

CORPORATION

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 30 March 2022 at 2.00pm

Present physically:	C Higgins, Vice Chair E D'Souza, Chair	N Savvas, CEO
Present virtually:	J Gazzard (part) J Wakelam	L Blackaby, HE Student Governor S Daley, Vice Chair
In Attendance:	A Maltpress, Observer C Shaw, Principal Sixth Form Provision E Lees, Executive Dean University Studies G Chittock Nash, Group Vice Principal Students J Raffel, CFO L Moody, Principal Strategic Growth and Partnerships R Bamford, Group Vice Principal Data and MI R Stevenson, Group Operations Director S Gales, Governance Professional S Graham, Group HR Director	
Apologies:	H Colthorpe, Staff Governor S Clarke S Howard S Shaddock, FE Student Governor	

The agenda was discussed in the following order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.1, 5.1.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.5.1, 5.3, 5.3.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 5.4, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 7, 8

1 Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence

The Corporation welcomed H Colthorpe, L Blackaby and S Shaddock as newly appointed members of the Corporation; and members introduced themselves.

C Higgins, E D'Souza, J Wakelam, N Savvas, and S Daley declared their roles as Trustees of Suffolk Academies Trust. J Gazzard declared his role as a Members of Suffolk Academies Trust. J Wakelam also declared her role as a West Suffolk District Councillor in relation to agenda item 5.3.2. No other conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

Apologies were received from H Colthorpe, S Clarke, S Howard and S Shaddock.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2021 were **agreed** as an accurate record.

The Corporation noted that on the 27 January 2022, a working group of the Finance and Resources Committees convened to review the proposal to lease the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre. On 28 January 2022, the working group recommended that the Corporation proceed to lease the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre subject to the amendments raised by the working group being integrated; Corporation members approved via email and delegated the signing of the agreement to the Chair and CEO. The lease was then signed.

J Gazzard joined the meeting at 2.11pm

L Moody provided a verbal update on the progress with establishing the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre.

Action

3 Matters Arising from meeting on 15 December 2021

The matters arising from the meeting were summarised in the report and all actions reported had either been completed or, where appropriate an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.

MA2 We have appointed a Finance Assistant Risk to oversee the risk register and this person will be developing a proposal for how we can distribute the risk register to their respective Committees.

4 CEO's Briefing

Governors received and considered the CEO's Briefing summarising the performance and operational update of activities at the College including the Group central services; and at the two multi-academy trusts the College sponsors (SAT and SENDAT).

N Savvas noted that one of the key successes this term was the successful Ofsted inspection in early March 2022 and how the college pulled together to demonstrate our amazing offer. Governors observed how well the inspection and daily feedback to staff was communicated, and commended the Executive on their leadership during the inspection. Governors discussed the outstanding feedback from our stakeholders, gathered as part of the inspection, and noted how endorsing the feedback is that we continue to deliver to the needs of our community.

C Shaw noted that students continue to work with employers and receive meaningful work experience on every course, our student-run restaurant has been re-awarded its two AA gold rosettes, our teachers have helped shaped national City and Guilds curriculum and have been invited to join the Worshipful Company of Plumbers.

N Savvas feedback from the College's annual strategic conversation with the ESFA, and noted they were incredibly impressed by everything the College is doing.

N Savvas also noted the plethora of recent positive feedback from the DfE, ESFA and Local Authority in regard to our success as a sponsor of multi-academy trusts.

L Moody noted that for Strategic Growth and Partnerships, we are on track to achieve our Apprenticeship targets and success rates and we are working to expand our Escalator provision (working with primary and secondary schools to support them to deliver STEM subjects supported by local businesses). L Moody gave an overview on the Higher Place and Visitor Economy (VENI) projects we are running; and noted that we are developing projects for the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (which replaces European Social Funding), working with the Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to develop projects linked to the Local Skills Improvement Plans, and working with the Department for Work and Pensions to continue to support local 'levelling up' priorities.

Governors commended the Executive for their leadership of these projects and the embedding of our strategic priorities around environmental sustainability and equality, diversity and inclusion.

N Savvas gave an overview of the common projects we are working on across the Group to share best practice and improve standards for all, and of the progress of our central Group teams.

