

MOULTON COLLEGE

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporation held on Thursday, 28th April 2016

Present: Mr R Thompson (Chair), Mr S Davies, Mr L Howarth,
Mrs J Morris, Mr K Moulton, Mrs K Mackaness, Mr T Neville,
Mr R O'Driscoll, Mrs E Olson-Williams, Mr R Sadler,
Mr R Sanders, Mr A Thomson and Mr M Thomson

In attendance: Mr G Davies, Mrs G M Hulley and Mr J Mair

Part 1

Prior to the meeting, the Board received a presentation from the Chief Executive of a hydroponics company. This was then subject to further discussion in Section E, Strategic Developments.

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

- 16/107 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**
Apologies were received from Mr M Seymour, Mr M Wakeford and Mrs S Wilkes
- 16/108 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**
Mr Howarth declared an interest in agenda items 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 16, 19 and 22. Mr Neville declared an interest in agenda items 5, 6, 10a, 10e and 11a. There were no other declarations of interest.
- 16/109 Minutes of the last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**
The minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2016 were approved as a true and correct record.
- 16/110 Matters arising**
At the meeting of the Board on 24th March 2016, Members had requested a position paper in relation to providing absolute clarity about bond liabilities. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services circulated a written statement to all Members. As the content was commercially sensitive and therefore considered confidential, this was recorded in a separate annex at the end of the Minutes.
- 16/111 Actions outstanding from the meeting held on the 24th March 2016 (Agenda item 4, Paper B)**
- 15/220(c), Moulton College Developments Limited, Action 9**
The Director of Finance and Corporate Services had consulted with VAT advisors. He was now awaiting advice about Corporation tax. A paper would be presented to the Board in May 2016. (Open)
- 16/3, Fire Services National Museum Trust, Action 12**
The College was awaiting a more detailed business plan from the Fire Services National Museum Trust. Once received, this would be shared with the Board. (Open)

16/54, Presentation Day Schedule, Action 20

Presenters had now been identified for all four ceremonies. They would be:

- Nigel Baker, Chief Executive, Pet Industry Federation;
- Chris Jones, England Athletics Ltd who would also be accompanied by Nathan Douglas, England Athletics Ambassador and International Athlete;
- Chris Blythe, CEO, The Chartered Institute of Building;
- Lord Boswell of Aynho.

(Closed)

16/94, College Strategic Plan, Action 21

This would be an item for discussion at the meeting, Agenda item 19, Paper U. (Open)

SECTION B – TEACHING AND LEARNING

16/112 Student Recruitment 2016-17 (Agenda item 5, Paper C)

Applications for Further Education (FE) were showing an improving trend with an increase of 13% compared to the same time last year. Internal progressions for 2016-17 had also been included. FE applications were being closely monitored and a range of activities were being undertaken to maintain the current momentum.

Apprenticeship numbers were showing an increase of 10% compared to the previous year. A particular growth area was 16-18 Apprentices at Intermediate level. There was a significant improvement in the timely completion of Apprentices. This had resulted in a positive impact on the current total of 'out of funding' learners compared to the same time last year.

In Higher Education (HE), although recruitment numbers were slightly lower than the previous year, there had been an increase of more than 40 students compared to the previous month. Members were informed of a careers event that had been held the previous weekend. This had been successful in generating additional HE applications. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

Members received a demonstration of the Dashboard which had been developed by colleagues from Management Information Systems (MIS). This would be used in the future to report on key indicators, for example, retention and attendance. Where the Board was concerned, the Dashboard would help Members to monitor progress as well as view the impact of different initiatives. Following discussion, *Members welcomed the potential benefits that the Dashboard would bring to future meetings.*

16/113 Student Retention and Attendance trends 2015-16 (Agenda item 6, Paper D)

In FE retention, there was a continued upward trend with an overall increase of 2% compared to the same time last year. Members were informed that accuracy and promptness of student recording had been a priority to ensure a genuine reporting position. HE retention was 5% less than the same time last year. This reflected a change to a more prompt and robust way of managing student withdrawals locally. In Apprenticeships, retention and predicted outcomes were improving. This reflected a number of recently introduced strategies that were having a positive impact. Although attendance had stabilised at 87%, it was still below the college target of 95% and a 100% expectation for all students. The use of ProMonitor had enabled further

investigation and analysis at course level. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

