

MOULTON COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 25th January 2018

Present: Mr R Thompson (in the Chair), Mr A Clarkson, Mr S Davies, Mr R O'Driscoll, Mr B Hansford, Mr L Howarth, Mr I James, Ms L Knapp, Mr T Neville, Mr R Sadler, Mr S Spry, Mr A Thomson and Mr M Thomson

In attendance: Mr D Aldridge, Miss A S Bruce, Mr G Davies, Mrs S Field, Mrs G M Hulley, Mrs M Semak

Pre-Corporation Presentations:

(1) Estate Opportunities

The Corporation Board received a presentation from a specialist external organisation. The presentation was supported by a number of documents. An agenda item during the meeting was used to discuss any implications for the College.

A copy of the presentation would be circulated to all governors. **(Action 85 – Clerk)**

(2) Programme Area Report: Animal Welfare & Equine

Phillip Warren, Programme Leader for the area presented an update on Animal Welfare. The presentation focused on: (a) background and context of the area; (b) areas of strength in 2016-17; and, (c) current priorities.

Following a question about progression into employment opportunities for Equine students, Members were informed of a variety of approaches that were used throughout the year to secure successes for students. Progression into employment rates are currently in excess of 90%.

Philip was thanked for his presentation which everyone found to be interesting and informative.

A copy of the presentation would be circulated to all governors. **(Action 86 – Clerk)**

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

- 18/01 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**
Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Katie Delamain-Blunt and Mr Steve Gordon.
- 18/02 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**
Mr L Howarth declared an interest in agenda items 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 19 and 20.
Mr T Neville declared an interest in agenda items 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12.
- 18/03 Minutes of the last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**
Minutes of the last meeting held on 30th November 2017 had been circulated previously. They were approved as a true and accurate record.

18/04 **Actions outstanding from the last meeting Agenda item 4, Paper B) 15/220(c), Moulton College Developments (MCD) Limited**
The Food and Drink Innovation Centre was going through MCD Ltd and there was a need to work through that and consider what subsidiaries the College required. (Open)

16/579, Marketing
This would be reported on later in the year. (Open)

16/581, Commercial Enterprise Report: Garden Centre
A price comparison exercise had been completed and it was found that products sold were similar or more expensive than other garden centres in the area. (Closed)

All other actions were either on the agenda for discussion in the meeting or progressing as planned and not due for discussion until later in the year.

18/05 **Commercial enterprise report: Farm (Agenda item 20, Paper Q)**
The report was outlined and discussed. Members were informed of the new staffing arrangements from January 2018. The overall farm performance for the financial year 2016-17 had been quite positive. The farm facilities were utilised by approximately 400 students. Members' attention was drawn to implications of Brexit which would need further consideration over time. The new way in which the report was presented was welcomed. It now provided the information that members had previously requested. Questions were raised about the qualification structures and future plans for the farm so that it continues to align with 21st century practice. Following discussion, *it was agreed that the cycle of reporting for commercial enterprises and programme area reports should be timed to coincide (where applicable) (Action 87 – Clerk) and, the report was received.*

SECTION B – PRINCIPAL AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT) Update

18/06 Principal and SLT update (Agenda item 5) a) Recruitment 2017-18

The recruitment figures for 2018-19 were outlined and discussed. For full-time, further education (FE), there had been nearly a 5% increase in applications compared to the previous year. The number of offers made and acceptances had also increased by 27% and 11% respectively for the same period. Members were informed of a number of actions that had been taken by the College that had resulted in this positive impact on recruitment. The Board also sought clarification around a number of potential challenges for the College and, where applicable, actions that were being taken. In higher education (HE), there was a reduction in the number of applications compared to the same time last year. Members discussed the implications of this including the current national trend of fewer applications to HE at present. HE recruitment had been added to the risk register and this area would continue to be closely monitored. The Principal outlined the current situation in relation to Apprenticeships. There were now 10 categories of Apprenticeships that the College was measured against. Recruitment in this area was also very positive. Following discussion, *the report was received.*

