

## MOULTON COLLEGE

### Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 in M4

**Present:** Mr D McVean (in the Chair), Mr A Clarkson, Mrs C Harris, Miss L Knapp, Mr M Knibbs, Miss I Knowles, Mr C Matts, Miss M McArdle, Mr T Neville OBE, Mr A Thomson, Miss M Smith, Mrs K Squires 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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**22/58 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)**

Apologies were received from Mrs P Hawkesford and Dr P Jones.

**22/59 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**22/60 Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022 had been circulated previously and were approved as a true and accurate record.

**22/61 Actions from last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)**

One action remained outstanding in relation to student voice which would be followed up by the Clerk before the next meeting. Two remaining actions were closed.

**22/62 Governance (Agenda item 5)**

- a. **Student governor election (FE):** Following an election, the appointment of Ivy Knowles and Megan Smith as student governor (FE) on a shared basis commencing 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 was ratified.
- b. **Staff governor election:** Following an election, the appointment of Karen Squires as staff governor (Business Support and Commercial) was ratified.
- c. **Search and Governance Annual Report:** The Committee had approved its annual report 2021-22 at its meeting held earlier in the day. A copy would be circulated via Teams.
- d. **Professional Training and Development Programme:** A Professional Training Plan 2022-23 had been approved by the Search and Governance Committee.

**22/63 Formal record (Agenda item 6)**

- a. **College seal:** Members noted the College Corporation seal had been affixed to three leases at Higham Ferrers: Licence to Underlet Unit 1 x 3; Licence to Underlet Unit 2 x 3; and, Licence to Underlet Unit 4 x 3 authenticated on each occasion by David McVean, Chair of Corporation and Corrie Harris, Principal and CEO.
- b. **Written resolution:** A written resolution had been used to approve the content of the: Strategic Land Development opportunity; College pay award; and, CFFR. A significant majority had agreed on each occasion. The written resolutions were approved

Mrs P Prow left the meeting due to IT connection problems.

**22/64 Governance framework (Agenda item 7)**

- a. **Instrument and Articles of Government (Paper C.1)**
- b. **Standing Orders (Paper C.2)**

**c. Code of Conduct (Paper C.3)**

An annual review of the three documents had been completed with no changes recommended. The Chair explained that currently, the College's standing orders were out of sync with the rest of the sector in relation to the number of terms of office. The College document stated three terms of office and effective practice in the sector suggested two. Having reflected on this and following discussion with the Deputy FE Commissioner, the Chair outlined a proposal to the Search and Governance Committee earlier in the day that the standing orders should not be changed but that it was more important to have a series of impact measures, specifically tiered to the governance role being undertaken. Targets would then be agreed for each governor either in the context of being a co-opted member; as a member of a committee; or, as a chair of a committee. Each individual would then be in a position to demonstrate impact.

In a wider discussion about the rationale for this proposal, the Chair confirmed that by not changing the standing orders, this would avoid the loss of several very effective independent governors during the next 2 years. The Executive Director of HR emphasised the importance of effective performance management; it was agreed at the Search and Governance Committee to reintroduce appraisals for all governors. Succession planning was also highlighted as important and having the right skills mix within the group. This was not only for current strategic priorities but of those in the next 5 years. Further work would be completed over the next 12 months to develop a suitable governance framework that would ensure governance was more agile; and, measures were in place for each governor to demonstrate impact.

**Resolved:** To approve the Instrument and Articles of Government; Standing Orders; and, Code of Conduct.

**22/65 Health and Safety (Agenda item 8)**

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) confirmed that the College was fully compliant; an action from a recent Health, Safety and Welfare meeting was to further explore how employers can better support people; and, the current version of the Estates Plan identified priorities areas for spend.

The Corporation highlighted the importance of the role of link governor for Safeguarding and Prevent and the need to ensure links were maintained across both priority areas. The Principal confirmed there had been a large increase in mental health concerns across the student body. The College was very proud of the support it provided to its students and Moulton was better resourced than many colleges in the sector. The COO confirmed that there was also a commitment to increasing the number of mental health first aiders.

