on applying for Apprenticeship vacancies. There were now better links on the student portal to vacancies, workshops run by the HCUC Careers Team and bookable appointments for learners to discuss their options with a Careers Advisor.
- Some learners would prefer some online teaching on days when College was busy but the meeting noted that current DfE guidance was for face-to-face delivery.
- Students had asked for a dedicated 'prayer room' as they felt uncomfortable praying in corridors. DMcT highlighted that the College had to prioritise teaching space with regards to room usage. It was confirmed that Reception held lists of vacant rooms which could be used for prayer on any given day.
- Positive feedback around: supportive experienced teachers, learners feeling safe, the multicultural nature of HCUC and the resources provided.

Governors asked for further discussion around the request for a multi-faith prayer room as they saw this as being of key importance to the inclusivity agenda of HCUC. AP asked the SLT to consider whether there was any way that this request could be accommodated so that all learners felt included and engaged. DDS asserted that the rooms had to be prioritised for education as the College was already under pressure for capacity issues. He affirmed that it would be hard to identify one-room that could be ring-fenced for this purpose but gave the meeting assurance that rooms were always available (these varied in location dependent on timetabling). Staff Governor (MB) highlighted that in her experience students were quite resourceful and often found a quiet place. The meeting noted that although rooms were available at all campuses maybe this was not advertised widely enough; a better communications strategy needed to be put in place. The meeting agreed that this issue needed further investigation as there were also restrictions

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around access to sinks for foot washing before prayer. DDS confirmed that the SLT would look at this issue across both college campuses and would also seek guidance on whether learners of different gender were permitted to pray together. Governors commended this review as it would be important for HCUC to implement best-practice and think about how it could enhance inclusivity.

The Student Governor presentations were NOTED.

It was AGREED that the SLT should investigate options for multi-faith prayer room facilities at all HCUC campuses.

iii) College Annual EDI Report 2020/21

The meeting took the report for agenda item 13 at the start of the meeting. The meeting noted the annual EDI Report covering students across Harrow College and Uxbridge College during 2020/21. This report was presented by the AP Student Aspirations and Projects (SD).

The record of discussions is included at item 13 on page 14 below.

The Annual Equality Diversity and Inclusion Report 2020/21 for HCUC was RECEIVED.

[SD left the meeting.]

6. Updates

• Chair's Update

The Chair flagged that the ongoing merger work and the Joint Steering Group process to try and get to a new confirmed merger date with RuTC was dominating his College based activity outside of formal Corporation meetings. He had also undertaken the appraisals for the Senior Post-holder and Remuneration Committee had met on 29 November to consider the appraisal paperwork. The formal minutes from this Remuneration Committee would be considered during the confidential Part 2 of the meeting.

• CEO's Update

DDS reminded the meeting of the very sad news that there had been a fatality of one of HCUC learners in Southall on the evening of 24 November 2021. There had been a meeting of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Safeguarding Lead Governor with SLT and HCUC security staff to review the incident and set an action plan for dealing with the incident on the morning after the news had been received. Senior level police had contacted the college to check that management and staff were getting the support needed. DDS highlighted that there had now been an arrest in connection with the stabbing. DDS confirmed that SLT had contacted the student's family and were mindful of their needs. Governors were also assured that the SLT had made the safeguarding of all other HCUC learners as a priority.

DDS also informed the meeting that he had just received a letter from Boris Johnson as the local MP; DDS had written a termly update letter to all local MPs including current concerns around T Levels and the possible removal of BTEC qualifications. DDS informed the meeting that while the Prime Minister's reply had been reassuring it emphasised the need for qualification reform. The letter from Boris Johnson had also offered a short term project to HCUC learners to design the official 'Number 10' Christmas card. As a result of HCUC participation, 15 learners had been invited to Number 10 and one of HCUC's students had their submission featured on the inside of the Number 10 card.

Finally, DDS concurred with the Chair that the merger work was a continuing focus as was the aim of ensuring that HCUC remained Ofsted ready.

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7. Covid-19 Update

The meeting received a Covid-19 Update Report from the Executive Director Corporate Services (AMi). Governors were assured that the College continued to follow the Government Covid-19 advice and remained

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agile to respond to hardening or softening of the restrictions. Through regular contact with the PHE, HSE, NHS and Hillingdon Health authority management remained current with latest developments and thinking. DDS confirmed that HCUC was aiming for full learner attendance and teaching on site in line with the wishes of the DfE. However, adjustments had been put in place - as advised by government - to combat the spread of the new Omicron variant; these were stated as temporary in government guidance and would be reviewed on 18 December 2021. AMi highlighted the following aspects of his report:

- **Face coverings:** Although face coverings were not required by law it was recommended by the Government that their use should be implemented in education settings. The use of the terms “must” and “should” throughout the guidance was noted. AMi confirmed that HCUC had supplied face coverings to students at all four locations at higher than expected levels even though students were being encouraged to provide their own face coverings.
- **Isolation rules:** All staff had been advised of the change in self-isolation rules; if a person was identified as positive with the Omicron variant, then all close contacts must also self-isolate. The self-isolation period for confirmed Omicron cases was also extended to 10 days. At present all those returning to the UK from abroad were required to self-isolate until they received a negative PCR test. Although this may have changed by the Christmas leave period all staff had been advised accordingly in order to mitigate any staff absence in January.
- **Ventilation:** This remained as a key mitigation measure. AMi confirmed that the Government supplied air quality monitors had now arrived and would be installed in the most appropriate areas after the Christmas break. HCUC had 100 to spread across the four campuses and training for their use was now being considered prior to issue. Governors were reminded that these monitors would only measure the air quality and not improve it.
- **Case numbers:** In the period 1st to 30th November (since half-term) HCUC had recorded 74 student cases and 7 staff cases. This compared to figures for the same period in 2020 of 71 students and 17 staff.
- **Covid Testing:** The College remains committed to at home testing and this regime seemed to be being followed as the majority of Covid cases had been reported as a result of an LFD test taken at home. It was also noted that students had also complied with the request to test prior to returning from half term as a spike in cases was reported at that time. This message would be reinforced for the return from Christmas holidays.
- **Vaccination:** The arrival of the Omicron variant had intensified the Governments drive for vaccination. The meeting was assured that the College continued to encourage staff and students to get vaccinated. A student survey had been conducted to ascertain any future take up but the return response had been disappointing. Out of 6,463 full time students only 1,878 responses were received; from this response the numbers who had taken at least one dose were split circa 50/50. AMi informed the meeting that the SLT were currently investigating the option of having a vaccine pop-up delivery facility on site at HCUC as this might encourage participation.
- **Staff Christmas meal:** Following the Government line concerning hospitality, SLT currently intended to proceed with offering a Christmas meal to all staff. However, it would be served in a box which would enable staff to either eat in the refectory or take the meal to somewhere less crowded. DDS highlighted that this would be accompanied by an online All Staff meeting to close the year where the annual Staff Star Awards would be celebrated.

The Covid-19 Update Report was NOTED and RECEIVED.

8. Governing Body Matters

• ***Corporation Self-Assessment 2020/21***

As part of the Governance Self-Assessment process 2020/21, Governors had completed a college generated questionnaire designed to assess governors' views on compliance with good governance standards. The self-assessment questionnaire and governors' responses had been discussed at the Governors Training Event in October 2020. Subsequently governors returned their completed questionnaires and narrative comments. In addition to this the Director of Governance (TR) reviewed the Skills Audit in order to ensure an appropriate balance of skills and knowledge within the new HCUC

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Corporation. For additional assurance, TR also undertook a review of HCUC Corporation's performance 2020/21 against its adopted Governance Code – the Association of Colleges Code of Good Governance for English Colleges. The meeting noted this detailed 'RAG' rated review against all of the elements of the code; Governors were assured that there were currently no areas of non-compliance that need remedial action.

At the October 2021 Governors' Training Day, the performance against the agreed Governance Objectives for 2020/21 was briefly discussed by HCUC Governors and this was followed up by email feedback. The outcome of the discussions is shown in italics below.

