

MOULTON COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 26th April 2018

Present: Mr R Thompson (in the Chair), Mr G Davies, Mrs K Delamain-Blunt, Mr R O'Driscoll, Mr B Hansford, Mr L Howarth, Mr I James, Ms L Knapp, Mr T Neville, Mr R Sadler, Mr A Thomson and Mr M Thomson

In attendance: Miss A S Bruce, Mrs G M Hulley, Mr C Jackson, Mrs J Matthews, Ms B Parker-Brown and Mrs A Turner (Landex Consultant)

Pre-Corporation Presentations:

(1) Estate Opportunities

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

Mr A Clarkson arrived during this item.

(2) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):

The Chief Finance Officer presented a PowerPoint explaining the meaning of GDPR, what it means for the College and the Corporation and the actions being taken. The information provided in the presentation was part of an update for Governors in line with their responsibilities for data protection.

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

- 18/79 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**
Apologies were received from Mr S Gordon and Mr S Spry.
- 18/80 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**
Mr Howarth declared an interest in agenda items 7, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21 and 22. Mr T Neville declared an interest in agenda items 5, 9, 12, 14 and 15.
- 18/81 Minutes of previous meetings (Agenda item 3, Papers A and B):**
The minutes of meetings held on the 1st March 2018 and 22nd March 2018 had been circulated previously. Both were approved as a true and accurate record.
- 18/82 Actions outstanding from the previous meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper C) 3rd December 2015, 15/220[c], Moulton College Developments Ltd**
The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) reported that a meeting had recently been held with VAT advisors. A number of recommendations had been agreed around streamlining current arrangements around VAT. A paper would be prepared for the next meeting of the Corporation. **(Action 92 – CFO)**
- 25th January 2018, 18/14, Growth opportunities**
This action was considered confidential and can be found in a confidential annex at the end of this document.

All other items were either progressing in line with deadlines or were on the agenda for discussion.

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

18/83

Principal and SLT's update (Agenda item 5)

a) Recruitment 2017-18:

Applications and offers for full-time further education (FE) were tracking closely to the same time last year. Members were informed of changes that had taken place this year in relation to improving internal processes around acceptances. In response to a question around the positive impact these changes would have on students, it was highlighted that the processing of bursary applications could be completed far more quickly. The Acting Principal confirmed how important it was for prospective students to have early notification that their application had been successful. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

b) Student retention:

The overall retention for FE programmes was 91.3% which was above the position at the same time last year. In terms of national benchmarks, the College was 0.6% below. Three areas were above the College target of 92%. The Corporation raised a number of questions. Further detail was provided on various factors that had occurred in two programme areas that had resulted in their retention figures being just below the College target. Members were informed of specific staff training that had taken place during the Easter holidays. There were initial signs of improvement since students had returned with staff challenging student behaviour which fell short of expectations. This had been observed across the College. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

c) Attendance:

Current trends of attendance were outlined and discussed. The overall attendance target for 2017-18 was 90% with an expectation of 100% for all students. Overall, attendance on FE programmes was currently 86%. In response to a question, Members were informed that for English and Mathematics, attendance was 3% below compared to the same time last year. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

SECTION C – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

18/84

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (Agenda item 6, Paper D)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th April 2018 were tabled. Members' attention was drawn to two items in particular. They related to staff turnover and observations of teaching, learning and assessment. In both instances, the Committee had received reports that had provided a greater level of detail than in the past. Members of the Committee were therefore able to provide a much greater degree of scrutiny and challenge. A question was raised about any actions that had been taken to improve the number of observations from 'ineffective' to 'effective'. It was acknowledged that further work was required in this area. There had, however, been an improved focus on staff development in recent weeks. A number of strategies were outlined to explain how this would be enhanced further in the future. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

18/85

Post-inspection action plan 2017-18 (Agenda item 7, Paper E)

The Director of Quality Improvement and Student Support (QI&SS) presented the updated post-inspection action plan (PIAP). This now comprised an overall worksheet comprising 6 over-arching themes. A series of additional

worksheets were also included with each one focusing on one of the 6 themes and aligned to the Ofsted common inspection framework. Other improvements to the PIAP included the addition of SMART targets, details of the actions taken each month and any impact to date. Members of the SLT were each allocated to a particular theme with responsibility for monitoring progress of their respective themes. The PIAP would also be subject to monthly scrutiny by the Corporation and monitored by the TLA Committee.