N Savvas gave an overview of the performance of SAT, noting ASFC's successful new provider Ofsted monitoring visit, the Trust's strong financial health, OSFC's preparations for a potential Ofsted inspection, and the work of the team to cover the leadership whilst the interim Head of Centre is recovering from a broken leg.

N Savvas gave an overview of the performance of SENDAT, noting the success of the Trust in opening new specialist centres to support SEND students across the region.

5 Committee Chair's Summary Reports:

5.1 FE Educational Excellence Committee Overview

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions and recommendations of the Educational Excellence Committee meetings in the Spring Term.

Following the 4-day full Ofsted inspection, the Committee focused on reflecting on the detailed feedback from inspectors, direct survey feedback from students, parents, employers and staff; the key strengths and areas for improvements.

The Committee also received and reviewed the college's progress against the 2021/22 Quality Improvement Plan, considered KPIs to monitor student progress and experience, received updates in regard to student welfare and support, including information on safeguarding and the results of student surveys, reviewed the complaints and compliments log to ascertain any themes or concerns, received executive summaries and the minutes of the Executive Board meetings (EDI, Progression and Safeguarding), reviewed the college's Careers Strategy and Careers Policy Statement, SEND Policy, Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration, Student Disciplinary Procedure, Complaints and Compliment Procedure, and received updates from the Executive as to how the Group is sharing best practice to improve quality and student experience.

C Shaw noted feedback from the Ofsted inspectors which explained how close we were to achieving 'Outstanding' and that the College's self-assessment gradings were justified. C Shaw noted that we have updated our Quality Improvement Plan to incorporate the areas for improvement identified within the Inspection.

Governors queried and C Shaw explained how the Inspection judgement will impact our future self-assessment grading.

5.1.1 Safeguarding Termly Report

Governors received the termly report which had been scrutinised by both the Safeguarding Board and the Educational Excellence Committee.

5.2 HE Educational Excellence Committee Overview

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions at and recommendations of the HE Educational Excellence Committee meetings in the Spring Term.

The Committee reviewed compliance against Office for Students (OfS) requirements, progress against our Access and Participation Plan (APP), considered KPIs to monitor student progress and experience, received updates in regard to student voice, and received updates from the Executive as to the next steps for University Studies to improve student satisfaction, create robust processes and increase student numbers.

C Higgins, as Committee Chair, noted that the significant work achieved by the Executive to crystallise the future strategy of our university provision and to develop a more cohesive approach to 19+ education, uniting adult and university provisions into a University and Professional Development centre. C Higgins noted the work to also improve data and reporting both for direct funded students and for University of Suffolk at West Suffolk College students; and to improve student satisfaction.

Governors queried how many students we have on each Level / provision type within the proposed University and Professional Development centre. L Moody and E Lees gave an overview of how many students are on each Level / provision type.

Governors queried what is being done to address the concerns, raised through student feedback, about insufficient work to improve and promote equality, diversity and inclusion at University Studies. E Lees gave an overview of the planned works which include an external audit, working with the student representatives and student council, listening to feedback as part of the assessment boards and working with the

Group's equality, diversity and inclusion ambassadors. L Blackaby noted how the student representatives are also looking at how to further promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

Governors queried which students are included in our Access and Participation Plan (APP). E Lees noted approximately 20% of our students fall under the remit of the APP and explained how the team are working to increase the impact of the APP.

Governors queried how QAA inspect Office for Students registered providers. E Lees explained the process and S Gales noted that training will be provided to Governors in the summer term.

Governors discussed the likely impact of the Teaching Excellence Framework consultation on the higher level study and university sector.

ELees
SGales

5.3 Resources Committee Overview

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions and recommendations of the Resources Committee meeting in the Spring Term.

The Committee received an executive summary and the minutes of the Health and Safety Board and Sustainability Steering Group Board, considered key performance indicators for HR and operational updates for IT and Estates, reviewed the college's Covid-19 mitigation plan, reviewed the college's major works and capital investment bids and, post-meeting, electronically considered and recommended the proposal to install photovoltaic cells on the rooves of College buildings.