- To ensure that all member of the Governance team were 'Ofsted-ready' in order to support an Outstanding grade for Leadership & Management in a future Ofsted inspection of HCUC under the new Education Inspection Framework. (A full Ofsted Inspection under the new EIF was likely in 2020/21.)
 - To ensure Governors have access to updated/ live performance data and ongoing briefing on curriculum areas of strength or underperformance during 2020/21.
 - To further develop governance training opportunities (internal and external) for all levels of governor expertise and to meet the challenges of a changing external environment; Governors to be kept apprised on all relevant legislative changes.

Both the Governors and the SLT were disappointed that Ofsted had not visited the College during 2020/21 but the pandemic had caused Ofsted inspections to be halted. Governors and the SLT believed that with the implementation of core systems and a strong culture across the whole of HCUC the organisation remained 'Ofsted-ready'. Governors believed that they had been given access to appropriate training provided from internal and external sources during the year.

- To work with SLT and take forward merger explorations with Richmond Upon Thames College (RuTC) focussed through the Joint Steering Group but with input from all Governors during the due diligence process.

The Merger Joint Steering Group with RuTC had been set up in November 2020 to take forward the merger with a target date of 31 July 2021. Membership and attendance at JSG meetings from HCUC Governors had been very strong during the year. All Governors at HCUC were kept fully informed on the progress of the merger at all times during the year and were fully involved in all aspects of decision making. The HCUC Corporation and SLT were disappointed when the target merger date had to be delayed due to unforeseen complications and ongoing risks associated with the phase two campus development work at RuTC.

- To work with the College HR Director and CEO to ensure that the Senior Postholder (SPH) vacancy within the Executive Management Team is filled in a timely and efficient manner to meet good practice guidelines and the College instruments and articles.

This objective had been met through Governors' input to the pre-merger work. Governors and the Clerk to the Corporation worked with the merger project managers – FEA Associates – to review and agree the post-merger senior management structure. Numerous HCUC Governors were involved in the interview and selection process for the designate senior management team which was all undertaken to meet the requirements of the HCUC Instrument & Articles. After the merger with RuTC was delayed the HCUC Corporation and Remuneration Committee worked to resolve the ongoing vacancy at Harrow College. A successful appointment was made for the Harrow Principal and the Deputy CEO/ Uxbridge Principal at the start of the 2021/22 academic year.

As a result of the self-assessment, discussion at the Governors' Training Day and a detailed discussion with the Chair of Governors the Director of Governance presented the following three priorities for the further development of governance at HCUC during 2021/22:

- ***To ensure that all member of the Governance team remain 'Ofsted-ready' in order to support an Outstanding grade for Leadership & Management in a future Ofsted inspection of HCUC under the new Education Inspection Framework. (A full Ofsted Inspection under the new EIF was very likely in 2021/22.)***

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- *To ensure Governors have access to updated/ live performance data and ongoing briefing on curriculum areas of strength or underperformance during 2021/22.*
- **To work with SLT to take forward the proposed merger with RuTC focussed through the Joint Steering Group but with input from all Governors to ensure the best outcome for HCUC and its stakeholders.**
 - *To ensure that the balance of skills and membership of the Corporation at HCUC remains fit-for-purpose during the extended pre-merger period.*
- **To ensure that Corporation Members fully understand the wider FE sector changes – e.g. Skills for Jobs White Paper, moves to regional collaboration, moves to an employer-driven curriculum, other curriculum changes at Level 3, T levels – and their impact on HCUC.**
 - *To further develop governance training opportunities (internal and external) for all levels of governor expertise and to meet the challenges of a changing external environment; Governors to be kept apprised on all relevant legislative changes.*
 - *To provide access to the ETF Governance Training modules for all HCUC Governors and to encourage their use.*

The meeting commended this comprehensive governance self-assessment process. Governors were reminded about the importance of realistic self-scrutiny by governors and senior leaders.

The HCUC Governance Development Objectives 2021/22 as presented (in italics above) were APPROVED as presented.

- **Governance Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

The Clerk presented draft KPIS for the Corporation to use within the 2021/22 self-assessment process.

The Governance KPIs as presented were APPROVED.

- **Notes from October 2021 Training and Planning (T&P) Day**

The Director of Governance (TR) provided a summary of the main items covered at the T&P Day in October 2021; a record of the discussions and actions was noted. Governors agreed that the event had worked well and were pleased that it had managed to be held on a face-to-face basis while adhering to Covid guidelines.

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- **White Paper 'Skills for Jobs' – interim guidance notes from DfE on governance**

The Director of Governance (TR) presented a document issued by DfE which provided interim guidance on the steps DfE was taking to strengthen governance in further education and sixth-form college corporations. Governors were reminded that these were part of the reforms set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper. TR highlighted that an updated version of the FE Governance Guide would be published in spring 2022 and an update would be brought to the Corporation on any changes required in governance at HCUC.

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8a. Modern Slavery Statement

The meeting considered the HCUC Modern Slavery Statement covering the period 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022 which was presented for annual approval. This document would be signed by the Chair of the Corporation and placed on the College website to meet regulatory requirements. SW also presented a 'Modern Slavery in the Supply Chain' supplier questionnaire that would be used by Tenet who provided procurement consultancy for HCUC.

The Modern Slavery Statement and Supplier Questionnaire was APPROVED as presented.

9. Self-Assessment Reports (SAR) 2020/21 and HCUC Overview

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The meeting considered an overview Self-Assessment commentary 2020/21 that related to HCUC; this had been drawn from the individual Harrow College (HC) and Uxbridge College (UC) SARs and performance data. The SAR overview report for HCUC had been drafted to mirror the format of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and reported on the following: Quality of Education (curriculum intent, implementation and impact); Education programmes for young people (57% of HCUC provision); Adult learning programmes (43% of provision); Apprenticeships (1.8% provision); provision for High Needs learners; Behaviour and Attitudes; Personal Development; and Leadership and Management. The meeting also considered the SAR appendices, which provided more detail on the characteristics of each of the two constituent colleges in terms of learners, curriculum offer, outcomes, progression, and destination data. The meeting noted the proposed SAR grades for overall effectiveness 2020/21 across HCUC compared with the comparable judgements for 2019/20 and 2018/19.

Proposed SAR Grades - HCUC	2019/20 Judgment	2020/21 Judgement
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>	TBC Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs & CV19</i> or Good+
Quality of Education	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs & CV19</i>
• Curriculum intent	Outstanding	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>
• Curriculum implementation	Good <i>with outstanding features</i>	Good <i>with outstanding features</i>
• Curriculum impact	Outstanding	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>
Education Programmes for young people	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>
Adult Learning Programmes	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>	Outstanding <i>with noted AFIs</i>
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement <i>with good features</i>	Requires improvement ++ <i>with good features</i>
Provision for High Needs	Good <i>with outstanding features</i>	Good
Behaviour and Attitudes	Good <i>with Outstanding features</i>	Good <i>with Outstanding features</i>
Personal Development	Outstanding	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding	Outstanding

The meeting was reminded that the SAR judgements had been built up through the College; each curriculum area self-assessed then validation panels were held to validate the judgement. The meeting discussed the management decision on whether to assess as outstanding or Good+ or Overall Effectiveness. This had been raised in the final draft (October 2021) when the possible impact of new curriculum intent guidelines raised by the white paper Skills for Jobs had been considered. There was also the impact of some staffing challenges post-covid. After discussion the meeting agreed that SLT seemed to be erring on the side of caution and that the college should go into any Ofsted inspection with the aiming of fighting to achieve an Outstanding rating. DMcT confirmed that this Sar had been considered in detail at both of the colleges

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Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committee meetings in November as well as at the Quality Curriculum and Student sub-committee. DMcT informed the meeting that an element of external verification would be undertaken on this SAR - from peer review (colleagues from another college) or from an ex-HMI - before it was uploaded to the Ofsted portal early in 2022. Governors commended the very strong results and agreed that the very detailed data gave assurance that there was still 'clear-blue-water' between HCUC and other providers. The meeting commended the very useful graph on page 13 of the SAR which gave very clear assurance to Governors of the ongoing support provided for learners and staff during the Covid-19 pandemic; the strong QAR data in 2019/20 and 2020/21 demonstrated the positive impact of this work.

