

MOULTON COLLEGE

CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2020

Present: Mr D McVean (in the Chair), Mrs C Harris, Mr A Clarkson, Miss E Cohen-Neighbour, Ms S O'Connor, Miss S Frederikson, Mr B Hansford, Mrs S Ijewsky, Miss L Knapp, Mr M Knibbs, Mr C Matts, Mr T Neville OBE, Mr M Pate, Mrs P Prow, Mr A Thomson and Mr M Wakeford

In attendance: Mr D Aldridge, Miss A S Bruce, Mrs G M Hulley, Mr S Parkes (ESFA), Mr J O'Shea and Mrs C Smith

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND GOVERNANCE ITEMS:

- 20/58 Chair's welcome**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the first Board meeting of the academic year. He emphasised the excellent work that had been completed during the last 12-18 months and how this had resulted from excellent collaboration between the Board, Principal and Senior Leadership Team (SLT). As a result, the College had stabilised and although not quite reached its ultimate goal, 2020-21 would be a year when the focus of the Board would also be on looking at success, future growth of the College, new ways of thinking and enhanced results of students, staff and Board.
- 20/59 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**
Apologies were received from Mrs P Hawkesford, Mr I James and Dr P Jones.

The Chair explained that it was staff governor Sophie O'Connor's last meeting and he wished to extend his thanks on behalf of the Board. Sophie had been an excellent staff governor and was wished every success for the future.

Pauline Prow (Independent), Michael Knibbs (Staff), Shannon Frederikson (Student) and Eisha Cohen-Neighbour (Student) were welcomed to their first meeting. Staff and student nominations would be addressed later in the agenda.
- 20/60 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**
Mr T Neville declared an interest in agenda items 8 and 11.
- 20/61 Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**
With a request to change 'Business Recovery Team' to 'Critical Incident Management Team,' the minutes of the meeting held on the 9th July 2020 were approved as a correct record.
- 20/62 Actions outstanding from last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)**
One item remained outstanding which was not due for completion until November 2020.
- 20/63 Governor appointments (Agenda item 5)**
The majority of governors approved:

- a. Search and Governance Committee's recommendation to appoint Ashley Clarkson for a 2nd term of office and Chair of Audit Committee commencing 1st October 2020.
- b. Following an election, the appointment of:
 - a. Michael Knibbs as staff governor (teaching) for a period of 4 years commencing, 1st November 2020.
 - b. Eisha Cohen-Neighbour as student governor (higher education) commencing 1st October 2020.
 - c. Sharron Frederikson as student governor (further education) commencing 1st October 2020.

The Clerk confirmed an induction programme had been arranged. The Chair explained that at the last meeting of the Search and Governance Committee, members agreed that student governors had a challenging time with study time and attending meetings. As a result, student governors must prioritise attendance at Corporation meetings. Although both student governors intended to attend as many Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee meetings as possible, the Corporation agreed with the Search and Governance Committee's recommendation that in the event of absence, a deputy could be nominated to attend the meeting on their behalf. For the purposes of consistency, the same person should be asked to deputise.

Resolved: To approve the four appointments.

20/64

Health and Safety (Agenda item 6, Paper C)

The report had been considered in detail by the Finance and Resources Committee held earlier in the week. Since that meeting, the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) reported that there had been one positive case for Covid-19 within the student body. Any additional students that needed to self-isolate had been identified.

The governor champion had attended the College's Health and Safety Committee and reported that all the necessary hygiene factors were in place; disaster scenario planning was in place; and, he was very pleased that basic standards had been met to a very high standard. A new Health and Safety Advisor was due to start this week. He identified a challenge associated with video conferencing when considering what was involved in leading cultural change. The governor champion had shared some ideas to address this with the Principal and CFO to consider outside of the meeting. The CFO highlighted the importance of the Health and Safety Committee ensuring that its role and responsibilities were clarified and understood by everyone.

Resolved: To receive the Health and Safety report.

SECTION B – PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:

20/65

Strategic Update (Agenda item 7, Paper D)

The Principal outlined a number of key points for the Corporation's attention:

- The new Strategic Plan 2020-30 was now available with each corporate objective having a corresponding action plan.