A question was raised about the extent to which there was a shared understanding by staff across the College of why Ofsted reached the judgements made in the inspection. A briefing had been delivered to all staff to explain the outcomes and detail behind the report. The SLT had been clear in its message to staff that in addition to health and safety, and safeguarding, improvements were also required with teaching, learning and assessment. In response to a question about governors having a greater involvement with health and safety and safeguarding, Members were informed that at that morning's Search and Governance Committee, it was agreed a governor and a co-opted member would be taking on the 'champion' roles on behalf of the Corporation. Members received confirmation of the practical arrangements for implementing the actions in the PIAP. The Corporation emphasised the need for a greater sense of urgency than was evident in previous months. Following discussion, *the report was approved for submission to the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency).*

18/86

Curriculum Plan and Contribution Analysis (Agenda item 8, Paper F)

The report provided members of the Corporation with the work currently being undertaken on curriculum planning and contribution analysis. The contribution analysis had been created using a new software package (4Cast) that had recently been purchased by the College. Further work was required on the report to ensure it was an effective planning tool for staff. The senior leadership team (SLT) provided a number of responses to questions including that this piece of work would be completed in the next fortnight. The information was being refined at the moment to include current student numbers. The CFO explained that there was a need to triangulate the information with the budget and such was the importance of this work, it was crucial to get it right. The Chair confirmed that once this work was finalised, the version that the Corporation would be presented for consideration, should be condensed so that it could be scrutinised more easily. Following discussion, the report was received.

18/87

Higher Education – Monitoring report (Agenda item 9, Paper G)

A presentation on Higher Education (HE) was outlined and discussed. Key points related to an overview of HE provision including student numbers. Overall full-time retention was 92.3% and 91% for full-time and part-time respectively. Some context around HE was provided in relation to staffing, student voice/experience, recruitment and the current offer. Short-term and longer-term actions were outlined and discussed. An action plan had been produced that had been shared previously with the TLA Committee. In response to a question about actions being taken to boost student numbers, a school liaison officer was visiting school sixth forms to promote the College's HE curriculum offer; open events; and more work was taking place with UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

18/88 Safeguarding Report (Agenda item 10, Paper H)
The termly safeguarding report was outlined and discussed. It provided an update on the actions being taken with regard to safeguarding practice in light of the findings from the recent Ofsted inspection. The Corporation received an assurance that the immediate safeguarding actions that were required by the ESFA in its letter of the 12th March 2018 had been completed. The report also summarised the main findings and recommendations from the external audit. The Director of QI&SS confirmed that some statistics from MyConcern would be brought to the next meeting (**Action 93** – Director of QI&SS). This would offer the Corporation a greater level of detail and increase Members' understanding of the actions being taken. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

18/89 Equality policy review (Agenda item 11, Paper I)
The Equality policy was brought to the Corporation for approval as part of an annual review. Minor amendments in relation to job titles had been made. . Following discussion, *the policy was approved*.

Mr Jackson, Mrs J Matthews and Ms B Parker-Brown left the meeting.

SECTION D - FINANCE

18/90 Management Accounts (Agenda item 12, Paper J)
Period 8 management accounts had been subject to scrutiny and challenge earlier in the week at the Finance Scrutiny Panel. The CFO reported that the positive various since the previous month was due to the costs of disposing assets being less than forecast. A number of exceptional items were noted. These had not been included in the management accounts as the final cost was still to be determined. Members were informed of cost controls that were now in place and fully operational. The College was likely to receive income from the TOP (The Oxford Partnership)/Saudi College partnership arrangement. Any income would be subject to withholding tax.

Members' attention was drawn to a summary of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) including the financial health score and bank covenants. The CFO (Chief Finance Officer) outlined the current risks associated with the financial health score and bank covenants at year end. The position was being improved using tight spending controls on pay, non-pay costs and working capital management. There had been a positive meeting with the bank the previous week.

Members were informed of the latest situation in relation to four properties of which two had been sold subject to contract. There was an expectation to exchange contracts by early May with completion shortly afterwards. Two other properties had been identified for sale in the future. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

18/91 Funding allocations 2018-19 (Agenda item 13, Paper K)
The main allocations had now been received and details were provided in the report. The ESFA had published 2 short videos to help Colleges understand the 16 to 19 funding statement. These had been circulated previously to governors and can be found at the following link:
[Information: helping you understand your 16 to 19 revenue funding allocation statements for 2018 to 2019](#)

Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

18/92 Draft College Budget (20180-19) and draft Financial Plan (2018-21) (Agenda item 14, Paper L)

The report had been subject to scrutiny at the FSP earlier in the week. It outlined the emerging gap between income and expenditure predicted in 2018-19 and the impact on the College's financial health. As a result, the current approved financial plan for 2018-19 was no longer viable without a robust cost reduction plan being delivered. College management had already taken steps to start the development of these plans. Members were reminded of the four main factors that had caused the gap in income. A draft recovery plan provided a summary of the steps and reviews that need to be undertaken to deliver savings and to keep the College in good financial health. The draft budget and level of savings identified were based on meeting financial KPIs set out by the ESFA and bank. The risk area for the College was generating sufficient operating surplus to meet debt service cover and operating surplus as a % of income.

