

MOULTON COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 3rd November 2016

PART 1

Present: Mr R Thompson (in the Chair), Mr S Davies, Mr A Clarkson, Mr L Howarth, Mrs K Mackaness, Mrs J Morris, Miss M Owen, Mr R Sadler, Mr R Sanders, Mr A Thomson, Mr M Thomson, Mr M Wakeford and Mrs S Wilkes

In attendance: Mrs S Field, Mr A Hartley, Mrs G M Hulley and Mr C Jackson

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

- 16/254 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**
Apologies were received from Mr T Neville and Mr R O'Driscoll. Mr G Davies, Mr J Mair and Mrs C Ryan were unable to attend and had sent their apologies.

Miss M Owen arrived
- 16/255 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 16/256 Minutes of the last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**
The minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2016 which had been circulated previously, were approved as a true and correct record.
- 16/257 Actions outstanding from the last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)**
- 16/158, Human Resources (HR) and Payroll System – Proposal**
The Assistant Director of HR was exploring a new proposal received from the current provider of the College's HR system. The current HR system would no longer be supported from June 2017. Proposed costs were significantly less than the previous proposal. There would be no charge for the software, a fixed fee to set up the new system and a fixed charge for maintenance over a 3 year period.
- 16/180, Key Performance Indicators – Position Statement**
These would be discussed in Agenda item 10, Paper li and lii
- 16/228, Safeguarding Report 2015-16**
The identification of a link governor for Safeguarding would be considered at the next Search and Governance Committee.
- 16/242, Online storage and delivery of Governance papers**
This would be discussed in Agenda item 22

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

16/258

Principal and SLT's update (Agenda item 5)

a) Recruitment 2016-17

The latest figures were outlined and discussed. For full-time, further education (FE), the College had achieved 96.1% of its overall target in terms of enrolments. The average conversion rate was 72.1%. Two programme areas had also exceeded their recruitment targets. The total of full- and part-time HE students had achieved nearly 80% of the recruitment target. This was likely to improve further as part-time HE students were still being recruited. There was a very positive position to report for Apprenticeships. Recruitment had been very good. Over the last 3 years, numbers had increased by 41% (187). The increase on the previous year was 30% (149). There were 98 infill apprenticeships from CITB. Advanced Apprenticeships had increased on the previous year. Higher Apprenticeship numbers had also doubled in the last two years. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

b) Student recruitment targets 2017-18

The student recruitment targets for the 2017-18 were presented to the Board for approval. The proposed targets were internal to the College. Members sought assurance that the targets were achievable. The Director of Further Education (FE) Curriculum and Student Engagement provided details of a robust and rigorous process which had been undertaken for FE. This included the involvement of all course teams, consultation with stakeholders, consideration of data in relation to labour market information and local demographics. Similar details of changes to process and developments to the curriculum were outlined for HE. Following discussion, *the targets were approved*.

c) College achievement rate targets 2016-17

The Director of Quality Improvement and Student Support outlined the overall College curriculum targets. Attendance was set at 90%, Retention 92% and Punctuality 99%. For FE, although the national rate information for vocational qualifications would not be available until March 2017, a slightly higher overall achievement rate target was proposed. The overall achievement rate target for English and mathematics was higher than last year. Significant work had already commenced in relation to further supporting this priority area. Students had been made aware of the importance of attending these sessions. The Board was assured of the College's approach to staffing of English and mathematics. There was now a full complement of staff for this priority area and professional development had been completed in the summer and was on-going. The focus of learning walks during the first term had been on English and mathematics. Evidence of improvements had already been observed.

The overall achievement rate targets for HE were outlined and discussed. Data for progression from level 4 to level 5 was not yet available. The target could not be set until the information was received from the University. The HE team was looking to make further improvements to progression outcomes. For Apprenticeships, national rates had been used. Level 2 was on an upward trend and the target would further support improvements. A point was raised about any impact arising from the 20% of income that would be retained pending completion of the

qualification. This was acknowledged and further consideration would be given to this in relation to setting of fees for apprenticeships in the future. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

d) **Early withdrawals**

The Director of FE Curriculum and Student Engagement highlighted that there had been a 1.7% reduction in the number of early withdrawals compared to the previous year. This was a very positive start to the year. Every programme area had seen an improvement apart from one. There had been a significant improvement in performance in Construction. There had been an increase in the number of meetings between managers and curriculum leaders. These meetings had a particular focus on those students at risk in relation to patterns of attendance or with English and mathematics. Better information, advice and guidance at the start of the learner journey had also proven beneficial. This ensured that students were better informed to make the right choices. Members welcomed this positive news. *Following discussion, the update was received*.