- Excellent progress had been made with FE 16-18 growth; Apprenticeships, HE and Commercial would be the priorities for 2020-21.
- In view of increase in FE 16-18, ESFA agreed that a business case could be submitted. A result was awaited.
- Student outcomes were as predicted due to the robustness of monitoring throughout the year.
- Two FE Commissioner stock-take visits had taken place with reports circulated. An action plan was included in the report to demonstrate progress to date.
- Great progress made towards achieving an excellent student experience. Now awaiting an Ofsted inspection which might be further delayed into the Spring 2021.
- Significant financial, quality and curriculum key performance indicators were 'at target' or were 'exceeded'.
- An announcement had been made regarding additional funding for adults who do not have A levels from April 2021. Guidance had not yet been issued.

The Board requested clarification about the College's position in relation to the delivery of Apprenticeships and when they might be made available. Discussions were being held internally at the ESFA at the options that might be available. The Board agreed to submit a proposition to the ESFA that would offer the level of assurances that were required. The Chair confirmed that each Committee had agreed to scrutinise their KPIs for 2020-21 to ensure that they were fit for purpose in terms of strategy and growth. Each Committee would also identify up to 5 KPIs for scrutiny at each Corporation meeting.

A recommendation in the FEC report was for the Board 'to have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively test, challenge and support management in the planning and optimisation of the sale of land for development'. The Chair of Corporation had proposed to the Deputy Director of the ESFA's FE Directorate Territorial Team that rather than having a single individual, an Investment and Advisory Group would be convened. Membership of the group would include a small number of governors, SLT and 2 external experts with the relevant skills. The group would have no decision making powers as all decisions were routed through the Corporation and its Committees. It would, however, be a vehicle to assess bids from Heads of each school for investment in their areas of expertise. This would ensure that there was a route for bids to come to the Corporation and help establish a prioritisation for any future funds realised from asset sales or from surplus.

Resolved: The Corporation agreed with the proposal to convene an Investment and Advisory Group and received the Principal's report.

SECTION C – QUALITY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE:

20/66

Quality and Curriculum Update (Agenda item 8, Paper E.1 and E.2)

The report confirmed progress with 3 main drivers from the previous year. Achievement had increased by almost 20% from the previous year. The Board was informed of any areas that required further

support and actions being taken. Recruitment had also increased by 20%. The self-assessment report process was under way with all school SARs completed in preparation for Ofsted. Pauline Hawkesford had attended each validation panel and prepared a report confirming her findings which were very positive. The next stage of the process was the completion of the College SAR which would be subject to internal validation prior to scrutiny by the TLA Committee in December and Corporation approval.

The Corporation welcomed the paper acknowledging the significant improvements that had been achieved. Clarification was provided about the grading decisions for each Ofsted sub-title. Attendance continued to be closely monitored. Fewer problems had arisen with timetabling compared to the previous year which had also had a positive impact. The Board requested that consideration should be given in future reports to including:

- views from students; and,
- a column that would inform the Board of student numbers in each area. This would help to inform specific areas of risk that required closer attention.

Resolved: The Quality and Curriculum report was noted.

20/67

Ofsted (Agenda item 9, Paper F)

The College had been involved in a 2-day (virtual) pilot interim visit from Ofsted in September 2020. The experience had been one that was very positive and a copy of the report was included. The Board sought clarification about the staff experience of the visit. A lot of time had been taken to prepare everyone involved. Staff had also benefited from involvement in the Landex peer review earlier in the year. Curriculum reviews over the next 8 weeks would provide further opportunities to develop staff confidence in the process.

Resolved: The Ofsted pilot interim visit report was noted.

SECTION D – FINANCE:

20/68

Meeting of Finance and Resources Committee (Agenda item 10, Paper G)

a. **6th July 2020:** The minutes of this meeting were noted.

b. 25th September 2020

The minutes of this meeting had been circulated previously. The Chair of the Committee summarised key discussion points or decisions taken:

- A very positive position with FE 16-18 growth compared to last year which could result in c. £1.5m additional income in year, but will certainly be included in the allocation in 2021/22. FE 19+ numbers had doubled and HE, numbers would be similar to 2019-20.
- Award of Student Bursaries 2019-20: A total of 678 students received an award in 2019-20 (131 last year). Evidence that performance by recipients of the various bursaries had improved against the whole College achievement rate.

