

MOULTON COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25th February 2016

PART 1

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

In attendance: Mr G Davies, Mrs S Field, Mrs G M Hulley, Mr J Mair and Mrs C Ryan

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS:

16/39 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies.

16/40 Declarations of Interest

Mr Howarth declared an interest in agenda items 5, 6 and 16. Mr Neville declared an interest in agenda items 5, 6, 7, 11, 12 and 14. Mr Thomson declared an interest in agenda item 19.

16/41 Minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2016 (Agenda item 4, Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2016 were approved as a true and correct record.

16/42 Table of outstanding actions (Agenda item 4, Paper B)

15/209	2012-13 Covenant)
15/210	Consideration of compliance with laws and regulations and related parties transactions statement)
15/212	Consolidated year end accounts)

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services confirmed this would form the basis of an update during Part 1 of the meeting. Further updates would be provided at future meetings.

16/16 (g) National Cultural Centre
Verbal update to be provided as part of Agenda item 17 (b)

16/17 (d) Area-based Reviews
Update to be provided as part of Agenda item 18 (a), Paper Q

SECTION B – FINANCE:

16/43 Management Accounts, November 2015 (Agenda item 5a, Paper C) and Management Accounts, December 2015 (Agenda item 5b, Paper D)

November and December 2015 Management Accounts were resubmitted to the Board for approval. Further clarification had been sought at the last Corporation meeting. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided assurance about the forecast column in the accounts. For the avoidance of confusion, this had always been an arithmetic calculation for the end of the year. Members agreed to receive a detailed update based on the January management accounts.

16/44 Management Accounts, January 2016 (Agenda item 5c, Paper E)

The Accounts were discussed. Members were informed of an anticipated deficit which was mainly due to a reduction in Higher Education (HE) income. This had been reported at the previous Corporation meeting. Any other major variances in income and expenditure were outlined and discussed. Members would have opportunities in other agenda items to discuss actions that the College would be taking to address the situation. Following discussion *the Management Accounts for November 2015, December 2015 and January 2016 were approved.*

16/45 Budget 2015-16 Update (Agenda item 6, Paper F)

The revised budget had been amended to reflect adverse variances in income. Expenditure on full-time staff was expected to be under budget. Part-time staff expenditure was expected to be higher due to costs associated with agency staff. Various changes had taken place following the recent efficiency saving measures and it was expected that the pay budget would improve. The cost saving exercise discussed at the previous Corporation meeting had now been completed. The exercise had also addressed feedback from the Board about protecting funds that supported the College's focus on learner recruitment.

Members were keen to understand the underlying issues. These were wide ranging and included a reduced number of 16-18 year olds and HE students; greater competition locally; the cost of the transport subsidy; development of curriculum areas that were not as advanced as expected; and, any reductions in income due to lower recruitment.

An agenda item on Curriculum Growth and Development had been prepared to offer an assurance of the College's proposed plans for the next three years. It was also agreed to produce an action plan for the Board. This would set out the proposed actions to address any concerns identified by the Board. Following discussion, *the budget update was approved.*

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services provided a brief update with the Bank and end of year accounts. Following discussion, *the latest situation was noted.*

16/46 Quarterly consolidated and subsidiary accounts (Agenda item 7, Paper G)

The accounts were discussed. The report reflected the latest position for the group and its subsidiaries. All subsidiary companies were trading as expected. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

16/47 Funding Report (Agenda item 8, Paper H)

The Funding Report was discussed. In relation to funding from the Education Funding Agency (EFA), the College was below target for learners. This will have an effect on funding in 2016-17. This was RAG rated 'green'. Due to a rise in 16-18 apprentices during the month, this indicated a likely outturn of close to budget. The RAG rating was 'amber'. The Adult Learner Responsive funding was below target. The Adult Apprenticeship income was also under target. Both were RAG rated as 'red'. Actions were being taken by the College to improve the situation. Following discussion, *the report was approved.*

16/48 Education Funding Agency funding 2016-17 (Agenda item 9, Paper I)

The report provided early confirmation of planned funding by the EFA. The report could be used by colleges to check whether numbers provided on the funding agreement match the college's expectations. The funding retention factor had changed and would be lower in 2016-17. The College would, however, benefit from a higher programme weighting for land-based courses. This would mean an increase in funding for next year, however, there would also be a reduction in formula funding protection. Members were informed that the full funding allocation for 2016-17 from the EFA was due at the end of February 2016. The SFA funding allocation was due at the same time. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

16/49 Insurance (Agenda item 10, Paper J)

The current levels of cover and costs were outlined and discussed. Due to insufficient numbers of colleges, it was not possible to establish a Landex consortium. This had the potential to further reduce costs. The College intended to use the same supplier. The report included current insurance policies and premiums for this year. The College had a good claims record. It was agreed to approach the insurance broker to explore any changes to the premium to acknowledge the College's claims record. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

Mr Mair left the meeting

SECTION C – TEACHING AND LEARNING

16/50 Student Recruitment 2016-17 (Agenda item 11, Paper K)

