

MOULTON COLLEGE

CORPORATION

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 12th November 2020 via Teams

Present: Mr D McVean (in the Chair), Mrs C Harris, Mr A Clarkson, Mr B Hansford, Mrs P Hawkesford, Mr I James, Dr P Jones, 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 A Creasey (agenda item 7), Mrs G M Hulley, Mr S Parkes (ESFA Observer), Mr J O'Shea, Mrs C Smith and Mrs S Titmuss (agenda item 11)

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND GOVERNANCE ITEMS:

20/76 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S Ijewsky, Miss E Cohen Neighbour and Miss S Frederikson.

Michael Knibbs was formally welcomed to his first meeting of the Corporation.

20/77 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)

Mr T Neville OBE declared an interest in agenda item 8.

20/78 Minutes of the last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 1st October were approved as a correct record.

20/79 Actions outstanding (Agenda item 4, Paper B)

The one outstanding action would be discussed as part of agenda item 10.

SECTION B – PRINCIPAL'S REPORT:

20/80 Strategic update and KPIs 2020-21 (Agenda item 5, Paper C)

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

- A 2-day virtual visit from Ofsted had taken place the previous week which had been very positive. A report would follow in the next 3 weeks.
- Students continue to get a good level of education with face to face delivery for everything. The number of Covid-19 cases remained very low.
- Student attendance was particularly high considering the current circumstances. Attendance on English and maths remained a priority.
- A number of very positive meetings had taken place with a range of stakeholders.
- Staff absenteeism and turnover were extremely low compared to the same period last year.
- There would be a continued focus on growth for 2020-21. Plans to achieve this were outlined. It was agreed a report would be prepared for the next Corporation meeting outlining the broader proposals in place to increase commercial revenue (**Action 166** – Executive Director: Commercial).
- Finance KPIs indicated an operating surplus compared to a deficit forecasted previously.

The report included two appendices:

- Terms of reference for an Investment Appraisal Advisory Group which would meet 3 times a year. All governors were welcome to attend. Any feedback on the terms of reference should be sent to the Clerk.
- The Finance and Resources and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committees had each identified 5 key performance indicators (KPIs) for the Corporation to monitor. Ten had been presented for approval.

The low number of Covid-19 cases was welcomed and in response to a question, the Corporation was assured that this information was regularly updated on the website; a fortnightly update was sent to all parents; and, regular text messages were sent.

Resolved: The Corporation approved the terms of reference for the Investment Appraisal Advisory Group; approved the proposed 10 KPIs for the Corporation to monitor at each meeting; and, received the Principal's report.

SECTION C – QUALITY AND CURRICULUM:

20/81 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Committee minutes (Agenda item 6, Paper D)

The Chair of the TLA Committee provided a summary of the meeting held on the 20th October 2020. Key discussion points or decisions taken to note were in relation to:

- **Data dashboard and KPIs:** detailed scrutiny of the dashboard had taken place and consideration given to which 5 KPIs should be recommended to the Board for approval.
- **Self-assessment report:** 2 governors would be attending a SAR validation panel on the 19th November 2020; the report would be presented to the next TLA Committee and Corporation meetings in December 2020.
- **Compliments, complaints and suggestions:** consideration of annual report for 2019-20 and agreement that processes in place were robust and comprehensive.
- **Stakeholder voice:** report confirmed significant rise in student satisfaction.
- **Staff CPD, observations, English and Maths:** robust observation process in place and comprehensive programme of CPD delivered. Impact evidenced by excellent achievement rates and reduction in staff turnover. Members recommended the importance of making more connections with employers to explain the importance of English and Maths.
- **Higher Education:** 3 reports provided a detailed insight into this area.
- **Decision:** The Committee approved 3 policies at the meeting: Transgender; English and Maths; and, Bursary Loans.
- **Recommendation:** Two annual reports were subject to detailed scrutiny and the Committee recommended both for approval by the Corporation.

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality confirmed that the curriculum planning process was in progress. There was full engagement with employers. The 5-year plan would be designed to meet current demands for employers of the future. One member cited the construction industry as an area where there would be a demand for new and different skills over the next few years. A new Government website had been developed to match prospective employees with employers. The Chair emphasised the need for a

curriculum that would prepare students for the workplace. The curriculum plan should also include apprenticeships at all levels.

Resolved: The Corporation approved the annual Safeguarding and Prevent 2019-20 report; the Careers Information Advice and Guidance 2019-20 report; and, received the Chair of the TLA Committee's report.

20/82

Safeguarding and Prevent training for governors (Agenda item 7)

Alison Creasey, the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead delivered a training session to all governors to ensure they could continue to meet their statutory requirements. The PowerPoint slides would be circulated after the meeting.

The presentation highlighted the increased number of concerns that were related to mental health and assurance was sought about whether the team had sufficient capacity to respond. Although the increase was comparable with the growth in student numbers, resourcing was constantly under review and it was acknowledged that in the longer term, further changes may be required. Governors were currently completing a number of online modules including one for Safeguarding and Prevent. The Chair requested that everyone completed the modules by the end of the month.

Resolved: To receive the training and update on Safeguarding and Prevent.

Mrs A Creasey left the meeting.