- 16/114 College Quality Improvement Report – Progress Monitoring (Agenda item 7, Paper E)**
The report provided the Board with an update on progress with the five key priorities. A number of actions were highlighted. All members of the Board had completed their Prevent online training. To date, over 1,800 students had also completed a Prevent tutorial package. Initial findings and feedback showed that outcomes for Apprenticeships were likely to improve by 10 percentage points. Outcomes for English and mathematics showed a predicted increase of around 14% compared to the previous year. Although an improvement, further work was still required. The report included actions for each of the five priority areas that would be focused on for the next month. Following discussion, *the report was received*.
- 16/115 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Termly report (Agenda item 8, Paper F)**
The termly Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) report was outlined and discussed. The College had successfully achieved reaccreditation of the Investors in Diversity (IiD) Stage 2 standard in January 2016. Equality objectives had been presented to the Board in March 2016. Five equality objectives had been approved by the Board and were now published on the College's website. An EDI action plan was in the process of development. This plan would capture actions from the IiD Stage 2 report and the College's equality objectives. The finalised action plan would be presented to the Board in July 2016. To date, good progress was being made. Following discussion, *the report was received*.
- 16/116 Equality and Child Protection Policies - Annual Review (Agenda item 9, Paper G)**
This was the annual review of the policy. It was brought to the Board for approval as part of an annual review. Minor amendments had been made to the current policies. These included changes to reflect the most recent statutory guidance and refinements in operational practice. Following discussion, *the policies were approved*.
- 16/117 Academic Board Minutes (Agenda item 10)**
a) HE Academic Board, 17 September 2015 (Paper H), and
b) FE Academic Board, 17 September 2015 (Paper I)
The HE and FE Academic Boards had met to consider the grades of those students who had completed resits over the summer. This was to ensure they complied with college regulations and the correct class of award. There were no major concerns to share with the Board. Following discussion, *the minutes from both Boards were received*.
- c) FE Academic Board, 26 November 2015 (Paper J)**
The FE Academic Board had been informed of significant changes to the curriculum that would be introduced from September 2016. All areas of the curriculum would be reviewed. A decision would be taken about any changes to awarding bodies at a later date. This would be shared with the Board in due course. Following discussion, *the minutes were received*.

d) FE Academic Board, 11 February 2016 (Paper K)

The focus of this meeting was to consider the way in which level 1 provision was managed. Historically, level 1 courses had been managed by the General Education programme area. It was agreed that level 1 provision would move into the respective vocational programme areas. This would not affect progression of Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) students. The FE Academic Board recognised the need for effective communication of this change. Following discussion, *the minutes were received*.

e) HE Academic Board, 23 February 2016 (Paper L)

The main points of the meeting were outlined and discussed. The minutes included some items about the QAA report which had been reported separately at a Board meeting in January 2016. Following discussion, *the minutes were received*.

SECTION C - FINANCE

16/118 Management Accounts March 2016 (Agenda item 11, Paper M)

The Accounts were discussed. The summary sheet confirmed an actual deficit which was greater than the revised budgeted deficit. This was due to the payment profile where the income from the Education Funding Agency can range from £0.5 million to £1.5 million between March and April. The HE income budget now reflected expectations. Work based learning was above budget for March and was expected to reduce the year to date profile. Where other income was concerned, there were no other significant variances with the commercial enterprises trading as expected. In line with a recommendation from the Audit Committee, the Key Indicators page now reported on bank covenant forecasting to 31st July 2016. This forecast would be closely monitored during the rest of the academic year. Following discussion, *the accounts were approved*.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided Members with an update from the College's bank. As the matter included some information that was commercially sensitive and therefore confidential, this was recorded in a separate annex at the end of the Minutes.

16/119 Funding report (Agenda item 12, Paper N)

The report was outlined and discussed. It had been based on the R08 file which had been submitted earlier in the month. There was very little movement at this time of the year. Additional learner enrolments on the Vision2Learn contract would become more evident in the R09 file in May 2016. Following discussion, *the report was approved*.