In response to a question, the CFO outlined the various deadlines that had to be met in order to meet the various requirements of the ESFA and the FE Commissioner. One Member highlighted the potential need for additional meetings for the Corporation to agree any recommendations by the SLT in relation to cost savings. It was agreed that a decision about any additional meetings would be taken after the first meeting with the FEC on Monday, 30th April 2018 (Action 94 – Clerk). Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

18/93 Review of profile of activities (including letting) (Agenda item 15, Paper M)

The annual review of activities carried out by the College was outlined and discussed. No activities were considered to be ultra vires. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

SECTION E – AUDIT

18/94 Board Assurance Framework (Agenda item 16, Paper N)

At the last meeting of the Audit Committee, the Chair had requested that a Board Assurance Framework should be produced. The Chair of Audit explained that in his experience, where the review and management of risks were concerned, assurance was gained from a broad spectrum. Not only was there the regular dialogue with internal and external auditors but there were other activities to take into account. The Board Assurance Framework (BAF) brings all of the different methods and activities into one place. The CFO outlined how the BAF would be used to provide the level of assurances required when signing the year-end financial statements. The BAF was an enabler for the Corporation in terms of answering certain core questions, for example, 'How do we know management are managing those risks?' and, 'What are we doing about it?' The CFO explained the 3 levels of assurance contained within the BAF. Safeguarding and health and safety were included in the BAF. The BAF would also be a useful tool to inform some of the priorities for the internal audit plan as well as featuring on the agenda at each meeting of the Audit Committee. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

SECTION F – STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

18/95 Reports from external agencies (Agenda item 17)

a) FE Commissioner: 10th and 11th April 2018

Feedback from the meeting had previously been circulated. The final

report would be circulated once it had been received by the College. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

b) ESFA Case Conference (Paper O)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th March 2018 were noted. A further meeting had taken place on the 16th April 2018. Following discussion, the report was noted.

18/96 Marketing Plan (Agenda item 18)

Due to competing priorities, it had not been possible to arrange a meeting with two members of the Corporation to discuss the Marketing Plan. This would be actioned in due course.

18/97 Progress review of Operating Statement 2017-18 (Agenda item 19, Paper P)

A summary of progress of items in each category was presented. To date, 7.1% had been completed. A further 9% were 'complete and ongoing' and 38% 'partially complete and on programme'. The remainder of 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. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

SECTION G - RESOURCES

18/98 Current developments (Agenda item 20)

a) Food and Drink Innovation Centre (Paper Q)

The Acting 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. Questions were raised about progress with student applications and staffing arrangements when the centre opens in 2018-19. Staff recruitment was ongoing. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

b) H20ganics

The planning application had been successful and planning permission had been granted subject to an archaeological survey which would be completed in due course. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

c) Veterinary Practice

Members were informed of the latest situation. The Chair confirmed that this should be a decision for the College management team to make. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

18/99 Commercial Enterprise report: Sports (Agenda item 21, Paper R)

The report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. In response to a question around the profitability of the enterprise, the Corporation was informed of actions that were in progress. Following discussion, the report was received.

18/100 Audit reports (Agenda item 22)

a) Health and Safety (Paper S) and Safeguarding (Paper T)

Two independent audits had been completed since the Ofsted inspection in February 2018. Both had been circulated prior to the meeting. A detailed action plan had been created to address the requirements in the health and safety report. A similar action plan would soon be created for Safeguarding now that the Director of QI&SS was in place. Questions

were raised about the ongoing arrangements planned for ensuring the proposed actions would be implemented. Governors would now have far greater oversight of both priority areas. This was confirmed in the agenda item earlier for the PIAP. From a College perspective, resources had been reviewed to ensure that they were adequate to deliver the action plan. A review of reporting structures had been overhauled to ensure these would be more effective. One governor queried whether similar audits would be completed in the future to ensure that the proposed actions had been taken and relevant procedures embedded. The Acting Principal assured all Members that the audits would be repeated in September 2018 (**Action 94** – Acting Principal). Following discussion, *the reports were noted.*

SECTION H – OTHER MATTERS

18/101 **Date of next meeting**
Thursday, 7th June 2018 at 9.30 am in M6.

18/102 **Any other business**

a) **Presentation:**

A presentation was made to Mr R O'Driscoll who was leaving the Board. The Chair thanked Mr O'Driscoll for his hard work, dedication and support to the College. Mr O'Driscoll had also been a member of the Finance Scrutiny Panel and his contributions were very much appreciated.

b) **Changes to working practices:**

One Member shared details of external support that had been provided to another educational organisation that had resulted in positive benefits to working practices. A member of the SLT confirmed that consideration needed to be given to the full range of support available within current budget constraints. Contact details should be shared with the CFO.

c) **GDPR:**

A further update on GDPR was requested for the next Corporation meeting. The CFO confirmed that this would also be an item on the agenda of the Audit Committee.

Mr R O'Driscoll, Mrs Delamain-Blunt and Mr Howarth left the meeting.