

**MOULTON COLLEGE**

**CORPORATION**

**Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023 in M4 at 1.30pm**

**Present:** Mr D McVean (in the Chair), Mr A Clarkson, Mrs C Harris, Mrs P Hawkesford, Mrs S Ijewsky, Miss L Knapp, Professor E Limond, Mr C Matts, Mr A MacCaig, Dr M Saeudy, Mrs K Squires, Mr A Thomson and Mr M Wakeford

**In attendance:** Mr D Aldridge, Miss A S Bruce, Mrs G M Hulley, Mr M Smith and Ms F Williams

**SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS:**

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**23/52 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**

Apologies were received from Miss I Knowles, Miss M McArdle, Mrs P Prow, Miss M Smith and Professor Shan Wareing.

**23/53 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**23/54 Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023 had been circulated previously and were approved as a true and accurate record.

**23/55 Actions from last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)**

Of the three outstanding actions, one remained open pending feedback from the Deputy FE Commissioner.

**23/56 Governance (Agenda item 5)**

**a. Recommendations from Search and Governance Committee:**

- a. Independent governors:** The appointment of Mrs P Hawkesford, Mr M Wakeford and Mrs S Ijewsky for a second term of office was recommended by the Search and Governance Committee. The recommendations for a second term of office were agreed unanimously.
- b. Student governors:** The appointment of Miss Ivy Knowles and Miss Megan Smith for a second year as joint FE student governors was recommended by the Search and Governance Committee. The recommendation was unanimously agreed by the Corporation. An election would be held for the HE student governor at the start of the next academic year.
- c. Co-opted members:** Confirmation of co-opted members' continuation on their respective committees was pending a decision about an independent governor.

**b. Committee members and link governor scheme allocations:** Allocations had been agreed at the Search and Governance Committee held earlier in the day. The report would be circulated by the Clerk. Chairs were asked to review the membership to ensure an appropriate skillset. The Audit Committee currently had one vacancy.

**c. Governance self-assessment:** Finalised governor self-assessment form and chair's appraisal documentation would be circulated within the next 7 working days.

- d. **Governor appraisal:** The proposed approach for governor appraisals was agreed by the Search and Governance Committee and would be circulated by the Clerk. The tiered approach to appraisals would be implemented in 2023-24.

**Resolved:** To approve the recommendations from the Search and Governance Committee as outlined above.

**23/57 Written resolution (Agenda item 6, Papers C and I)**

- a. Deed of adherence: A written resolution had been used to approve the adoption of a deed of adherence in relation to the strategic land development opportunity. The written resolution was approved.
- b. Deed of Grant for Avant Homes: The College entered into a Deed of Grant of Easement with Avant Homes in March 2017. This granted rights for service media and to discharge into the College's adjoining land. The Corporation approved the Deed of Grant and delegated authority to the Principal and Chair of Governors to sign the deed on behalf of the Corporation.

**23/58 Governance 2023-24 (Agenda item 7, Paper D)**

- a. **Meeting dates:** Proposed dates had been agreed by the Search and Governance Committee. An additional meeting would be arranged for the TLA Committee so that members could meet with Heads of School.
- b. **Terms of reference:** These had been agreed in principle pending any further changes required by Chairs following a second review in November 2023.
- c. **I&AG/Code of Conduct/Standing Orders:** As less than 75% of governors were present, approval of any changes to the three reports would be postponed until the next meeting in November 2023.

**23/59 Health and Safety (Agenda item 8)**

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) highlighted a number of key points: accidents, incidents and near misses were presented differently so that comparisons with the previous year could be made; legionella was now limited to one room with a new contractor testing and all relevant staff trained to level 2 legionella management; the new Director of Estates was now in post; and, IOSH management training had taken place the previous week.