SECTION C – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

- 16/259 Higher Education Annual Report and Action Plan 2015-16 (Agenda item 6, Paper C)**
The annual report was outlined and discussed. Members' attention was drawn to a change for this year in relation to the quality assurance processes for HE which had been introduced by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England). The revised process required the Corporation to confirm that they had received and discussed a report and action plan relating to the continuous improvement of the student academic experience and student outcomes. The report had been prepared to give the Corporation that assurance. Members' attention was drawn to sections 5.2 and 5.3 which were incomplete. Progression and completion data were not published by the University of Northampton until late November. All aspects of the report would be updated once the additional information had been received. *Following discussion, the Board endorsed the report and agreed with the requirements of the declaration. The Principal (as the Accounting Officer) would sign the declaration by the 28th November 2016.*
- 16/260 Teaching Staff Utilisation (Agenda item 7, Paper D)**
This was a new paper for the Board and would provide a better understanding of where the College was with staff utilisation across all programme areas. The target set for areas was 95%. Two programme areas were within 0.5% of reaching the target; a further 4 areas were within 3% of the target. Greatest utilisation was by Land-based and Sport. Two areas were identified as below 90% and therefore significantly below other areas. It was proposed that this type of report would be produced on a termly basis. The next report would include hours completed by staff for cover arrangements. *Following discussion, the report was noted.*
- 16/261 Programme area report – Animal and Equine (Agenda item 8, Paper E)**
The report had been brought to the Board to complement the Commercial Enterprise Reports. It would help to extend Governors' knowledge of different programme areas. The programme area of Animal and Equine was delivered across all academies. A number of strengths were shared with the group.

Level 3 progression was positive and there had been an increase in success rates across all academies. Members welcomed the 100% success rate at the Higham Ferrers campus. Areas of development had been informed by the previous year's outturn. Further improvements to teaching, learning and assessment would continue to be a priority.

As this was the first programme area report shared with the Corporation, members were invited to offer feedback on its inclusion. Members confirmed that the report was a useful addition to the agenda. Only one report from each area would be required and these should be planned across the year. Feedback for further development of the reports included:

- The inclusion of a discrete section on the labour market assessment to aid governor reflection.
- Opportunities to demonstrate any potential for growth from full cost (commercial) courses.

Following discussion, *the report was received*.

Mrs S Field and Mr C Jackson left the meeting.

SECTION D – FINANCE

- 16/262 Five-year Financial Strategy and Plan Update (Agenda item 9)**
Members were informed that a first draft of the 5 year financial strategy was being prepared. Preparatory work had been completed to date that would inform the 5-year plan. This included the student numbers and growth projection in the 5 year curriculum plan overseen by the Director of FE Curriculum and Student Experience. Further moderation of the targets within the curriculum plan were planned to ensure the targets remain challenging but achievable. It was expected that the first draft of the 5-year financial plan would be produced by 11th November 2016. Following discussion, *the report was received*.
- 16/263 Funding Report 2015-16 (Agenda item 10, Paper F)**
This was the final funding report for 2015-16. There had been a reduction in EFA (Education Funding Agency) numbers. As this was lagged funding, any impact would occur in 2017-18. With SFA (Skills Funding Agency) 16-18 Apprenticeships, there had been growth on the previous year. The Adult Apprenticeship and Adult Learner Responsiveness were both short of target and there would be a clawback of funding made in January 2017. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.
- 16/264 Current Year Financial Performance (Agenda item 11)**
The Interim Director of Finance presented a high level view of the College's financial performance against expectations. The key measures which had been considered were cash, pay, Agency grant income, HE Tuition fees and earned Agency income. Performance at the end of quarter 1 was virtually in line with expectations in relation to income. Performance was better than expected for pay expenditure. Cash flow would continue to be closely monitored throughout the year. Following discussion, *the report was received*.
- 16/265 Fees and Charges 2017-18 (Agenda item 12, Paper G)**
The proposed changes were outlined and discussed. The majority of fees would remain unchanged with the exception of some infill rates and residence

fees. It was proposed that there would be a slight increase to the individual and group rates for school students (14-16). A decision on the Apprenticeship levy would be deferred pending further guidance. A recommendation was made to convene an employer group to offer a perspective on this. The final change related to the charges for a shared room where it was proposed to make a reduction. Details of the current occupancy rates were requested. These were reported in 'Any other Business' at the end of this document. It was also agreed that in the next 3 to 6 months, the Board would receive a separate report on occupancy rates and actions taken with the residences to improve the overall rates. Following discussion, *the fees and charges were approved.*