- **Emerging Strengths & Areas for Improvement (Afls) 2021/22**

The headline **strengths** for HCUC to maintain were noted as:

- HCUC curriculum is designed to meet London's economic needs effectively. Employer involvement enhances and delivers ambitious career goals.
- The large numbers of highly effective lessons were characterised by expert teachers effectively using their subject knowledge and pedagogical skill to support students to achieve very high levels of knowledge & skills.
- Well-planned lessons that skilfully use a variety of student-led learning tasks which are appropriately sequenced to build students' knowledge, skills, and understanding to reach the highest levels of performance.
- Students achieve their full potential with very high & improving 16-18 & 19+ QAR Achievement, well above NA and improved over five years. This is reflected in exceptionally high destinations, positive valued-added & high-grades.
- Student Achievement is high and consistent in the majority of subjects. It is above NA for all subjects. HCUC has successfully invested in improving Construction & WBL which are now also above NA.
- Student behaviour is highly respectful, they are courteous to staff and one-another.
- Student well-being, mental health and monitoring and supporting 'at-risk' student is highly effective, including throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Support for students and staff throughout Covid-19 maintained student progress and staff and student wellbeing effectively.

The common areas identified across HCUC **for improvement** in 2021/22 were highlighted as:

- To continue improvement in Work Based Learning (WBL) outcomes, now well above national average (NA). Covid-19 had meant that a minority of WBL Teaching Learning & Assessment (TLA) provision had not improved quickly enough.
- Further developing the craft of less effective teachers in order that they can better deploy an appropriate range of learning tasks and/or assessment methods that ensure that all students make at least the progress expected of them.
- English & Maths attendance is inconsistent.
- To further increase the volume of work experience to above 80%.

The meeting commended the detailed information provided in the SAR 2020/21, which enabled them to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the two colleges and provided a clear picture across HCUC. Governors agreed that they would concur with this anecdotal evidence and positive judgement. The meeting commended the increased consistency across the whole of HCUC in the judgements.

The Chair sought, and was given, confirmation that the SLT felt able to justify an Outstanding self-assessment grading with noted AFIs (several tied to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic) and the meeting agreed that HCUC should go into any inspection aiming for this top grade.

The HCUC Self-Assessment Report 2020/21 was APPROVED; it would be uploaded to the ESFA Gateway and to the Ofsted online portal.

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• Higher Education (HE) SAR & HE Overview

The meeting was reminded that the individual College's Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees (SSCs) had reviewed HE outcomes for 2020/21 and a full combined HE report had been presented to the Quality and Curriculum and Student (QCS) Committee on 25 November 2021. The very detailed HE SAR was taken as read along with the numerous appendices giving data by course level and protected characteristics as well as continuation rates and destinations.

The meeting noted the following summary:

- HCUC HNC/ HND outcomes 2020/21 overall retention was 89%, and 98% achievement. Within this Harrow College was 100% for retention and achievement (22 starts) and UC 88% retention and 98% achievement (185 starts).
- Uxbridge College Teacher Training retention was at 98% and achievement was 100%.
- The HE SAR (in relation to Condition B of the College's registration with the OfS) had been completed with robust actions identified to address areas for improvement. The HE SAR had been reviewed in detail at the QCS Committee in November 2021.

The summary strengths and AFIs for 2021/22 were noted as follows:

HE Strengths

- High quality learning experience and reliable assessment leading to very high levels of achievement.
- Robust quality assurance processes and effective management of academic standards by curriculum teams.
- Strong partnerships with HEIs to support Teacher Training and Pearson to support Higher National provision.
- Well qualified staff many of whom have industry experience to enhance teaching and learning which leads to very good outcomes including for students with disabilities.
- Rigorous assessment feedback enabling students to improve the standard of their work.
- Excellent progression to university and employment for those completing their programmes.

HE Areas for Improvement

- Consolidate improvement in some resources to support teaching and learning.
- Maintain improvement in retention to secure improved continuation rates.
- Improve advice and support related to student finance at application, enrolment and on-programme.

In her absence DMcT formally thanked governor MRW for her ongoing input to the monitoring of HE at HCUC; her knowledge of the university sector and OfS requirements had been an extremely useful resource for the College. The CEO (DDS) highlighted a paper to be considered later in the meeting in relation to the Governance Scrutiny of compliance with the OfS requirements of registration during 2020/21.

The HE Update Report and self-assessment 2020/21 was NOTED and RECEIVED.

10a. Audit of Financial Statements 2020/21

To receive, consider and approve the Report & Financial Statements of HCUC for the period ending 31 July 2021 as recommended by the Resources Committee

The Group Director Finance and Resource Planning (GDFRP), presented the results for HCUC for the year-end 31 July 2021. It was noted that the Financial Statements and the associated audit reports had been considered in detail by the Resources Committee and the Audit Committee on 24 November 2021. The meeting was given assurance that the Resources Committee was recommending the Financial Statements 2020/21 to the Corporation.

i) Financial Statements

The GDFRP (SW) introduced the draft reports and financial statements for the period ended 31 July 2021 and highlighted the following key points:

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- The operating surplus for the year was £2,384,000 (compared with £3,434,000 in 2019/20).
- Once the impact of the £604,000 actuarial FRS17 pension loss was applied this resulted in a 'Total Comprehensive Gain' of £1.731m.
- The balance on the income and expenditure account (excluding pension reserve) now stood at £81.968m (compared with a figure of £77.162m in 2019/20).
- Total income for the year was at £55.525m compared with £52.977m in the prior year.
- Total expenditure was at £53.190m compared with £49.9543m in the prior year. Staff costs were at £6.6m compared with £6.1m in the prior year. The increase in other operating expenses (now at £11.935m compared with £10.250m in the prior year) was due to a number of factors including: the move of data to Azure to improve cyber security which had cost an extra £200,000; merger costs of £180,000; cyber provision of £500,000; IT consultancy and bad debt provision had increased to £274,000 (an increase of £235,000).
- The College had accumulated reserves of £42.881m, non-current assets of £109.073m and cash balances of £29.070m.
- Net current assets were at £18.475m compared with £11.915m in the prior year.
- The LGPS pension liability was noted as £43.706m compared with £40.661m last year. Governors were reminded that the pension liability (FRS17) was not included by the ESFA when assessing the financial health of colleges. The reason for this movement was a change in the actuarial assumptions especially in the discount rate used and price inflation. The external auditors had confirmed that the assumptions used by the College actuaries were largely in line with those used at other Colleges.

The meeting went through the Income and Expenditure account and the Notes to the Financial Statements and the Balance Sheet. The meeting noted that in 2020/21 the College delivered activity that produced £48.722m in Agency main allocation funding (compared with £44.850m in 2019/20). The total Agency funding was at 85.6% of income in 2020/21 (82.7% in prior year). The meeting noted the detail of the fixed asset additions during the year, which amounted to £8.062m (compared with £16.558m in 2019/20). The meeting noted the strong financial performance indicators for the 2020/21 year which included a strong cash position after the net cash inflow of £9.7m as well as the following:

- Cash days in hand at 31 July 2021 were 224.7 against a forecast of 192.6
- Current ratio (assets over liabilities) of 2.48 against a forecast of 2.55 (2.23 achieved in 2019/20).
- Accumulated reserves were 151% of income against a forecast of 148%.
- EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation) was at 14.66% against a forecast of 11.25%; SW reminded the meeting that the sector average was circa 7%.

SW highlighted the impact of Covid-19 on the financial results with the following income streams adversely affected as follows: other income £321,000; commercial activity £260,000; Work Based Learning provision £749,000. There had also been additional costs incurred of £140,000 in relation to PPE sourced. This was counter-balanced by a saving of £58,000 for the HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (to cover furlough payments for staff).