SECTION D – AUDIT

16/120 Audit Committee Minutes (Agenda item 13, Paper O)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11th April 2016 were outlined and discussed. The Committee considered the findings from the Higher Education Funding Council in England (HEFCE) who had undertaken a Key Information Set (KIS) audit. HEFCE had identified a number of actions for the College to address. The Audit Committee was satisfied with the actions taken by the College to date and welcomed the opportunity to view the action plan at its next meeting in July 2016. The Risk Management Audit Action Plan

was shared with the Committee and Members were satisfied with progress to date.

The internal auditors presented four reports.

- i) Corporate Governance: Board Effectiveness Assessment gave an overall assurance rating of 'Substantial'. The report included a number of recommendations including a comment on overall attendance. This had improved since the previous year and the Committee agreed that the Board could strive to make further improvements.
- ii) A second report, Education Funding Agency (EFA): Conditions of Funding Healthcheck was completed as part of an overall funding check. This review would give the College maximum notice to ensure compliance with the EFA Conditions of Funding.
- iii) The third report, Fundamental Financial Controls: Stock Control and Transportation included an audit of stock at the College's Garden Centre and a Value for Money (VfM) review. This audit received two low priority recommendations with an advisory recommendation for the VfM review.
- iv) The final audit report, Student Journey: Initial Enquiry, Admissions and Enrolment resulted in an overall rating of 'Reasonable'. The Board were informed that although the report received the most recommendations (10), it should be viewed in the context of considerable staff changes within Student Services. The Audit Committee was assured that improvements had been made and the recommendations were being dealt with satisfactorily. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

SECTION E - STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

16/121 Annual Operating Statement – Progress Review (Agenda item 14, Paper P)
Twenty three of the 35 items due for completion during March had been fully or partially completed. A further 10 items were ongoing. One or two actions may not be completed this year, for example, 'Develop a SharePoint solution'. Different dates would be required. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

16/122 Growth Opportunities

a) Saudi Arabia (Agenda item 15, Paper Q) Saudi Arabia

The monthly report was outlined and discussed. There had not been a full The Oxford Partnership (TOP) Shadow Board meeting since the last Moulton College Corporation Board meeting in March 2016. A dialogue between TOP Directors and the Colleges of Excellence (CoE) programme in Saudi Arabia had continued. Based on an external assessment of the quality of outcomes, 3 of the 4 colleges were in the top 5 performing colleges in the CoE programme. Some financial challenges had been shared at the last Board meeting. Although still present, these had now stabilised. It was also reported that a positive variance was expected at year end. The partnership still comprised Moulton College, Activate Learning and GEMS. Another potential partnership opportunity was being explored but this would be subject to careful consideration.

At the last Board meeting, Members were informed of a difficult negotiation with the CoE in relation to the minimum guaranteed payment (MGP). A more favourable agreement had been reached in relation to the MGP and this would be backdated to Trimester 1. This had been confirmed in writing. The Board welcomed this update.

Members sought clarification at the last Board meeting about which documents were held by the solicitors representing the College. A document containing this information was circulated to Members. There were 25 documents listed. It was agreed that further clarity was required concerning which documents were critical and therefore binding. Furthermore, where a document was considered binding, an action plan should be produced. This would provide confirmation of any actions that were needed and could be used to monitor progress. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

b) Hydroponics (Agenda item 15)

The content of the presentation was discussed as part of a separate agenda item. As the matter was considered to be commercially sensitive, this was recorded in a separate annex at the end of these minutes.

16/123

External reviews (Agenda item 16, Paper R)

The report provided Members with updated information regarding the Area Based Review process of post-16 education and training institutions. Mr S Davies, Mr G Davies and Mrs J Morris had attended a workshop on 13th April 2016 which had been delivered by Regeneris Consulting. Copies of the PowerPoint slides were included with the report. During the workshop, it was announced that Moulton College would be in Wave 5 of the Area Based Review process. This would commence in November 2016. A report from the workshop would be shared with the Board in due course. A second workshop was planned for 7th June 2016. The benefits of a creating a small working group were considered. This group could consider any options that would arise from the steering group meetings. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

16/124

Northern Orbital Relief Road (Agenda item 17, Paper S)

The purpose of the report was to bring the Board up to date with the responses sent on behalf of the College through Turley Associates Limited (Turley) regarding the Northern Orbital Relief Road (NORR). Turley had been commissioned by the College to advise on strategic planning matters relating to the College Estate.