C Higgins, as Committee Chair, noted that the College managed the pandemic very well to limit the impact on operations; and all the resources teams continued to harmonise processes across the Group and improve performance despite the pandemic. C Higgins noted that the Committee receives detailed HR data and this has evidenced the strength of the Executive in managing staffing throughout a very uncertain period. C Higgins noted the growing risk of recruiting staff given the national recruitment markets and the risks associated with our IT infrastructure, and summarised the status of the bids in progress to upgrade the College estate aligned to our curriculum and property strategy.

Governors commended the resources teams for their performance.

R Stevenson gave an overview of plans to develop the AV/VR centre at the University and Professional Development centre, both short term via the Office for Students funding and longer term by working closely with businesses to bring in the latest tech and innovations.

5.3.1 Health and Safety Termly Report

Governors received the termly report which had been scrutinised by the Health and Safety Board.

5.3.2 Recommendation to install Photovoltaic Cells

Governors received the proposal to install photovoltaic cells on roofs of college buildings which had been recommended by both the Sustainability Board and Resources Committee.

J Wakelam, as Governor Lead for Sustainability, gave an overview of the benefit of this scheme to align to our strategic objectives; but declared her conflict of interest in relation to the scheme's provider and absented herself from the vote.

E D'Souza noted that whilst there is no capital associated with this pilot, the decision involves the lease of College roofs for 25 years hence the reason for bringing this to the Corporation for approval.

The Corporation **agreed** that the scheme proposed offers good value and provides greater energy security, and **agreed** to the lease as proposed.

5.4 **Finance Committee Overview**

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions at and recommendations of the Finance Committee meetings in the Spring Term.

The Committee considered management account and key performance indicators to monitor financial performance, reviewed the college's student applications compared to planned targets and apprenticeship pipeline, reviewed and approved the College's Treasury Management Policy, reviewed the annual report on contracts awarded between the values of £50k and £100k, reviewed the college's bid register to ensure proper process was followed and due consideration was given to each bid in the context of the college's financial position, budget and/or forecast, and alignment to the college's property strategy and overarching vision, reviewed the funding allocations from ESFA for 2022/23 and reviewed and recommends the college's Financial Regulations.

C Higgins, as Committee Vice Chair, noted that the Committee has overseen significant work to identify savings and further income and to reforecast the budget in light of the under-recruitment of HE students. C Higgins noted that the College has also strengthened the Finance team, bringing on board a qualified accountant with significant experience in FE, to support the CFO and help improve our financial budgetary planning process.

C Higgins noted that whilst the year-to-date position remains a deficit, the forecast year end position now predicts a net surplus (albeit a smaller surplus than budgeted).

5.4.1 **Financial Regulations**

Governors received and considered the Financial Regulations which has been reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee.

Governors **approved** the Financial Regulations, *subject to* the minor amendments recommended by Steve Clarke in absentia to 3.2.2 and to 3.2.4; and the Committee's recommendation to amend 3.1.5. to permit the capitalisation of own-staff costs associated with a project.

JRaffel

5.4.2 **Treasury Management Policy**

Governors received and considered the Treasury Management Policy which has been reviewed and recommended by the Finance Committee.

Governors **approved** the Treasury Management Policy.

5.5 **Audit and Risk Management Overview**

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions at and recommendations of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meetings in the Spring Term.

The Committee reviewed the college's Risk Register to ensure the college had identified pertinent risks and put in place appropriate and effective mitigations in place to minimise risk, reviewed the findings reports of the internal auditors and received updated in regard to GDPR, subject access requests, freedom of information and data breaches to ensure proper process was followed and effective measures put in place to lessen the risk to the organisation. The Committee also discussed training needs of the Committee and the need to re-tender for both external and internal auditors.

J Gazzard, as Committee Chair, noted that cyber security, difficulties in recruiting staff in an ever more competitive market with rising costs, and the uncertainty and rising costs resulting from the war in Ukraine are some of the highest risks the College is

facing at the moment. J Gazzard noted that GDPR continues to be handled well and sensitively.

Governors commended the work to improve the risk register and **delegated authority to the CEO and CFO** to propose how the risks within the Risk Register are allocated to each Committee and **delegated authority to the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee** to approve the proposed risk allocation.

NSavvas
JRaffel
JGazzard

Governors queried the two risks which had increased in score (after mitigation). N Savvas apologies for this error within the report and J Raffel to amend. The Committee **agreed** to look at the risk register in greater detail at the next meeting.