SECTION E – STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

16/266

Saudi Arabia (Agenda item 13)

The Corporation received an update on the latest developments. Global Dimension Education Trading (GDET) was now confirmed as the third partner. The arrangement would be confirmed by the Principals from both Colleges who would attend the relevant government department in Saudi in order to sign and lodge the relevant documentation. This would take place over the weekend of the 11th November 2016. The O&M (Operations and Maintenance) contract had not been signed by the CoE (Colleges of Excellence). The planned visit in November would provide an opportunity for a meeting with CoE to resolve the situation. Kathy Bland, CEO (Chief Executive Officer) was now confirmed as the general manager of the company. A meeting was taking place this week to consider the situation with the college in the north east of the Kingdom to explore the practicalities of how this college might work in the future. Any proposal would not be accepted unless the O&M contract was signed. A claim had been received from a former employee. This was now being dealt with by the TOP group. Copies of the due diligence documentation would be circulated to Board members in the Clerk's weekly mailing that day. The Principal assured the Board that the documents had been checked thoroughly by TOP solicitors and the CoE solicitors. Following discussion, *the update was received.*

16/267

Area-based reviews [ABR] (Agenda item 14)

a) Task and Finish Group – Minutes of last meeting

Draft minutes from the meeting held on Monday, 31st October 2016 had been tabled for information. Andrew Thomson, Chief Executive from ACER (Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region) had attended the meeting as he had experience of ABRs in the eastern region. Andrew was able to provide the Group with an insight into the process and some strategies that could be adopted by the College. The impact of the Insolvency Regime was considered by the Group. Members of the Group confirmed how beneficial Andrew Thomson had been in providing a strategic view. This had helped to further develop ideas. The Board was also informed that through its membership with the College, ACER was in a position to provide further advice and opportunities for discussion going forward. The Board had all been invited to the first meeting for the ABR process on the 5th December 2016. This would be held at Northampton College. Everyone was very welcome to attend the meeting. The ABR team would be visiting the Moulton College on the 12th December 2016. The focus of this visit would enable members of the ABR team to get a

better understanding of the College. Following discussion, *the report was received.*

b) Area-based review Options Appraisal

This would be considered at the next meeting of the Task and Finish Group in November 2016. Following discussion, *the update was noted.*

16/268

Growth opportunities (Agenda item 15)

Northampton College had just been successful in putting in a bid for the “Delivery of Education & Vocational training services activity funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) to support employees and employers in SEMLEP (South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership)” for apprenticeship services. This support is via the SFA (Skills Funding Agency). This had been submitted on behalf of the FUSE group. Moulton College would be involved. A meeting was planned for 10th November 2016 for all parties to have a more detailed discussion about the implications. Further detail would be provided at the next Board meeting.

There had been two meetings with the East of England Agricultural Society (EEAS) to discuss a proposal for a programme which could mean a number of African nationals coming to the college between April and July. This would be for academic and practical training. The programme would offer a cultural understanding of the UK. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

16/269

Marketing and Communication Strategy (Agenda item 16, Paper H)

The report included the College Marketing Policy for the Board to approve. Members’ attention was drawn to the five elements of the proposed Policy. The Market and Communication Strategy had been updated to reflect the changes in the College Strategic Plan 2016-2012. The Strategy included a number of traditional and innovative plans to market the College. This had been approved in July 2016 by the Board. Following discussion, *the Board approved the Policy and received the report.*

16/270

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (Agenda item 10)

a) KPIs 2015-16 (Paper li)

Members received the final report on the KPIs for the last academic year. Of the 19 KPIs that had been approved by the Board, 74% were either green or amber. The report included a commentary for each of the outcomes. Following discussion, *the final outturn with the rating and College progress with the targets was approved.*

b) KPIs 2016-17 targets (Paper lii)