Going Concern: The meeting was assured that a detailed review of the 'going concern' status of HCUC had been reviewed by the joint meeting of the Resources and Audit Committee on 24 November 2021. SW assured the meeting that the HCUC Corporation could be assured that a formal assessment of going concern had been undertaken in preparation for signing the financial statements. This had included an assessment of the following factors: the financial position and reserves on 31 July 2021; cash and investment balances and cash flow forecasts for the next 12 months; the 2021/22 financial budget as approved by the HCUC Corporation; student recruitment in 2021/22; and, known liabilities and commitments during the next 12 months.

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The meeting noted the assurance around Going Concern which had been supported by the external audit process. The Corporation agreed that the College had adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the near future. ***For this reason, the Corporation APPROVED the recommendation that HCUC should continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.***

Governors commended the strong financial results which had exceeded forecast by some way. The meeting agreed that the College was in a strong position pre-merger and would be able to meet current and future economic challenges from a position of relative strength when compared with many other FE Colleges. It was agreed that the College's key strategic aim in relation to finances 'To maintain the strong financial profile needed to ensure a secure future', had been fully achieved.

ii) July 2021 Management Accounts

The restated Management Accounts for 31 July 2021 and the adjustments arising post-year end from the preparation and audit of the Financial Statements were noted by the meeting. Adjustments totaling £297,000 were made against the income and expenditure. As previously noted by the meeting the revised historical surplus was £2,384,000 against a forecast surplus of £1,055,000. The detail of the management accounts for July 2021 was taken as read; they had been reviewed by the joint meeting of Audit Committee and Resources Committee on 24 November 2021.

The 2020/21 Financial Statements and July 2021 Management Accounts were NOTED and APPROVED.

The Financial Statements would be signed by the Chair and CEO and submitted to the ESFA in advance of the deadline of 31 December 2021.

iii) Audit Findings Report of the External Auditors, Cooper Parry, following their audit of the HCUC Financial Statements for 2020/21.

This had been discussed at the start of the meeting when Nick Simkins of Cooper Parry presented the Audit Findings Report to the Governors which acknowledged the strong financial outturn and cash position for HCUC. The meeting had been pleased to note the clean unqualified opinion on the financial statements and for the regularity audit. The meeting agreed that the low number and low risk score of the recommendations highlighted an ongoing positive control environment at HCUC. The Corporation Members commended the College finance team and Cooper Parry for a very positive external audit.

The Audit Report and Management Letter of the External Auditors, Cooper Parry, for HCUC 2020/21 was RECEIVED.

iv) Letters of Representation

The meeting noted the draft Letters of Representation; one for the Financial Statements and one for the Regularity Audit. SW confirmed that these letters had a standard format for all FE Colleges – dictated by the Joint Audit Code of Practice – they did not include any narrative specific to HCUC. SW highlighted the one outstanding item before the Letters of Representation could be signed; Cooper Parry had only just received confirmation around final assurance that the level of provision held for the cyber incident was appropriate – this had now been provided by legal experts.

The Letters of Representation for HCUC were APPROVED (subject to the finalisation of the wording on the provision for the cyber incident) and would be signed by the Corporation Chair on behalf of the Corporation, and the Group Principal/ CEO as Chief Accounting Officer of HCUC.

v) Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The meeting considered the detailed Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2020/21. This had been completed by the College Management Team for the assurance of the External Auditors on all Regularity Issues. As previously noted, Cooper Parry had provided a clean opinion on the Regularity Audit for HCUC during 2020/21. The meeting agreed that this document which had been enhanced for 2020/21 with an additional Annex B in relation to the ongoing operational impact of Covid-19 provided a useful summary for the Governors.

The Regularity Audit Self-Assessment Questionnaire was NOTED and APPROVED

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10b. To receive the Audit Committee Annual Report to the Corporation 2020/21

The Chair of Audit Committee presented the Annual Report from the HCUC Audit Committee for 2020/21. This detailed the membership and the activities of the Audit Committee during the academic year. The positive assessment of the work of the external auditors, Cooper Parry, which was appended to this report was also noted by the meeting. It was noted that this report and the appendix would be submitted to the ESFA to accompany the Financial Statements 2020/21.

The Audit Committee Annual Report was RECEIVED.

10c. Pay Award December 2021

The meeting was reminded that the approved HCUC budget for 2021/22 included a provision of a 1.0% cost of living (COL) pay award which had been approved by the Corporation in July 2021. This 1% COL award had been applied to all HCUC staff except those on protected salaries. SW informed the meeting that the AoC recommendation on pay for 2021/22 had not yet been agreed but HCUC did not usually wait for this recommendation before agreeing pay awards. SW informed the meeting that SLT were making a further recommendation for a one-off Pay Award in light of the strong financial performance and staff commitment that delivered high learner performance outcomes during the pandemic, as well as staff rising to the challenge under extraordinary circumstances during 2020/21. The meeting considered a recommendation that a one off £250 pay award be paid in December 2021. The one-off payment would be awarded pro rata: More than 1 year service £250; 1 year service £125; and Less than 1 year service £0

SW confirmed that this one-off pay award would cost circa £150,000; this had been included as a provision in the financial statements so would not have any impact on the 2021/22 financial performance. Governors sought and were given confirmation that this December 2021 one-off pay award might not be repeated during the 2022/23 academic year. Chair of the Resources Committee (AMcL) confirmed his strong support for this proposal; it would be a good way of thanking staff for their considerable efforts during an unprecedented time for the College.

The meeting APPROVED the one-off December 2021 recognition payment up to £250 per person as outlined above.

11. Learner Involvement Strategy 2021/22

The meeting noted the annual update of the HCUC Learner Involvement Strategy. This strategy used both College-led approaches and learner-led approaches to seek the views on issues and develop systems and structures to empower learners to raise issues and promote discussion. Implementation of this strategy was the responsibility of the Assistant Principal Student Services and Safeguarding at Uxbridge (formerly Director – SEND, Safeguarding & Prevent), and the Head of Learner Services – Experience & Employment at Harrow along with the Student Governor Representatives. The meeting sought assurance that the College had continued to deliver all the commitments within this Learner Involvement Strategy during the Covid-19 restriction. DMcT informed the meeting that all planned activity had gone ahead even if delivered remotely e.g. the student representative conference. Governors also sought – and were given - confirmation that the additional Higher Education Students within the Institute of Technology (IoT) were adequately represented within this strategy. DDS confirmed that HE students attended the Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committee meetings. In addition, there was a communication process from the college HE Committee through Academic Board to the Corporation's Quality Curriculum and Student Committee. **It was noted that the new AP Student services and Safeguarding job title at Uxbridge College needed to be amended on the front page.**

The Learner Involvement Strategy 2021/22 was APPROVED subject to the job title amendment as detailed above.

12. Update on proposed merger with Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC)

The meeting noted a update report on progress with the merger discussions with Richmond Upon Thames College (RuTC) provided by the CEO. Governors were reminded that the RuTC Phase 2 Capital build had

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presented challenges in relation to planning conditions, following ongoing review by the local authority planning committee. This in turn was impacting the ability and timeliness for RuTC to access funds for the Phase 2 build from the developer (Clarion). As a result, the HCUC members of the Joint Steering Group had considered that there were financial assurances that would be prudent for HCUC to receive prior to agreeing a revised merger date. These assurances had been framed as 'gateways to merger' which had all been shared with RuTC and progress against these was being monitored by the Joint Steering Group (JSG). The 'gateways to merger' were noted as:

- i) Clarion contractual arrangements with RuTC: We believe it is essential for the Clarion Heads of Terms to be fully executed and that these will be done so in line with what has currently been agreed with regard to the phasing of the payments from Clarion.
- ii) Planning permission: We think it is essential for the joint planning application for the sports hall to be submitted to the council including timeliness of land transfer to the school.
- iii) ISG Contract for the next phase. HCUC had concerns that the figure previously quoted for the next phase of the project – STEM Building - may no longer be valid and that any contingencies identified may not be sufficient to cover the potential increase in contract price caused by Brexit, material costs and labour shortages.
- iv) GLA contracts: HCUC would like further details on the potential for GLA claw-back of capital funding and would like whatever assurance is possible around claw-back risks.
- v) Visibility on RuTC working capital position: Cash flow forecasting will be an essential element of this process; building a financial model, with a particular emphasis on accurate cashflow forecasting was also key .