JRaffel
ARMC

5.5.1 Risk Register

Governors received and considered the risk register, as reviewed by the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

The register currently identifies **2 red**, **9 amber**, **16 yellow** and **0 green** status risks. Of which, 21 risks have had no change in post mitigation score, 2 risks have reduced in score and 4 risks have increased in score; with 0 new risks added and 13 risks removed (to enable Governors to focus on the most serious risks) from the register.

J Gazzard left the meeting at 3.50pm

6 Policies

6.1 Careers Strategy and Careers Policy Statement

Governors considered the policy which had been reviewed and recommended by both the Progression Board and the FE Educational Excellence Committee. Governors **approved** the policy.

6.2 SEND Policy

Governors considered the policy which had been reviewed and recommended by both the Safeguarding Board and FE Educational Excellence Committee. Governors **approved** the policy.

6.3 Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

Governors considered the policy which had been reviewed and recommended by the FE Educational Excellence Committee. Governors **approved** the policy.

6.4 Student Disciplinary Procedure

Governors considered the policy which had been reviewed and recommended by the FE Educational Excellence Committee. Governors **approved** the policy.

6.5 Complaints and Compliment Procedure

Governors considered the policy which had been reviewed and recommended by the FE Educational Excellence Committee. Governors **approved** the policy.

6.6 Anti-Bribery Policy

Governors considered the policy which had been reviewed and recommended by the Resources Committee. Governors **approved** the policy.

6.7 Employee Privacy Policy

Governors considered the policy which had been reviewed and recommended by the Resources Committee. Governors **approved** the policy.

6.8 Freedom of Information Policy

Governors considered the policy which had been reviewed and recommended by the Resources Committee. Governors **approved** the policy.

Governance

Governors received and considered the report provided which summarised the discussions at and recommendations of the Nominations and Governance Committee meetings in the Spring Term.

The Committee reviewed the membership of the Corporation and its Committees and noted the appointment of Louisa Blackaby as HE Student Governor, Han Colthorpe as Staff Governor and acknowledged that Affy Green had withdrawn her application, so was not appointed as a Co-opted Governor. The Committee also reviewed the feedback from annual 1:1 meetings with the Chair and the 360° feedback on the performance of the Chair, Governance Professional and CEO. The Committee also started work to review our compliance with the updated AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges; and reviewed and recommend the role descriptions for the Chair and Vice Chair(s) of the Corporation and the Corporation's Scheme of Delegation. The Committee also received an update on Governor recruitment.

Role Descriptions for Chair and Vice Chair(s) of the Corporation

Governors reviewed and **approved** the Role Descriptions for Chair and Vice Chair(s) of the Corporation, as reviewed and recommended by the Nominations and Governance Committee *subject to* the addition of reference to adherence to the Governance Code responsibilities.

SGales

Scheme of Delegation

Governors reviewed and **approved** the Scheme of Delegation, as reviewed and recommended by the Nominations and Governance Committee.

Appointments

Governors recognised the **appointment** of Han Colthorpe as Staff Governor for a term of 3 years ending on 3 January 2025 and to appoint her to the FE Educational Excellence Committee.

Governors recognised the **appointment** of Louisa Blackaby as HE Student Governor for a term of 2 years ending on 31 August 2023 and to appoint her to the HE Educational Excellence Committee.

Governors **accepted** Steve Clarke's resignation from the Resources Committee with effect from May 2022.

Recruitment

S Gales gave a verbal update on the ongoing recruitment campaign with Peridot to source additional Governors to the Corporation.

Strategy

E D'Souza gave a verbal update on the plans for the Strategic Conference scheduled for 6 May 2022 and for future in-person strategy sessions and another series of virtual Briefing Strategy Seminars.

S Gales gave a verbal update on plans to reconvene the Corporation in the Summer term to review a formal collaboration agreement (and other associated governance documents) to better facilitate and govern the strategic alliance with Suffolk Academies Trust.

Any Other Business

- **Review of the meeting**

Governors feedback that the meeting was well-run and the meeting papers were accessible and easy to understand. Governors suggested further work could consider how to reduce the overlap between the CEO's Briefing and the Committee overviews, and how to capture all the work to progress governance.

NSavvas
SGales

The meeting closed at 4.51pm