As at 17th February 2016, applications to Further Education (FE) courses were slightly lower than the previous year. The conversion rate was higher than last year. A careers event held earlier in February was very positively received and resulted in a prospective 239 students. A number of taster events had resulted in 175 prospective students who had registered to attend. There was an increase in Apprenticeship numbers of circa 10% compared to the previous year, seeing growth across the 16-18 provision. This would have a positive impact on students progressing to Advanced frameworks. Numbers had increased by circa 64% in Higher Apprenticeships compared to the previous year. Higher Education (HE) numbers were exactly the same as last year. Figures also showed that fewer Apprentices had gone beyond their planned end date. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

16/51 Student Retention and attendance trends 2015-16 (Agenda item 12, Paper L)

The report was discussed. In FE, retention continued to show a 2% improvement. Apprenticeship retention also showed an improvement. This should reflect well at the end year for 2016-17 and 2017-18. HE showed a 2% decrease in retention compared to the same time last year. In FE, there had been a 1% improvement with attendance in the previous month. Further work was required with attendance and this would continue to be a major focus of all concerned. The use of ProMonitor was being used to improve attendance. There was also an emphasis on improving motivation and actual student experience. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

16/52 College Quality Improvement Report – Progress Monitoring (Agenda item 13, Paper M)

Members received an update on progress with the five priority improvement areas identified in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). English and maths continued to be a significant area of development. Interim success measures had been set particularly around functional skills. Assessment results would show how successful these students had been. A further set of regular learning walks were being carried out with significant improvements expected. Work had continued with improving outcomes for apprentices. Retention for apprentices with a planned end date for this academic year had shown an improvement of 11.7% compared to the previous year. Plans were in place to strengthen links between teaching and learning strategies to the performance development review process. Further work had been completed to embed British values into the curriculum. A reporting framework for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be produced and shared with the Board. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

16/53 Curriculum Development and Growth (Agenda item 14, Paper N)

The report was part of an ongoing project of curriculum development and growth. Colleagues at all different levels of the College had been involved in the process. Ideas and proposals were then tested with industry. Feasibility reviews would be undertaken on existing provision. This would identify any changes needed to existing provision. There was a target of 2-5% annual growth. A summary table of new provision was shared with Members. It was important to take advantage of all types of media to promote the offer. It was agreed that more explicit links with employment opportunities and the labour market were needed. Progression at 95% into employment or HE were highlighted as strengths of the College. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

16/54 Presentation Day Schedule (Agenda item 15, Paper O)

There would be 4 ceremonies for the presentation of awards on 29th and 30th June 2016. A presenter had been identified for the morning ceremony on the 30th June. Members were encouraged to suggest ideas for presenters for the other three sessions. HE students would attend award ceremonies by the University of Northampton held in February or July. Following discussion, *the report was noted*.

SECTION D – STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS:

16/55 Annual Operating Statement – Progress Review (Agenda item 16, Paper P)

Progress with the latest items due for completion in January were outlined and discussed. Year to date, of the 35 items listed, 15 were fully completed, 12 partially completed, 6 ongoing and 2 rescheduled. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

16/56 Growth Opportunities

a) Saudi Arabia (Agenda item 17)

Members received a detailed update of developments since the last Corporation meeting. There had been two meetings in the UK with the Principal and three members from the board, the Principal, Chair and Vice Chair of Activate Learning and UK directors of The Oxford Partnership (TOP). There was representation from Eversheds for both partners. Members were reminded of the expectations from the project in terms of profit and terms and conditions for payment. This was linked to student numbers in each institution, achievement, progression and inspection outcomes. An update was also provided about partnership arrangements and how these had evolved during the period of the agreement to date.

Since the last meeting, there had been issues regarding the Colleges of Excellence (CoE) keeping to their side of the agreement. This was an issue experienced by other UK and international partnerships working in Saudi Arabia. A senior UK Government official was acting on behalf of this partnership and other UK partnerships.

A range of strategies had been put in place to resolve the situation including a direct communication with the Chair of CoE. A teleconference with GEMS was arranged for this Friday. The Principal would be attending a meeting in Saudi Arabia in the second week of March.

It was agreed that minutes of both meetings would be circulated to Members. Further information would be shared as it became available. The Principal would provide a further update at the Governor Development Day on the 3rd March 2016. Following discussion, *the update was noted.*

16/57 Other opportunities (Agenda item 17b)

a) Link with Kazakh National Agrarian University (Levins Discovery)

It was likely that a programme at Moulton College would take place in June or July 2016. The aim of the programme was to improve the language skills for approximately 20 students. *Following discussion, the update was noted.*

b) Fire Services National Museum Trust (FSNMT)