The Chair (ND) assured the meeting that RuTC and their project managers continued to meet regularly with the Housing development company (Clarion) and Richmond council to progress matters. DDS was also having weekly 'one-to-one' update meetings with RuTC Interim Principal. The pre-merger work was continuing with the JSG meeting monthly and the Workstream activity had now recommenced with a main focus on Finance, Systems, Quality, HR & Marketing/communications. SW highlighted the joint review of the KPMG funding audit which had been commissioned at each of the two colleges on the ILR 2020/21; there had been a joint Audit Committee meeting on 30 November to consider the audit reports. The Chair commended the detailed work undertaken by the GDFRP (SW) on the financial risks and the cashflow analysis in relation to the RuTC capital planning delay. DDS confirmed that activity between the two colleges continued to be really positive with a lot of very effective collaboration already taking place.

[The meeting spent some time considering risks and benefits of the merger which is recorded in the Confidential Part 2 minutes of the meeting.]

The meeting NOTED and RECEIVED the merger update and the action points from the JSG meeting on 1 December 2021.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

13. Statutory Updates: Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Report 2020/21

The meeting noted the annual EDI Report covering students across Harrow College and Uxbridge College during 2020/21. This report was presented by the AP Student Aspirations and Projects (SD) and covered the following aspects of EDI:

- Student involvement in Equality and Diversity activities
- Reducing Inequalities – The Black Mentoring Project
- Student Data:
 - Enrolment data
 - Student measures of success with data split by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic disadvantage, Free School Meals, Looked After Children, Looked after Students destination data, High Needs, Learning Difficulty, and Apprenticeships.

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- Staff Data: showing BAME representation, gender, disability, age breakdown, recruitment, and training.
- Effectiveness of Policies and Procedures:
 - Equality and Diversity Action Plan
 - Student disciplinary data
 - Complaint data
- Marketing activities
- Response to litigation

Student Data: Governors were reminded that much of this 2020/21 year-end data had already been reported and discussed through the sub-committee meetings including: Quality Curriculum and Standards Committee (students); Resources Committee (staff data), and the two college Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees. SD highlighted that the EDI Action Plan for 2021/22 was monitored by SLT as well as the cross-college EDI Committee.

SD confirmed that, as could be seen from the EDI Report, there had been a lot of involvement during the year across HCUC. The EDI calendar of events was well-embedded across college and – as highlighted in the CEO introduction to the annual EDI report – inclusivity was one of the core values of HCUC. SD confirmed that the College Marketing Team had done a lot of work on inclusivity during the year. The meeting was given some more detail on the Black Mentoring Project which had been funded as part of the College Collaboration Fund. This project had provided 1:1 mentoring support for 231 Black Caribbean students, who were designated ‘at risk’ of withdrawal or non-achievement. The 17 mentors provided pastoral as well as academic support which had been especially beneficial during the Covid-19 lockdown in early 2021. The Black Mentoring Project at HCUC had led to good retention and success data and was now seen as a model of good practice within the sector.

SD highlighted the QAR student success rate data and confirmed that most ethnic groups were within 5% of the overall HCUC success figure for 2020/21 (88.76%). The meeting noted the four groups outside of this 5% threshold – Caribbean (698), Gypsy/ Irish Traveller (41), Not Provided (68) and White/ Black Caribbean (306). Two of these groups were very small numbers and the White/ Black Caribbean was following a national trend. SD confirmed that this would be included in the EDI Action Plan for 2021/22. The meeting looked at the data for High Needs learners and SD highlighted that High Needs learners had been required to take Functional Skills exams and had not benefitted from the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) employed for many qualifications in 2021. The meeting noted HCUC’s participation in a project to devise two new qualifications for SEND learners where the College had created and validated the qualifications. The College had also now put in place ‘SEND Champions’ across HCUC.

The overall QAR for apprenticeships was 70.4% for 2020/21 and whilst most ethnicities were within the 5% of the College QAR, it is clear that Black Caribbean and African students (Other Black – very small numbers) were significantly below the 5% College target. SD confirmed that this would be a focus in the EDI action plan for 2021/22. The meeting also noted that in terms of recruitment and apprenticeship enrolments, White and Other White had a much higher proportion (59%) compared with non-apprenticeship provision (23%), this would also be addressed in the EDI action plan although noted as being reflective of a national trend. SD reminded the meeting that HCUC had contributed to the London Mayor’s Sector Skills Academy initiatives as a partner within the hubs across the West London priority sectors. A focus of the Skills Academies was to help to support employers to address structural barriers to engagement, recruitment, retention and progression for underrepresented groups in their industry/workforce.

Staff Data: This was taken as read as this had been considered in detail by the Resources Committee in September 2021. However, the meeting noted that the BAME representation at HCUC had now increased to 40% (compared with 36% for 2019/20. This was now above the GLA benchmarking figure of 36%.

Response to legislation: Governors were assured that HCUC was mindful of the protected characteristics - age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; gender; and sexual orientation – as defined in the Equality Act 2010. In addition, the College was

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always mindful of socio-economic disadvantage as a particularly important area in education. Governors were reminded that as part of the legislation the College was required to set and review objectives for EDI every four years. The College's current EDI objectives in relation to student success and staff recruitment were noted by the meeting.

The meeting agreed that the annual EDI Report demonstrated that 2020/21 had been a successful year for Equality and Diversity in the College. There had been a general high level of success rates for different ethnic groups and a maintained narrowing of gaps in achievement for those with protected characteristics. However, there were some actions required for those groups of students with protected characteristics that were not performing to the high standards the College sets itself, and these would be addressed in the implementation of the EDI Action Plan for 2021/22 as outlined above. The meeting commended the very thorough and professional looking report and noted that QCS Committee would be monitoring actions against the EDI Action Plan through the year. The meeting was reminded that this EDI Annual Report was published on the College website on an annual basis with a comprehensive narrative summary to meet legislative requirements.

The Annual Equality & Diversity report 2020/21 for HCUC was RECEIVED.

14. Notification of any fraud 2021/22

The meeting noted that there had been no reported attempts or instances of financial fraud during the 2021/22 academic year to date.

The report was NOTED

ITEMS TO BE TAKEN AS READ (with questions from Governors)

15. Partnerships Report

The meeting took this report as read which gave the meeting an update on employer engagement and partnership activities for HCUC for the autumn term 2021. Governors commended the wide range of activities and partnership development work across HCUC. Principal Harrow (JW) led on this report and highlighted that although there was a continuing impact from Covid opportunities were now starting to come through. Employers were keen to benefit from the incentives around Apprenticeships. The detailed report was taken as read but Governors noted the key points as follow:

Apprenticeships: The meeting noted that recruitment remained challenging, but HCUC had recruited 73% of the profile for the first quarter 2021/22. Engineering and building services were recruiting well with health and care sectors seeing some challenges with the suitability of candidates. The final QAR achievement for 2020/21 was 70.4% which was 7% higher than the prior year QAR and 6.2% above the national average. However, this would need close monitoring for the current year as there were some legacy issues. The focus would be on achievement for 2021/22 with current predictions for 2021/22 currently at 66.2% to 77.4%. JW confirmed that recruitment for quarter 1 of the year had started well and was at 95% of target but Quarter 2 was proving more of a challenge despite extended employer incentives. Kickstart was proving an alternative option for some candidates and employers. The meeting was reminded of the new Technical Apprenticeship School (TAS) put in place at HCUC at the start of the year to raise quality in the building services, engineering, motor vehicle and IT curriculum areas. The new Assistant Director role created as Head of the TAS for 2021/22 was now driving this work forward even though the challenges and complexities had been greater than expected. JW assured the meeting that a very strong action plan for this provision was now in place and would be delivered through the TAS framework.