The targets for 2016-17 were outlined and discussed. The number of KPIs had increased to just over 30. The College would be able to focus on some areas in more detail. The revised format for the KPIs was modelled on an example of effective practice from elsewhere in the sector. The KPIs were linked to the strategic aims and would further help to measure how well the College was doing throughout the year. Further work was being completed on Strategic Aim 3: To provide a high quality learning experience. A future version may show that this aim had been combined with others. The increased number of KPIs for finance reflected the College’s commitment to providing the necessary assurances to the Board. Following discussion, *the KPIs were approved.*

SECTION F – RESOURCES

- 16/271** **Current developments (Agenda item 11)**
a) Food and Innovation Development Centre
The Board was informed that contract to take the project forward would be finalised the next day. Payment arrangements had been agreed. The design should be completed by the end of December 2016 with planning permission arranged for mid-January. The project would go out to tender shortly after. The Deputy Principal continued to meet with the strategic group. Following discussion, *the update was noted.*
- b) Veterinary Practice**
Initial proposals had been received for extending the current veterinary practice. A longer term lease agreement would be agreed to reflect that the College was not funding the extension. Progress to date was positive and movement was expected in the early New Year. The project would provide an opportunity for the practice to grow and a different service. There would also be a further opportunity for students to access commercial enterprise opportunities. Following discussion, *the update was noted.*
- c) H20ganics**
Project was still in progress with a design being produced. A planning application would be submitted in December 2016. Work was underway on drawing up a leasing arrangement and how this would work in practice. Following discussion, *the update was noted.*
- 16/272** **Commercial enterprise report - Garden Centre (Agenda item 12, Paper J)**
The report was outlined and discussed. The report confirmed that salaries had been brought under control. The College was looking at a positive financial outcome in addition to commercial experience for the students. Members acknowledged the improvements that had taken place with the Garden Centre since the last report. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

SECTION G – GOVERNANCE

- 16/273** **Appointment to Committees (Agenda item 12, Paper K)**
Following the resignation of two external governors during 2015-16, vacancies had arisen in the Remuneration Committee and the Audit Committee. This had been considered at the Search and Governance Committee at its meeting in September 2016. It was proposed that an existing member of the Board would join the Remuneration Committee. The proposal also included a recommendation by the Search and Governance Committee for a new external governor to join the Audit Committee and the recently appointed student governor to join the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee. Following discussion, *the appointments listed in the paper were approved.*
- 16/274** **Board Key Performance Indicators (Agenda item 13, Paper L)**
The report for 2015-16 was outlined and discussed. Fourteen of the 19 indicators had been fully achieved. It was proposed to set the same targets for 2016-17. It was agreed that where the Governance Development Day (GDD) was concerned, when an external visit was planned, the Board meeting would not be combined with the GDD. Following discussion, *the report was noted and the recommendation from the Search and Governance Committee to set the same targets for 2016-17 was approved.*

16/275

Online storage and delivery of Governance papers (Agenda item 14)

The Clerk to the Corporation presented details of the proposed online storage area. Members had previously received details of their personal login details for access. A prompt sheet had been circulated and this could be used a method for accessing the area. In addition, members were informed that a link would be included in future invitations to the Board and Committee meetings. By clicking on the link, Members would be presented with a copy of the agenda and hyperlinks to all papers. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

SECTION H – OTHER MATTERS

16/276

Date of next meeting

Thursday, 1st December 2016 at 9.30am in M6

16/277

Any other business

- a) **Occupancy levels:** In response to a question earlier in the meeting (minute 16/265), Members were informed that occupancy at Holcot was around 93%. At Moulton Centre, the occupancy was 68%. During holiday periods, this occupancy level would be closer to 100% due to external bookings. The overall occupancy during term time was 80% currently and was expected to rise to 83% from January 2017. Although occupancy may fall in the summer with reduced demand from HE students, holiday lets for July and August looked exceptionally good at present. The financial targets for accommodation were likely to exceed budget this year.
- b) **Apprenticeship levy:** The potential for an employer group to be convened to focus on and explore the potential opportunities associated with the levy on behalf of the College. This same group could also be used to target big local businesses to maximise the use of levy funds.

Part 1 of the meeting concluded. Mr L Howarth, Miss M Owen and Mrs S Wilkes left the meeting.