Mr Howarth left the meeting.

b) Student retention

The College target for FE and HE student retention was set at 92%. All areas were above this figure. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

c) Student attendance

The College target for FE was set at 90% and attendance figures included English and maths. One programme area had attendance of 94%. Four programme areas were slightly below the College target. Members were informed of a new 'cross College' area which included a small number of schools' link provision and a new NEET (not in employment, education or training) course. Two new student support mentors were having a positive impact with improving attendance. In HE, attendance was below the College target at 84% overall. In Apprenticeships, attendance was very positive with 91% for Construction, Land based and Equine and 94% for Animal Welfare. The Programme Leader for Apprenticeships had worked closely with employers to emphasise the importance of successful engagement. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

SECTION C – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

18/07

Self-assessment report (SAR) 2016-17 and Quality improvement plan (QIP) 2017-18 (Agenda item 6, Paper C)

The latest version of the SAR and QIP had been circulated previously. The latest iteration had been updated to reflect feedback from Board members and following close scrutiny by the SLT. The report had also recently been scrutinised by a Landex Peer Review team who had commented favourably on the clarity of the document and the evidence of impact of actions during the period in question. The Peer Review team had also reported that the QIP accurately reflected the improvement priorities of the College. A destination survey via an external agency had been commissioned. Any valuable evidence from this report would be included into the SAR and QIP. The survey was expected the following week and any findings would be shared with the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee at its meeting on the 1st February 2018. The SAR and QIP were due to be uploaded to the Ofsted portal by the end of January 2018. In the event of further updates to either document, these could be made at any time to ensure that Ofsted was in receipt of the latest information. A request for any headline information from the destination survey resulted in members being informed that: for 16-18 completers, 91.9%, for whom a destination was obtained, progressed to a positive destination. For 19+ and Apprenticeships, progression to a positive destination was 79.9% and 97.8% respectively. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

Mrs M Semak left the meeting

18/08

Termly safeguarding report (Agenda item 7, Paper D)

In line with the Corporation Board's legal duties and responsibilities in relation to Safeguarding, the termly report was outlined and discussed. At the meeting in November 2017, members had received a training session on a new safeguarding software system (My Concern) that the College had invested in. The report now included a high level summary of the concerns in a range of categories that had been raised to date. Members also received updates on the latest situation in relation to Looked After Children (LAC). Following a number of changes to the induction process, retention in the autumn term of 2017 had increased by 27%. Two student support mentor (SSM) roles had recently been appointed and were already having a positive

impact with those students experiencing non-curriculum related issues. From January 2018, the SSMs will be the first point of contact for LAC which would be an additional level of support for this cohort. Members were reminded of the work of the link governor for safeguarding who had completed two visits to date. As part of his role, he scrutinised the information in more detail to provide an additional assurance to the Corporation. Following discussion, *governors were reminded to complete their Prevent and Safeguarding online modules by the agreed deadline (Action 88 – Clerk); and, the termly report was noted.*

Mrs S Field left the meeting.

18/09

Aquatic zoology field trip (Agenda item 8, Papers Ei and Eii)

The report was outlined and discussed. The report included detailed risk assessments that had been completed. These had been scrutinised by the Health and Safety officer. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

SECTION D – FINANCE

**18/10 Management accounts (Agenda item 9, Paper F)
a) December 2017**

The management accounts for December 2017 had been scrutinised by the Finance Scrutiny Panel earlier in the week. The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) presented the headlines from the report and confirmed that the full year forecast at Period 5 showed an overall reduction in surplus. The sale of assets was currently forecasted to overachieve against the original target. Taking this into account, the total adverse variance was £343k. The report included a detailed breakdown of the contributory factors that had caused the adverse variance. The forecast also assumed that the contingency was fully committed. The CFO highlighted a number of actions that had been taken since she had started in the post or would be completed over the coming months. These included scrutiny of non-pay costs to identify any savings; and, transport which was an area that required further review due to it being a heavily subsidised service and had escalating costs. There was unlikely to be a significant impact in the current financial year. The College would maintain its satisfactory health score and meet its bank covenants.