Assurance was sought about any impact from the change of use of a building to a leisure centre. The COO confirmed that: more signage was required; the introduction of a security team had helped greatly with active monitoring; and, this was a community college and any challenge had to be appropriate. There had been some instances of dogs fouling pitches or green spaces; a number of actions had been taken to address this problem

**SECTION B – STAFF AND STUDENT VOICE**

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**23/60 Feedback:**

- i. **Staff voice:** Staff were extremely positive at the moment; the recent CPD day had been very successful with excellent feedback gathered from staff. Pay continued to be of interest to staff. This was particularly in relation to current pressures in relation to increases in the cost of living. Leavers' interviews also confirmed this was an issue. As part of the leaver process, HR would speak to a person's line manager to understand the reasons and any steps that needed to be taken before acknowledging the resignation. In response to a question whether staff understood the non-financial benefits that were available, the Principal reported on a recent 'you said, we did' communication that was shared. A lot work had also been completed around wellbeing. Where staff turnover was concerned, although high this was due to a significant number of retirements. For

those leavers that were not retiring, their destination was unknown (another college, industry); a report with this level of detail would be produced for F&R (Action 205– EDHR). The EDHR reported that a lot of staff who had been promoted as part of the College’s retention strategy and should contribute to preventing some staff from leaving the College. The Chair thanked both staff governors for collecting the views of staff and sharing them with the Corporation throughout the year.

- ii. **Link Governor Scheme:** Governors were invited to report on their recent visits.
- Pauline Hawkesford had attended a performance monitoring board (PMB) for English and maths. There had been some disappointment as Heads of School did not attend. The main issue was that there was still no link between vocational areas and the English and maths syllabus. There had been some inconsistency in the use of English and maths tutors. Charles Matts had attended a Land-based and Equine PMB where issues relating to English and maths were outlined.
  - Alastair Thomson had attended a Business PMB and had questioned how resilient the current staffing model was. He queried whether there was any potential to create further ‘flex’ so that some problems that had been encountered could be resolved more quickly. Recognition was given to a number of staff who had worked really hard to track students.
  - Suzanne Ijewsky had informally met the new Director of SEND and Student Support. The team was secure. Issues remained around mental health.
  - The Chair of Corporation reported on the recent student awards ceremony he attended with two other governors. It had been an excellent event and was very proud to be involved. There were some really outstanding students.

iii. **Equality, diversity and inclusion:** Dr Mohamed Saeudy confirmed he was working with Ann Simson and her team to develop an updated policy including how to measure and report on performance.

## **SECTION C – PRINCIPAL’S UPDATE**

### **23/61 Operating Plan and KPIs (Agenda item 10, Paper E)**

The report confirmed that where KPIs were concerned, growth targets were met; and, income and expenditure were largely on target with an improved EBITDA forecast. Staff costs were lower than anticipated due to shortages. Staff turnover had been affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Staff absenteeism was higher than anticipated, however, this was exacerbated by some long-term serious health issues. Student retention is slightly lower than last year’s outturn. The overall predicted achievement rate should be similar to last year. Recruitment for the 2023-24 was looking very healthy. The Principal highlighted the importance of measuring the right things; this had been subject to a lot of discussion during sessions in the Governor Development Day. Other priorities included: a meeting with the ESFA the following Monday; to concentrate on the HE curriculum offer; achieving apprenticeship starts; and, some of the quality KPIs.

Assurance was sought around actions taken for the poor attendance on English and maths; the VPC&Q confirmed a new Head of School was starting in August. The individual was very experienced and had already shared ideas on a series of actions that would result in improvements. Some timetabling issues had occurred during the year which had since been addressed. Expectations needed to be set at the start of the year. The changes were welcomed but governors also wanted to be assured that students understood why English and maths was important in terms of employment prospects. The VPC&Q confirmed guest speakers from a range of employers would attend the College as part of student inductions. The Corporation emphasised the

importance of students understanding the relevance of gaining these qualifications and the learning experience should be enjoyable. In terms of investment, a question was raised about the capacity to successfully deliver on the T Level programme and IT investment. The COO confirmed that there were no capacity issues in relation to T Levels; the new Director of Estates was an experienced project manager. There was some concern with IT and the COO highlighted the importance of delivering on each of the individual tasks that had been identified. Monitoring of progress with the capital bid would be undertaken by the F&R Committee. Each Committee would review their respective targets to agree whether the right ones were being measured (Action 206 – Chairs).