Employer Partnerships and Employability Programmes: The meeting was reminded of the focus for 2021/22 for HCUC to increase employer partnerships to inform the curriculum plan and support the co-design and co-delivery of study programmes. Successful Job Fair hosted in partnership with local Jobcentres boosted Kickstart placements, apprenticeships, recruitment for SWAPs (sector-based work academy programmes); new relationships had been forged with new employers for the benefit of HCUC curriculum areas. There would be an increase in SWAPs in 2021/22 to support employers' recruitment with repeat business from Menzies, World Duty Free and British Airways. JW confirmed that referrals to date had been strong and online courses were on track to meet target.

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Stakeholder partnerships: The West London Authority HE/FE steering groups representing the four priority sector in West London (digital, green, creative & culture, and health & care) were continuing to build traction with employer engagement, establishment of progression pathways and influence on policy drivers. The aim was to address employment, skills and progression within these priority areas. These were working well with the College Collaboration Fund CCF project and the Good Work for All initiative which was linked to the highest priority sector in West London health and care.

Subcontracting: HCUC was now working with seven subcontractors (AEB £100k and Good Work for All £175k) including one sub-contractor for apprenticeship delivery. Monthly partnership meetings were being conducted with more formal termly performance reviews which would monitor and drive high performance.

West London Institute of Technology (WLioT): The meeting was reminded that key risks remained in relation to learner numbers at levels 4, 5 and 6 against original DfE targets and employer engagement; this had been heightened by the pandemic, College lockdown and a lack of any national advertising for the IoTs. Current recruitment data was noted as follows:

- 2019/20: Levels 4 & 5 139 v 149 Target
- 2020/21: Actual 378 v 513 (DfE target), 448 (WLioT target)
- 2021/22: Actual 327 vs 781 (DfE target) 503 (WLioT target)

JW confirmed that DfE would review learner number targets for all twelve IoTs in January 2022 when the first return was completed against targets. A discussion around the option of reprofiling would then take place in February. There was an ongoing challenges around specialist staff recruitment in hard to fill STEM roles which the College was seeking to resolve by using some innovative new recruitment methods. This had been discussed in detail at both the Resources Committee on 24 November (with the HR Director present) and at Quality Curriculum and Student Committee on 25 November.

The Partnerships Report was NOTED and RECEIVED.

16. Curriculum Intent and Employability

The meeting noted this projects report which included an update on the development of T Levels, vocational intent and employability. In order to drive forward curriculum intent and employability (including work experience) a new Curriculum Intent and Employability Group (CIEG) had been established at HCUC. This was in response to the need for an employer focus brought about by the Skills for Jobs white paper published in 2021 by the DfE. This new strategic group in College would bring employers right into the heart of the curriculum.

The purpose of the group would be to ensure that:

- The College was meeting regional and local skills needs and developing a pipeline of talent to meet those needs through the development of Employer Advisory Groups
- HCUC was developing deeper relationships with employers to co-design and deliver curriculum alongside using them as guest speakers, and work experience providers.
- All work placement targets were regularly monitored
- Students were supported to develop appropriate behaviours, whilst having access to high level and current industry knowledge and skills through the regular employer activity in the classroom.
- Students had a clear line of sight to employment and a real sense of purpose in their studies.

The group would also be the main forum matters related to the development and delivery of the T Levels at HCUC. JW reminded the meeting that T Level delivery had started at Harrow College for 2021/22 as well as growing at Uxbridge.

Governors noted the current data for Work Experience and Governors were reminded that the College was currently recruiting to the position of Head of Employability to lead the development of employability skills across all of HCUC's study programmes. JW informed the meeting that Colleges had been a very loud voice

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nationally so the DfE were now allowing 40% of the Significant Industry Placement of T Levels to be undertaken on a remote basis. The meeting also noted that the recent entry requirements change with the removal of GCSE English and Maths was in danger of lowering the value of T levels. Colleges were currently waiting to hear about proposed curriculum changes which would turn off the funding for applied general qualifications i.e. BTECs. Governors were assured that the SLT were watching this situation very closely.

NOTED

17. Finance and Funding Update

17.1 HCUC Management Accounts for the quarter ending 31 October 2021.

The GDFRP presented the composite HCUC management accounts to 31 October 2021. These showed an historical cost surplus for the period of £2,326,000 compared to a budgeted surplus of £1,641,000 giving a favourable variance of £685,000. The significant variances were highlighted as follows:

- Total Income of £15,834,000 compared to budget of £16,180,000, (adverse variance of £346,000). Within this major variances were noted as: a negative variance of £254,000 in Employer Services income as some T level and CDF project work had been deferred.
- Staff costs of £8,706,000 compared to budget of £9,468,000, (favourable variance of £762,000) due to vacant posts within Academic and Support staff). Members were reminded that the budget assumed all posts would be filled for the whole year.
- Other Operating Expenses: a favourable variance of £190,000 against the budget of £3,884,000. This was noted as mainly being due to timing issues. Depreciation was £79,000 positive variance against the budget of £1,187,000 due to timing of capital expenditure in the prior year – especially IT equipment.
- Balance Sheet remained strong with a cash balance of £34,674,000; this was due to the funding from the ESFA and the GLA being front-loaded as well as higher accruals and Other Creditors. Fixed Assets were at £108,479.
- All ratios were healthy: cash days in hand at 263 (budget of 195); current ratio at 2.21 (budget 2.70); staff costs as a percentage of income at 54% (budget 67%); and reserves/ income at 156%.

The Management Accounts for the first quarter to 31 October 2021 were RECEIVED.

17.2 Update on performance against target for ESFA contract 2021/22

The meeting noted an update report on performance against the ESFA contract for 2021/22. Actual learner numbers enrolled were 63 below target at 5,645 vs 5,708; the final R04 funding claim for 2021/22 had been submitted on 6 December 2021. Uxbridge College was at circa 92% of its 16- target and Harrow was at circa 87%. Adult 19+ enrolment was at 835 against the target of 977. The financial impact of this shortfall would be a loss of circa 300,000. Governors were reminded that due to the lagged funding methodology, the decrease in funding would take effect in 2021/22 when ESFA funding would drop from £31.9m to £31.6m excluding any other funding changes.

The detailed report was taken as read which highlighted areas of learner number shortfall by curriculum area at each college. The areas below 80% of target at Harrow were noted as Health and Social Care, ICT, Art and Hair and Beauty. There were no areas below 80% at Uxbridge and there were two area above 100%; ELTFS and Computing.

NOTED

17.4 Capital Update

The meeting considered the Capital Update Report presented by SW; it was noted that this was for information as there were no decisions currently required. Key current bids and projects were noted as follows:

- House at Harrow Weald: The meeting was reminded that the second cash offer of £500,000 had been accepted at the end of February 2021. SW reminded the meeting that contracts had been exchanged

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during the first week of September but exchange had not yet taken place due to some complications around access. SW was hopeful that this would be finalised before the end of the term.

- Vacant land at Harrow Weald:

The meeting was reminded of the interest shown by the Heronslea Group Portfolio who had offered a cash sum subject to planning permission for some land at the Harrow Weald campus. As previously agreed, this would be considered within the wider HCUC Estates Strategy but current thinking was that this land would not be used for HCUC education purposes in the future. SW confirmed that he had commissioned a market review to ascertain whether the offer from Heronslea represented good market value.

(The discussion around this item is included in the Part 2 confidential minute due to commercial sensitivity.)

The Property Update Report was RECEIVED.