Recognition was also given to the need for a longer term strategic approach within the organisation, for example, to identify opportunities to generate additional income and, an extensive re-procurement programme of non-pay costs. In a discussion around challenges associated with student numbers, a range of ideas were shared around development and delivery models of new courses to maximise income.

The Principal also provided a financial update to the Corporation Board following his visit to Saudi Arabia earlier in the week. Following discussion, *the report was received.*

18/11

Student fees and charges 2018-19 (Agenda item 10, Paper G)

The report had been considered earlier in the week by the Finance Scrutiny Panel. Residential costs had been adjusted two years ago. In response to a question about benchmarking, this had been completed by an Assistant Director to ensure the proposed fees and charges were comparable to elsewhere in the sector. Recommendations were then presented to the SLT for consideration. Following discussion, *the fees and charges were approved.*

- 18/12 Treasury management report (Agenda item 11, Paper H)**
The report had previously been scrutinised at the Finance Scrutiny Panel earlier in the week. Members were informed of the debt servicing costs for the year to date and interest rates in relation to investments and borrowings. There were no treasury deposits or investments. Where borrowings were concerned, the FSP had queried the potential for the revolving credit facility (RCF) to be more proactively managed to reduce borrowing and avoid any unnecessary interest costs. The CFO confirmed that the finance team were not currently doing this due to other competing priorities and capacity issues. Once a new financial controller was appointed, this situation would change. Members highlighted that this was something that could be undertaken by the Bank. The Treasury Management Report also included a table showing the College's compliance with loan covenants as at the end of July 2017. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

SECTION E – STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

- 18/13 Key performance indicators (KPIs) targets 2017-18 (Agenda item 12, Paper I)**
The report had previously been presented to the Corporation Board in November 2017 where a number of targets and KPIs were approved. As a number of targets were not established at that point, the report had been updated to take into account information that was not previously available. A position statement as at the end of December 2017 was also included. In response to a number of questions about staff turnover, further clarification was provided. This included a breakdown of numbers of staff in various categories who had left the College due to retirement, redundancy or ill health; findings from exit interviews; and, further detail on how the target had been set. The Board suggested that this KPI should be revised to be more realistic. Where the target for HE was concerned (4.4), it was agreed that a further review would be required in due course. Following discussion, *the report was approved*.
- 18/14 Growth opportunities (Agenda item 13, Papers J(i) to J(iv))**
This matter was considered to be confidential at this stage and the Minute is contained in a confidential annex at the end of this document.
- 18/15 Operating statement (Agenda item 14, Paper K)**
A summary of progress of items in each category was presented. To date, 4.7% had been completed. A further 4.7% were 'complete and ongoing' and 45.3% 'partially complete and on programme'. Many items in the report were 'not complete' as they had deadlines which did not fall until later in the year or the work was not due to start yet. It was agreed that for 2018-19 onwards, the report would be restructured to show those items throughout the year which were 'not complete' as they were overdue (**Action 89 – Deputy Principal**). Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

SECTION F – RESOURCES

- 18/16 Annual human resources report 2016-17 (Agenda item 15, Paper L)**
The report included an overview of changes in staffing; equality, diversity and inclusion; and, quality assurance aspects of the employment process for the 2016-17 academic year. Staff turnover remained a challenge for the College and there had been an increase of 3.8% compared to the previous year. This would continue to be area of focus over future months. More flexible

employment options were being considered by the College. There had also been a lot of investment with new members of staff. As part of the College's induction arrangements, monthly meetings were held between new staff and the SLT. These meetings provided an informal opportunity to help share the early experiences of all concerned. The number of FTE (full-time equivalent) staff numbers had reduced by nearly 3% compared to 12% in 2015-16. Staff costs were 49.8% of turnover which was comparable to the lower decile of the land-based sector and significantly lower than the GFE (general further education) sector average of 62%. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

Mr T Neville left the meeting.