**Resolved:** To receive the Operating Plan and KPIs report.

## **SECTION D – COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL:**

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### **23/62 TLA Committee (Agenda item 11)**

- **Minutes of meeting (Paper F):** The Chair of the TLA Committee outlined a number of key points from the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 including:
  - Processes in relation to PMBs were under review to ensure that they would be fit for purpose. Staff training would also be organised.
  - An Enrichment Co-ordinator would be recruited to enable the College to create a student council body.
  - HE Plan received with top seven strategic priorities. Impact would be reported at next meeting.
  - Quality Improvement Plan: All expected milestones had been completed; six actions would be carried forward to next year.
  - Learning walks continued to be developed and were becoming more focused. The Chair acknowledged how teachers welcomed observers into their classrooms.
  - Governance: Meeting dates were agreed and terms of reference expanded to demonstrate a greater focus on student experience. The business planner was in development and should be finalised in August. The HE Code of Governance (Paper F.1) was subject to scrutiny and a recommendation made to the Corporation to accept the report.

**Resolved:** To approve the HE Code of Governance; and, to receive the report.

### **23/63 Audit Committee (Agenda item 12)**

- **Minutes of meeting (Paper G):** The Chair of the Audit Committee outlined a number of key points from the meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023 including:
  - Governance: Meeting dates were agreed with an additional date in September for presentations from the new auditors. Outgoing internal auditor would be involved in a handover to the new auditor. Terms of reference and business planner were agreed.
  - Risk management (Paper G.1) and Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) (Paper G.2) policies: these had been reviewed at the April meeting and was subject to a recommendation to the Corporation to approve the policy.
  - Board assurance framework: It was agreed to approach Landex about an external review to determine if there were any gaps in relation to maximising opportunities to develop profitable commercial activity.
  - Internal audit action tracker: Of the 18 recommendations from the six reports, 65% had been implemented; 28% in progress; 3% not accepted; and, 3% not yet due. The IT security recommendations would be reported on in November 2023.

- Insurance: An increase in premiums due to claims history and inflationary pressures. The team would test the market for an alternative broker.

In response to a question about the internal audit plan for 2023-24, the COO confirmed the number of days that would be completed. Included in these days for next year would be a mock funding audit, corporate governance and risk management. The other days would be agreed with the Principal around priority areas. It was agreed that before this plan was presented to the Audit Committee in September, it should be shared with all Chairs of Committee for their feedback (Action 207 – COO).

**Resolved:** To approve the Risk Management policy and the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) policy; and, to receive the report.

#### **23/64 Finance and Resources Committee (Agenda item13)**

- **Minutes of meeting (Paper H):** The Chair of the F&R Committee outlined a number of key points from the meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 including:
  - Risk management: No changes were proposed with the scoring. The key priority was to address the level of debt. The ESFA had been very supportive to date.
  - FE and HE recruitment: FE recruitment was performing well; HE predicted numbers were lower than the previous year; AEB budget was within tolerance.
  - Management accounts and cash flow: No significant variations expected. The main adjustments were in relation to pensions and holiday pay accruals.
  - Business support and FRP KPIs: Staff KPIs were not in line with targets for turnover; absence; and, utilisation. Financial KPIs were in line with the revised budget and financial recovery plan.
  - College budget and financial plan 2023-24 including pay award and financial recovery plan (Paper H.1): The report including a pay award of 4% for College staff was recommended for approval.
  - College Financial Forecast Return (CFFR) (Paper H.2): The report had been subject to scrutiny by the F&R Committee and the Chair confirmed the data reflected what was in Paper H.1. The report was recommended for approval.
  - Sustainability report (Paper H.3): The annual report was reviewed by the F&R Committee with an agreement that feedback from that meeting would be factored into the next version. A request was also made for Heads of School to be consulted on how this priority might be factored into the curricula; consulting students was encouraged. A number of risks were highlighted including a pre-agreement where governments agreed that where investments were concerned, a scope 3 assessment may be required. The COO confirmed that she was in discussions with a company to help with these assessments.

**Resolved:** To approve the College Budget 2022-23, Pay Award of 4% for College staff and Financial Recovery Plan 2023-24; and, to approve the College Financial Forecast Return; and, to receive the report.

#### **23/65 Any other business (Agenda item 14)**

There was no other business.

#### **23/66 Date of next meeting (Agenda item 15)**

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 9.30 am.