The College and Turley had met with Northampton County Council (NCC) on 5th February 2016 to discuss their proposals for the NORR. Feedback from the Board in relation to benefits and drawbacks of each option was also obtained in February and March 2016. These discussions helped to frame the feedback as part of the consultation process.

In a response to the initial consultation, Turley sent a letter to NCC. The letter confirmed that the College had taken a neutral stance and stated it would not be appropriate to state a preference for any one route over another at the time of writing. The letter confirmed that as a key stakeholder, the College was committed to sustained engagement with NCC in order to define more fully, the implications of the differing route options. Turley also noted in the letter from the College that further engagement was likely to take place over a period of several months. Following discussion, *the report was received*.

16/125 The Moulton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2014-2029 (Agenda item 18, Paper T)

The report provided an update on the Independent Examiner's findings into the representations made by Moulton College and other parties in response to the 'Moulton Neighbourhood Development Plan (MNDP) 2014-2019. The report confirmed that whilst the plan can proceed, a number of modifications were required. The report included a summary of the main recommendations that related to the College. An updated plan would be prepared by Moulton Parish Council (MPC). This would be submitted to Daventry District Council (DDC) who would decide whether the amended document would proceed to the public referendum. This process was likely to take 3 to 4 months. Members welcomed the report as a positive outcome for the College. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

16/126 College Strategic Plan 2016/17 – 2021 (Draft) (Agenda item 19, Paper U)

The Draft College Strategic Plan had been updated since the last Board meeting. This included minor amendments to the objectives. To date, consultation had taken place with managers. There were also plans to consult with staff in due course. Members' attention was drawn to Annex B which included some questions to support a wider consultation with external stakeholders. Following discussion, *the report was approved for wider consultation with stakeholders.*

SECTION E - RESOURCES

16/127 Current Developments – Progress Report (Agenda item 20)

Work continued on the athletics track. Tarmac had been laid and the track itself will be laid once the weather conditions had further improved. Completion on the Pavilion was expected imminently. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

16/128 Commercial Enterprise Report (Hotel Services) (Agenda item 21, Paper V)

The report was outlined and discussed. The report summarised the extensive range of commercial elements that formed the basis of Hotel Services. Members were also informed that the same team had a wider remit and responsibility for the cleaning of the College (internal and external), rubbish disposal, supply of furniture and disposal services. When considering the income generated by Hotel Services, Members were directed to the information contained in Table 2 as this excluded costs associated with cleaning. Hotel Services provided a healthy income to the college.

A lot of work had been completed to improve the occupancy of the College accommodation. Thanks were extended to Mr Neville who had provided a contact with Navitas¹. This should provide term-time accommodation opportunities for overseas students completing courses at the University, looking for accommodation during term-time. A report of occupancy for 2016-17 would be brought to the next Committee meeting. Following discussion, *the report was received.*

16/129 Health and Safety Policy Annual Review (Agenda item 22, Paper W)

¹ An embedded college within Northampton University that sources accommodation for overseas students

This was the annual review of the policy. Minor changes were required this year including changes to job titles. Senior Management Team (SMT) was now recorded as Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 3.7.9 where the regulations had been updated to reflect the most current legislation. Following discussion, *the policy was re-approved.*

Mr R Sanders left the meeting.

SECTION F – OTHER MATTERS

16/130 **Date of next meeting (Agenda item 23)**
Thursday, 26th May 2016 at 9.30 am in M6.

16/131 **Any other business (Agenda item 24)**
There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 11.58 am

Part 1 of the meeting concluded. Mr L Howarth, Mr K Moulton, Mr J Mair and Mrs E Olson-Williams left the meeting