18/17

Gender pay report (Agenda item 16, Paper M)

The report was outlined and discussed. The report was prepared to inform the Corporation Board of the College's position in response to the Gender Pay Gap reporting. The information would be published on the College website and a Government website by 4th April 2018. The report was based on a 'snapshot' date of 5th April 2017. The College had a mean Gender Pay Gap of 18.25%. Members received confirmation that for any given role at any level of experience, the College was paying the same salary whether the member of staff was male or female. The Assistant Director of HR is producing an action plan to focus on closing the gender pay gap. Following discussion, *the report was approved.*

Mr D Aldridge left the meeting.

18/18

Ofsted inspection of residential provision (Agenda item 17, Paper N)

The College received a short notice inspection of its residential provision between 5th and 7th December 2017. The two inspectors who completed the inspection graded the College as Good in all categories. Key findings from the inspection included the high aspirations of young people and that they achieve their ambitions. Young people had good relationships with residential wardens. The health and well-being of young people remained a high priority for leaders of the College. An action plan would be developed to address the areas for improvement. Following discussion, *the report was noted and congratulations were extended to Alison Creasey and her team.*

18/19

Current developments (Agenda item 18)

a) Food and Drink Innovation Centre (Paper O)

The financial spreadsheet had been updated to reflect two invoices which had been received and paid by the College. The Deputy Principal informed Members of the progress being made by the building contractor as well as any potential risks. Where the latter was concerned, mitigating actions were outlined and agreed. Following discussion, *the report was received.*

b) H2Oganics

It was hoped that planning permission would be sought the following week. Confirmation of this was awaited. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

18/20

Health and safety report (Agenda item 19, Paper P)

The termly report was outlined and discussed. Managers were completing their weekly health and safety inspections. The completion rate was 100% just before Christmas 2017. The majority of risk assessments had been updated and transferred into dedicated folders on Google drive. The same approach

would be applied to COSHH assessments. Fire risk assessments had been updated. Fire marshal training had taken place in October 2017 with more planned for the February study week. The health and safety policy would be brought to the May Corporation Board for approval. Following discussion, *the termly report was noted.*

SECTION G – GOVERNANCE

- 18/21 Succession planning (Agenda item 21)**
The Chair confirmed that there was currently one vacancy on the Corporation Board. Over the next 12 months, a number of governors would need to be replaced once their terms of office had expired. Members were encouraged to inform the Chair of any local contacts who might wish to join the Board. There were two individuals who had been governors previously who may wish to return in the future. The Chair confirmed that his term of office as Chair of the Corporation would expire in November 2018 and that he expected to retire from being a governor at the same time. A discussion had taken place at that morning's Search and Governance Committee where it was agreed that it was important to find out if any external governor would like to be considered for the role of Chair. There would be an opportunity for further discussion at the Governor Development Day in March 2018. A National Leader of Governance would be supporting that event and would be able to help Members think through this process. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*
- 18/22 Governor Development day – draft programme (Agenda item 22, Paper R)**
The proposed programme for the Governor Development Day was discussed. The arrangements included guest speakers who would offer an overview of national and regional implications of proposed curriculum changes. A College tour was also planned. The Chair hoped that everyone would be able to attend. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*
- 18/23 Written resolution – Moulton College solar panel lease agreements (Agenda item 23)**
A written resolution had been approved by a majority of Members from the Corporation Board for the approval to use the College Seal and associated signatories on the lease agreements in relation to the Solar Panel Lease Agreements. The lease agreements were authenticated by Mr R Thompson and Mr S Davies on 15th January 2018.

SECTION H – OTHER MATTERS

- 18/24 Date of next meeting (Agenda item 24)**
Thursday, 1st March 2018 at 9.30 am in M6
- 18/25 Any other business**
The Mallows Company organise the annual Carlsberg Northamptonshire Food and Drink Awards. The Deputy Principal confirmed that for 2018, the College would be hosting the launch event on 8th March 2018. Promotion of the event would be by the Mallows Company.

Mr S Spry left the meeting

The meeting closed at 1.05 pm