- Property disposals: Little Bostock had completed with funds in the bank. Land next to Boughton Lane and land next to A508 due to complete by the end of the week.
- Management Accounts and Cash Flow (P12): scrutinised and no major issues identified.
- Cash Flow (P1): had been updated to take into account the capital grant and other funding. There was an improvement to the cash low point in March 2021.
- Commercial update: Many examples of increased commercial activity running under Covid-19 protocols. An internal audit of stakeholder engagement recently completed - overall assurance of 'substantial' received.
- HR Quarterly Report: The full year staff turnover was 26.86% which included retirement/end of contract data. A staff survey completed during the lockdown was broadly positive.

Three reports had been subject to detailed discussion were subject to recommendation for approval by the Corporation:

1. **Capital Expenditure Budget: Proposal:** The College had been awarded a £532k capital grant for building capital maintenance and IT infrastructure. Projects must be committed and/or completed by the end of March 2021. Match funding element of 25%. ESFA required confirmation by the 16th October of how the grant would be spent. The proposal included details of projects that had already been committed; projects that were achievable by the agreed deadline; and, IT focused projects.
2. **Business support KPIs 2020-21:** Much more focused and linked to objectives from the Strategic Plan 2020-30. F&R would continue to monitor but the Committee identified 5 that would be most appropriate for monitoring by the Board.
3. **People Plan 2023 (Appendix 3 from Strategic Plan):** A 3-year plan focused on 6 themes: Leadership; Succession; Communication and Technology; Employer of Choice; Talent Development; and, Staff Wellbeing. Next steps to produce an action plan with F&R to monitor progress of actions against milestones.

Resolved: The Corporation approved the Capital Expenditure Budget: proposal; Business support KPIs 2020-21 specifically 1, 4, 6, 8 and 9 for monitoring by the Board; and, People Plan 2023.

20/69

Management Accounts (Period 12) and Cash Flow (Period 1) (Agenda item 11, Paper H)

The reports had been subject to scrutiny and challenge at the Finance and Resources Committee earlier in the week. Minutes of that meeting had been circulated. No further questions were raised by the Board.

20/70

Risk Management (Agenda item 11, Paper I)

The risk register had been reviewed and updated by the SLT in September 2020. This had also taken into account feedback from governors and recommendations received to date from a review being undertaken by the Internal Auditors. Direct links had also been made between the risks and objectives set out in the Strategic Plan 2020-30. The overall risk profile of the College was improving. The CFO

advised the Board of the need to complete a risk workshop to refresh the strategic risks in line with the new Strategic Plan at its next Governor Development Day in February 2021.

The Chair of Audit Committee confirmed that he was pleased with the more rigorous approach, links to the Strategy Plan and that the number of risks were reducing.

Resolved: To receive the risk management report.

SECTION E – GOVERNANCE

20/71 Governance 2020-21 (Agenda item 12, Paper J)

- a. Instrument and Articles: The annual review of the Instrument and Articles of Government had been completed with one change in relation to the use of video conferencing.
- b. Governance CPD Plan 2020-21: Governors were reminded to complete their 3 online modules. The Link Governor Scheme should be updated to outline how this would be implemented in 2020-21 in light of the Covid-19 restrictions.

Resolved: To approve the Instrument and Articles of Government and the Governance CPD Plan.

20/72 Governance actions to note (Agenda item 13)

- a. **Lease agreement:** A lease agreement had been signed by the Principal and CEO on behalf of the Corporation. This was in relation to East Lodge which had been rented to a member of staff.
- b. **College seal:** Members noted the College Corporation seal had been affixed to a deed of sale for the land known as 'Little Bostock' authenticated by Charles Matts, Vice Chair of Corporation and Corrie Harris, Principal and CEO on the 22nd September 2020

SECTION F – CLOSING ITEMS

20/73 Any other items of business (Agenda item 14)

The Chair explained that the College had received a revised financial notice of concern which had been copied to a number of partners. The content of the letter was disappointing as it did not reflect the very positive progress that the College had made in 2019-20 as reported in today's meeting. A formal response would be circulated in due course.

20/74 Date and time of next meeting (Agenda item 15)

Thursday, 12th November 2020 at 9.30 am.

Ms S O'Connor, Miss E Cohen Neighbour, Miss S Frederikson, Mr M Knibbs and Mr M Pate left the meeting.