SECTION D – FINANCE:

20/83

Finance and Resources (F&R) Committee (Agenda item 8)

The Chair of the F&R Committee provided a summary of the meeting held on the 28th September and 9th November 2020. Key discussion points or decisions taken to note were in relation to:

- **Health and Safety:** Lots of activity taking place. Terms of reference for College H&S Committee were being drawn up. Assured re Covid-19 actions being taken. The governor champion for Health and Safety confirmed that governors should be confident that this priority was moving in the right direction.
- **Risk Management:** Risk register now linked to the College's Strategic Plan. Direction of travel for **8** of the risks were 'improving'; **3** were above the College's risk appetite.
- **FE and HE Recruitment:** Received an update on FE and HE recruitment numbers post day-42 which confirmed a very small drop in numbers for FE but up on the stretch target; part-time; and HE. Assurance letter received from ESFA to fund an agreed number of students due to growth.
- **Business Support KPIs 2020-21:** A very good report which was now far more succinct. Majority of risks currently RAG rated green. Worth noting the current number of FE applications for next year was above expectations.
- **Property Disposals:** The sale of land next to A508 was still going through but a slight delay was expected. This may take up to 5 weeks to complete.
- **Management accounts and Cash Flow:** Scrutinised in detail at the meeting. Clarity was sought around the presentation of figures for the farm and members were informed that further work was being undertaken in relation to accounting for movements in stock.

- **Commercial Update:** Lockdown was currently having an impact on commercial activity which was unfortunate after a positive first quarter. A re-forecasting exercise was in progress.
- **New Appointment Policy:** The Committee **approved** an Appointment Policy which had been updated including allowing the Executive Director of HR to sign out employment paperwork.

Two annual reports were subject to detailed scrutiny and the Committee recommended both for approval by the Corporation: Health and Safety Annual Report 2019-20 and Tuition Fees 2021-22. Where the latter was concerned, these were scrutinised in some detail and the Committee was assured that a benchmarking exercise had been undertaken with other colleges. The Chair of Corporation also outlined some partnership opportunities with the University of Northampton.

Resolved: The Corporation approved the Health and Safety 2019-20 annual report; Tuition Fees 2021-22; and, receive the Chair of Committee's report.

20/84 Risk Management (Agenda item 9, Paper F)
The Risk Management report was received.

SECTION E – RESOURCES:

20/85 ILT Strategy 2020-23 (Agenda item 10, Paper G)
The report had been prepared in the first instance to share a vision for ILT/IT and seek the Corporation's agreement of that vision. Once agreed, as such skills were not available in-house, an expert would be commissioned to produce a road map, action plan and fully costed investment plan which would be aligned with the vision. The report emphasised the need for the College to be ambitious and the need for it to be a digital leader in education. The team had taken part in virtual visits to other colleges to find out what they had implemented and to learn from their experiences to date. The Corporation recommended the need to liaise with the University of Northampton as it may be able to offer some help due to its level of expertise.

Feedback on the report included:

- The pace of change with ILT/IT was very fast and consideration should be given to prioritising those elements of the strategy that needed to be in place quickly.
- Future plans needed to be supportive of those students who do not have access to IT and recognise that students have different levels of reading and writing skills and how both can be supported through technology.
- Any investment plan should factor in the costs associated with training staff over a period of time to ensure they have the confidence to use technology successfully in their delivery to students.

Resolved: To agree the vision for ILT/IT as outlined in the report and that the road map, action plan and fully costed investment plan should be presented to the Investment Appraisal Advisory Group at its meeting in April 2021 (**Action 167** – CFO).

20/86 Moulton College Centenary (Agenda item 11, Paper H)
The report outlined a number of proposals for the Corporation to consider ahead of the 100-year anniversary of the opening of the Northampton Institute of Agriculture, the precursor to Moulton College. Such a milestone would be

an ideal opportunity to celebrate the history of the College, its recent successes and set out its ambitions for the future. Such celebrations would engage with students and staff, both past and present as well as other key stakeholders including local employers. A project group would be convened in due course to consider the proposals in more detail before a more detailed plan would be presented for approval by the Corporation.

The Corporation welcomed the proposals and it was agreed that any other suggestions or ideas should be sent directly to the Clerk and Marketing Manager. The themes of 'past, present and future' were supported by everyone. The Chair outlined plans for a memorial project for the village of Moulton and sought 'in principle' agreement from the Corporation. Once finalised, the project plan should be shared with the Finance and Resources Committee to consider costings and the Corporation for overall approval.

Resolved: The Corporation agreed with the proposed memorial project subject to cost and received the Moulton College Centenary report.

Mrs S Titmuss left the meeting.

SECTION F – CLOSING ITEMS:

20/87

Any other items of urgent business (Agenda item 12)

- a) **Risk register and staff retention:** What actions were being taken to attract and retain staff particularly in view of student growth? The Principal outlined different approaches that had been taken including: advertising posts; liaison with key partners, for example, Landex; and, the importance of good succession planning. The College had set high expectations for all staff including as part of the recruitment process. This was important for the long-term success of the College.
- b) **Online modules:** Governors were encouraged to complete their online modules by the end of November 2020.
- c) **Skills audit:** The Search and Governance Committee had agreed a new format for the skills audit. This would help to consider whether the Corporation had the right skills moving forward.

20/88

Date and time of next meeting (Agenda item 13)

Thursday, 10th December 2020 at 9.30 am via Teams.

Meeting closed at 11.30 am.