Mr Neil Wallington, Chairman of FSNMT had been asked to develop a detailed business plan for the Board's consideration. This was likely to be available in late spring. *Following discussion, the update was noted.*

c) National Cultural Centre

The Chair of Corporation and Principal had met with the Managing Director of the consortium looking at the development, to get a better understanding of the project. Details of the scale of the project had been shared at the last Corporation meeting. The project had the backing of Northamptonshire County Council, the Local Enterprise Partnerships and fits in with the Government's visitor economy strategy. Currently, the College was waiting to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Looking ahead, Members were informed that a task and finish group would be created. The membership of this group would be from governors with specialist expertise in this field. The Chair had spoken to three members. Mr Wakeford, Mr O'Driscoll and Mr Sanders had agreed to be involved. This group would then periodically report to the Corporation on matters relevant to this project. Following discussion *members noted this update.*

d) Pet Industry Federation (Federation)

The College was looking to make a link with the Federation. There is potential to offer animal first aid and animal related seminars at the College. The Federation was working successfully with another Land-based College. A 2-day seminar was planned for the last weekend in February. Following discussion, *members noted this update.*

e) National Land-based College

The National Land-based College (NCLB) was fronted by Landex. The NCLB had gone into a formal agreement with an awarding organisation. A suite of qualifications would be developed for the sector that would be employer driven. Further discussions would be needed to understand any implications for land-based colleges, in particular, in relation to area-based reviews. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

f) Hydroponics

A meeting was held to discuss the project. The planned date for completion was Spring 2017. Further consideration was needed about the size of the site. Further plans would be shared with Members at the Governor Development Day on the 3rd March 2016. Following discussion, *members noted this update.*

16/58 External Reviews - Area-Based Reviews (Agenda item 18, Paper Q)

The latest progress update was discussed. Members had received two recent publications from the Association of Colleges (AoC). These linked directly to the area-based reviews (ABRs) and so very timely. A steering group of three colleges (Moulton College, Milton Keynes College and Central Bedfordshire College) and the two LEPS (Local Enterprise Partnership) had been formed. The group had been proactive in working together to plan for the forthcoming ABR. This included planning two development workshops and the creation of thematic working groups. The Principal and Chair had recently attended an AoC event on ABRs. Further review guidance from BIS (Department for Business Innovation and Skills) was due imminently. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

16/59 Proposals for the Northern Orbital Relief Road (Agenda item 19, Paper R)

An initial meeting had been held between the College, Turleys and Northampton County Council (NCC) to review the proposals. Further work had been completed to illustrate how the four options would affect the College by super imposing the proposed routes onto a plan of the College estate. The College would make an initial response to NCC on the proposals. However, there would be a need to look into the proposals in more detail.

Initial thoughts were shared on the four options in terms of implications for the College from a range of perspectives. A recommendation was made to object to one of the routes, as this would cause significant issues for students in terms of access to the College. Members agreed that Turleys should be invited to the College to provide more detail on the implications of the options for the estate. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

16/60 Current Developments: Athletics track (Agenda item 20, Paper S)

No further delays were expected with the changing facilities. A site meeting was planned for the following week for the track. A decision would be made as to whether the track was dry enough for work to re-commence. Following discussion, *the verbal update was noted.*

16/61 Commercial Enterprise Report – Garden Centre (Agenda item 21, Paper S)

The report was discussed. Students gained valuable commercial experience from their involvement with the garden centre. Future priorities included the need to focus on and improve margins. It was expected that by the end of the financial year, the centre would break even and start to generate a small margin. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

16/62 Farming Future Plan (Agenda item 22)

In response to a request from the previous meeting, Members received an update on three priorities of the Farming Future Plan. Examples of new technologies and techniques were shared. Changes to the animal stock were discussed. There were 38 beef animals and 55 dairy young stock. Plans were shared in relation to changes to the stock. A decision had been taken to have a breed called Stabiliser. Details of various courses that had either started, needed further promotion or would commence from September 2017 were shared with the group. Following discussion, *the verbal update was noted.*

SECTION E - GOVERNANCE

16/63 Development Day Programme, Thursday 3rd March 2016 (Agenda item 23, Paper T)

Members were reminded of the arrangements for the Governor Development Day. Minor changes to the programme were discussed. In addition to some pre-reading, the Principal would also circulate some additional questions for Members to consider. The afternoon session would provide an opportunity for Members to comment on the revised mission, vision and values for the College. There would also be opportunities for Members to inform the strategic planning process. Following discussion, *the report was noted.*

SECTION F – OTHER MATTERS:

16/64 Date of next meeting (Agenda item 24)

Thursday 24th March 2016 at 9.30 am in M6.

16/65 Any other business (Agenda item 25)

a) Corporation Agenda

The new format for the agenda was welcomed. At future meetings, Teaching and Learning would be scheduled for discussion at the start of each meeting.

b) WPM Users Award

The College Finance team had been shortlisted for a WPM Users Award. The Awards recognised innovative and effective approaches in the use of online payment systems. Eleven organisations from the FE and HE sector were shortlisted. The Finance team from Moulton College was highly commended.

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

Part 1 of the meeting concluded. Mr Howarth, Mr Moulton, Mrs Ryan and Mrs Field left the meeting.