17.5 Risk Register

The meeting received the HCUC Risk Register that had been updated by the Executive Team, through a review of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 corporate goals, and projects coming on stream throughout the year. The meeting discussed risks with changed risk profile and the key 'red' rated risks in more detail and the mitigating actions that had been put into place:

- 1.08 Insufficiently qualified and equipped staff to support the delivery of study programmes and quality outcomes for learners. (Risk score unchanged at 12 'red').
- 1.09 Failure to recruit sufficient staff, qualified at the appropriate level. (Risk score still at 12 'red'). The meeting was reminded of the ongoing project work looking at innovative ways to recruit for hard to fill specialist technical vacancies as discussed at the Governors' Strategy Day in October 2021
- 1.12 Project Work fails to prepare College for T levels, CDF & Transition Fund. (Risk still at 15 'red')
- 1.14 College fails to retain Highly Trusted Status for international students (Risk score at 12 'red'). HTS secured for the current year but this continued to be a high-risk area.
- 2.05 Inflexible delivery models for Apprenticeships could restrict growth (Risk score remains at 12 'red'). The meeting noted that the SLT were currently developing a five-year strategy to develop plans for growth in Work Based Learning (WBL), Institute of Technology provision, and commercial income.
- 3.02 Insufficient enrolment on employability pathways for adult unemployed learners will reduce spend of ESFA contract. (Risk score remains at 12 'red').
- 3.11 Underachievement of funding targets (Risk score still at 15 'red'). SW reminded the meeting that the bid for in-year growth funding would not now be appropriate for 2021/22 as enrolment had not been above the ESFA allocation.
- 3.12 Failure to secure and respond to large levy paying employers could impact on apprenticeship income (Risk score remains at 15 'red'). The College's Business Development Consultants (BDCs) had worked hard to stay in touch with employers during the Covid-19 business disruption.
- 3.19 16-18 and 19+ mainstream recruitment target not met, leading to a reduction in funding in current and future years. (Risk score remains at 12 'red'). As discussed earlier in the meeting, the R04 funding return had been submitted on 6 December to confirm 2021/22 enrolment figures.
- 3.20 WBL non-levy 16-18 and 19+ apprentices target not met. (Risk score still at raised level of 15 'red'). Current WBL delivery against the ESFA allocation was being closely monitored but had been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.05 Failure to achieve IoT targets (Significant red risk with a score of 12.) The ongoing dialogue with the DfE around targets continued. As noted earlier, a decision would be taken by the DfE in February 2022 regarding whether to vary the existing targets for the 12 national IoTs.
- 5.11 Compliance with GDPR and other data related regulation (Risk score remains at 15 'red'). As previously discussed by Governors at Corporation and Strategy days the SLT were still working to improve current HCUC practice on the destruction of obsolete data in a timely manner. The meeting was assured that progress was being made but the risk score had not yet been reduced in order to

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maintain focus. The ongoing work to strengthen IT security was also noted. The move of all College data to SharePoint was now complete.

- 5.12 College loses IT capability and/ or data following a cyber-attack. (Risk score remains at 12 'red'). This risk was very real despite IT Services using up to date security software and policies.
- 5.13 Operational impact due to Coronavirus (Covid-19). (This new risk added in March 2020 was still deemed as a risk score of 12 'red'). The meeting was reminded of the measures in place and the ongoing adherence to all Public Health England and Government guidelines.

The HCUC Risk Register was NOTED and RECEIVED.

The Finance Directorate Report was RECEIVED.

18. Academic Report

The meeting considered a report from the Deputy Principal (DM) which covered the following:

- KPI Dashboard for in-year monitoring 2021/22
- Feedback from the First Impressions Learner Survey (October/ November 2021)
- Current HCUC Strengths and Weaknesses (based on SAR 2020/21)
- Leadership and Management Highlights (Ofsted focus)

This report was largely taken as read after the time spent considering the SAR at item 9 of the agenda but the following data was noted.

Retention/ Attendance and Punctuality Rates 2021/22: Current full-time attendance for 16-18 learners was at the year-end target of 88% (92% with authorised absences). English and maths attendance for 16-18 learners was RAG rated red with figures of 82% and 83% respectively. Punctuality was holding on target at 4%. Retention for 16-18 (98.7%) and 19+ (99.4%) was above NA (91.0% and 93.5%) and above the prior year figures. HE retention was also improved on the prior year at 100%.

Complaints Report 2021/22:

Uxbridge College: Year-to-date in 2021/22 there had been 11 complaints compared with 5 at the equivalent time last year, of which 4 were upheld.

Harrow College: To date in 2021/22, there had been 6 complaints compared to 5 at the equivalent time last year, of which 3 were upheld.

Lesson Observations (LOs): DMcT highlighted that although the Dashboard was showing 'amber' as the LO profile was currently at 68% 'meets or exceeds good'. However, this was due to the very early lesson observations which had focused on any teaching staff identified as being weaker. Improvement had been secured already in 70% of these cases when 31 of these 'at risk' teachers had been reobserved already.

Safeguarding: DMcT focussed attention on the Safeguarding update. The meeting noted that currently there were 36 students on the serious safeguarding register, these are mostly for Domestic violence and mental health. This was slightly higher than the same time last year; the meeting was reminded that the prior year figure was the highest year ever recorded for serious cases. There were four cases ongoing on the Prevent register, one of whom was attending Channel Panel meetings. There were 392 looked after children in the college, and 266 currently on the mental health register for 2021/22; these figures were broadly in line with last year. DMcT highlighted the 19 cases reported on the new Sexual Harassment Register, which records incidents and actions. Governors were reminded that a whole college approach to sexual harassment had begun with a number of planned events already. All HCUC staff were trained in safeguarding, Prevent and sexual harassment on 22nd October 2021 and governors were trained on 20th October 2021.

First Impressions Learner Survey 2021/22: This College- generated survey had been issued to all students on programmes at HCUC. The survey close data had not yet passed so the data reported to the meeting was noted as interim. There had been 2011 responses and 96% were satisfied with the TL&A on their

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courses. The figure for learners who would recommend HCUC to a 'friend' was 92%. The overall satisfaction rate for HCUC was 93%.

The meeting noted the updated Governors' Briefing sheets for 'HCUC Strengths and Weaknesses' and the Leadership and Management Highlights. The Director of Governance (TR) confirmed that these would be kept updated and loaded onto the Ofsted Shelf on the Board Intelligence system in readiness for any Ofsted Inspection.

The Academic Report was RECEIVED.

19. Higher Education: Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration

The meeting noted a report which outlined the role of the Governing body in maintaining oversight for the quality of HE provision and ensuring that the College continued to meet the Conditions of registration set by the OfS. The meeting was reminded of the OfS' expectation of Governors:

- Collective responsibility under lead of the Chair
- Oversight of the provider's corporate and academic activities
- Ensure the provider has adequate and effective arrangements to ensure it is complying with all of its conditions of registration and knows how it is complying
- Ensure action plans contain key information and that arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate compliance with the plans and progress against targets

The meeting was assured that effective evaluation and monitoring of HE provision and HE students at HCUC existed within the College's academic structures and these ensured compliance with ongoing conditions of registration. The reporting mechanism to Governors was to the Corporation and via sub-committees, in particular QCS, Audit and Resources. A risk management spreadsheet provided finer detail for scrutiny and allowed identification of actions required and checks on progress and improvement; the focus on this was via QCS Committee. In addition, both of the two Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees had discussed HE updates and a combined HE report had been presented to QCS (25/11/21). DDS highlighted the amber risk currently associated with 'Highly Trusted Status' required for the enrolment of international students. DMcT confirmed that it would be up to five months before the College received confirmation on this from the UK Border Agency. A short summary was considered by the meeting:

- Enrolments 2021/22: Harrow College (HC) enrolments 25, Uxbridge College (UC) 229. Overall HCUC HNC/HND 254 HE enrolments, IOT 188, and Teacher Training 45.
- HNC/HND retention to date was HC 100% UC 98% HCUC HNC/HND was at 98% and Teacher Training at 100%.
- A start of year student survey has been conducted. Findings in summary: students across all sites were happy with their course, the teaching, support from staff, resources available and felt safe in class. However, there were concerns with regards to the IT resources in the Hayes HE Study Area, the numbers of learners at the Uxbridge exit barriers (in relation to Covid-19) and staffing for some units on some programmes.
- HE Programmes Committee had focused on sharing practice in relation to supporting 'at risk' learners and the increased number of international students with study skills sessions. There had also been discussions around use of the LRC and open access spaces. SW highlighted the new regime put in place of earlier intervention with regard to any student debt.
- Access to HE programme across HCUC continued to be closely monitored. HC Enrolments 54, UC enrolments 58, HCUC 112. Cross-College retention to date was at 97%.

It was noted that the Resources Committee (24 November 2021) had considered an annual report to Resources Committee which evidenced compliance with condition C 'Protecting the interests of all students'. This new annual report had covered the following areas:

- Publication and review of the Student Protection Plan
- Publication and review of Terms and Conditions

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- Review of policies and procedures relating to the provision of information.
- Any engagement with OfS regarding consumer protection law
- Engagement with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

The Chair of Resources (AMcL) confirmed that after considering all the evidence the Resources Committee had concluded that they could take full assurance that HCUC had been compliant with HE consumer protection law during 2020/21. The paper drew Governors attention to Condition E – Good Governance and, within this, the entries relating to the OfS' Public Interest Principles. In order to provide assurance on this matter the Clerk presented a RAG rated summary document which provided detailed assurance for Governors that HCUC had complied with the 10 OfS Public Interest Governance Principles for 2020/21.

The meeting AGREED that there was sufficient assurance for Governors that the College continued to comply with its ongoing requirements as set out under conditions of registration.

20. Corporate Goals 2020/21 – Update on progress

The CEO (DDS) provided an update on the Uxbridge College's and Harrow College's Corporate Goals YTD achievement. The meeting was reminded that this was the first update since the approval of the Corporate Goals at the September 2021 Corporation meeting. DDS reminded the meeting of the impact on the 2020/21 achievement against Corporate Goals of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. DDS asserted that the effect of the pandemic would also be seen during 2021/22 and could affect finance and funding, learner outcomes, quality of the educational experience and in partnership and project work. The recent surge in the Omicron variant made it very clear that the pandemic was not nearing its end yet. Governors were reminded that the Corporate Goals format reflected alignment of common HCUC KPIs that each College was working towards. However, although the detailed commentary now prioritised the HCUC joint perspective there was some flexibility to account for the local Harrow or Uxbridge context. The front page reflected the key KPI coverage under the main four headings listed on the front page of the Corporate Goals: Corporate performance; Learner Outcomes; Quality of Education; and Responsiveness and Compliance. DDS highlighted the significant elements for finance & funding – within Corporate Performance - which had now established High Needs learners as a constant component and the ongoing but varied Government funded national and regional projects also reflected under 'Responsiveness'.

DDS highlighted the following:

- It was understood that current Ofsted Inspections would be particularly focused on safeguarding aspects and mental well-being, including the support provided to learners. In addition, following the impact of the pandemic and its disruption to learning, the College's approach to addressing lost learning was again expected to be a key focus of Inspection. Students' readiness for learning and readiness for employment and further study would be key themes. With the declared DfE intent to return to more traditional modes of assessment, the pedagogic challenge to meet the varied expectations this year would be substantial.
- Quality of Education (previously TL&A) retained refinements to incorporate the rise in importance of remote learning delivery. The importance of Curriculum intent and real employer/industry impact was also emphasised. Any formal Lesson Observations would continue to use external validation, but with an increasing focus on the developmental aspects and continuous professional development for teaching staff. 'Drop-in observations' would be an additional means of gauging and improving quality of teaching and learning; both measures would be reported on in a comparable way at both colleges in 2021/22. 'Deep Dive' activity during the first half of the autumn term had confirmed a 'Good+' overall profile with identified Areas for Improvement (Afls). This 'deep dive' work in preparation for any Ofsted Inspection had enabled the College to front-load the assessment of any 'weaker' teachers to ensure that they had no adverse impact on TL&A. DDS confirmed that of those weaker teacher identified during this exercise 70% had already improved.
- The Finance & Funding section had been amended to reflect the reduced CV19 funding elements. Project funding was more varied – and would become confirmed throughout the year - to reflect the promotion of collaborative initiatives focused on economic recovery. Small group tutorial funds were

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expected to be forthcoming. DDS informed the meeting that the final ILR R04 return to reflect enrolment 2021/22 was due to be imminently finalised and submitted to the ESFA.

- Responsiveness and compliance would again focus on main Government backed projects. Key within these were the Institute of Technology (IoT), T-level pilots and associated substantial Industry Placements, Mayor's Skills Academy (MSA) and activity linked to collaborative economic recovery projects within London and specifically West London.
- The Learner outcomes section and its contents remained largely unchanged.

DDS highlighted that the RAG rating system flagged up those items on the front page where progress in relation to a particular KPI or performance area had either faltered, prompting mitigating actions (amber rating), or stalled such that full achievement was now not possible (red rating). It was too early in the academic year for any target to be identified as not achievable so there were no 'red' ratings. Governors were reminded that considerable further detail was provided within the body of the Corporate Goals reports about the amber and red rated items flagged on the cover pages. In addition, some other items within the extended commentaries were flagged as amber because progress had not been as expected; nothing was yet categorised as 'red'. Where a goal was new for 2021/22 or had been changed substantially this was indicated in the 'Notes' commentary. DDS informed the meeting that the 2019/20 and 2020/21 national averages (NAs) for classroom-based FE provision, together with related performance tables were not available due to the lack of formal examinations caused by the pandemic. The Corporate Goals report was using the last available NAs (from 2018/19) as comparators.

The meeting RECEIVED the Corporate Goals update report.

21. Audit Committee – 24 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting would be circulated as soon as available. The Chair of Audit Committee (NK) confirmed that all items covered had been brought to the current Corporation meeting.

NOTED

22. Resources Committee – 24 November 2021

The minutes of the meeting would be circulated as soon as available. There were no additional items to highlight that had not already been covered within the Corporation meeting. Key items included the important consideration of the College's compliance with the OfS Condition C of registration; the Human Resources Report; and the recent Staff Focus Group feedback.

NOTED

23. QCS Committee – 25 November 2021

The minutes of the meeting would be circulated as soon as available. In the absence of the Chair the meeting noted the following highlights from the committee as feedback:

The following items were agreed as highlights of the meeting:

- Governors commended the focus on linking the curriculum development and delivery to employers. HCUC was ensuring that it did the best it could to prepare students for the workplace with a focus on employability within study programmes. The ongoing focus on Work Experience for the maximum number of learners was commended.
- Apprenticeship provision at HCUC: there had been a clear and thorough review of the Leadership & Management of this area and an action plan was now in place to continue to drive up quality of WBL at HCUC.
- Governors had approved a review and revision of the HE Access and Participation statement.
- The QCS Committee were recommending the College SAR 2020/21 for approval with an overall grade of Outstanding.

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24. Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees (SSCs)

The meeting received the minutes from the two individual College SSCs which had been held on 9 November at Uxbridge and 10 November 2021 at Harrow.

NOTED

25. To confirm the dates and times of the meetings for 2021/22 (currently all via Zoom to meet Covid-19 guidelines)

- Tuesday 29 March 2022 at 4.30pm
- Wednesday 27 April, Training and Planning Day, 8.45am (SSC Members to be invited.)
- Tuesday 17 May 2022 at 4.30pm
- Tuesday 12 July 2022 at 4.30pm

26. Feedback to Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees

The CEO reminded the meeting of this agenda item designed to improve the flow of communication from the HCUC Corporation to the individual Colleges Stakeholder and Scrutiny Committees. After consideration the meeting agreed that the following three key items would be taken to the SSCs in advance of the formal Corporation minutes becoming available to SSC members.

- An update on the merger and the current activity within the Joint Steering Group. SSC Members would be given this update for information and to allow any comment.
- The Student Governors' comments around prayer rooms.
- The approved whole-College SAR 2020/21 with key strengths and AFIs which would be reflected in the Quality Improvement Plan 2021/22.

The feedback to the SSCs was AGREED

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

27. Any other business as previously notified

• Resignation of Uxbridge College Staff Governor

The Chair thanked Melissa Bridge for her contribution as Uxbridge Staff Governor over the last 2½ years, she would be leaving HCUC to take up a new role in January 2022. The meeting wished MB well in her new role. MB thanked the Corporation for the opportunity to take on the governance role which she had found really interesting and had helped in her own personal development.

The Director of Governance confirmed that she would run a nomination process for MB's replacement as Uxbridge Staff Governor in January 2022.

NOTED

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 6.55pm.

Signed

Date.....

[Staff and Student Governors left the meeting and there was then a review of the recent Remuneration Committee meeting. Details included in Confidential Part 2 Minutes to the meeting.]

DRAFT