**Resolved:** To note the Health, Safety and Wellbeing report.

**22/66 Risk Management (Agenda item 9, Paper D)**

The report had been scrutinised previously at the TLA and F&R Committees. A significant risk related to IT and responsibility had now changed to Corporation level. The risk register was actively monitored by the senior leadership team each month ahead of any committee meeting. The Chair highlighted the need to be mindful in the future of Apprenticeships in terms of scaling up the offer not only the curriculum but staff, resources, etc.

**Resolved:** To receive the report on Risk Management.

## **SECTION B – STAFF AND STUDENT VOICE:**

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### **22/67 Staff and student voice (Agenda item 10)**

Student governors were informed that this was a standing item on each Corporation agenda and students were actively encouraged to represent their student body through feedback. Staff governor Michael Knibbs had convened some focus groups with different staff to gather feedback on a number of themes. Feedback from these meetings was shared with the SLT. The Principal confirmed how helpful the feedback had been and outlined some of the actions that had already been taken. The Chair invited both staff governors to give consideration at future meetings about the actions the Corporation needed to take to make improvements if feedback suggested certain changes were needed. Both staff governors had already planned how they would work in collaboration in order to present information on behalf of the staff body.

**Resolved:** To note the staff governor report.

### **22/68 Link Governor visits (Agenda item 11)**

A number of visits had been completed since the start of term including: attendance at performance monitoring boards; meetings with senior post-holders or Directors; SAR validation meetings; and, a dedicated meeting with a group of level 1 and 2 students to gather feedback on their experience of the College.

**Resolved:** To note the report on Link Governor visits.

## **SECTION C – PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE:**

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### **22/69 Strategic Plan and Operating Plan update (Agenda item 12, Paper E)**

The report confirmed that the team was focused on curriculum planning and aligning the College's provision to the Local Skills Improvement Plan. This work was being led by Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce and would include input from a variety of key stakeholders including colleges and training providers. As per the Skills for Jobs White Paper, governors and college leaders were required to produce an accountability statement to be published on the website in May 2023. The DfE would articulate key priorities which would be used to inform the College's plan. There was also now a statutory requirement for governors to 'review how well the education or training provided meets local needs.' This would place a duty on governing bodies and institutions in the further education sector to review how well the education or training provided by the institution met local needs. This was to be undertaken every 3 years or when a new LSIP was in place.

Clarification was sought around student numbers and the Principal confirmed there had been some growth and final numbers would be confirmed in early December when the ILR was submitted to the ESFA. The new Executive Director Skills and Business and Development (EDSBD) outlined the key actions he had taken since being in post from August 2022. Individual income lines had been allocated to teams and the EDSBD was meeting with colleagues regularly to monitor progress. Commercial income was significantly higher than average compared to other colleges. The team was also very much focused on looking at opportunities to further grow income. Where T Levels were concerned, the Vice Principal outlined the challenges that colleges were experiencing; Moulton was proposing to deliver Construction in 2024-25. As a new member of the Corporation, Dr Saeudy had extensive experience in relation to the many facets associated with sustainability and was willing to have a more detailed discussion with the Vice Principal (**Action 31 – VPC&Q**).

**Resolved:** To receive the Strategic Plan and Operating Plan 2022-23.

## **22/70 National Agricultural Event proposal (Agenda item 13, Paper F)**

The College had been contacted by a company called Agricultural Engineers' Association who organised big grassland events across the country including ScotGrass and Tillage Live. The College had been asked if it would host a similar event in the May half-term. The Head of School for Land-based and Director of Facilities Management toured them around the site and they were really excited by the opportunity for this event and potentially more in the future to be held at Moulton. The report included a more detailed proposal.

The Vice Chair of Corporation explained that the proposal would need to be approved by the Highways Department and that every care should be taken to avoid excessive disruption for the local community; the local parish council needed to be involved as well as Pitsford and Boughton parish councils. This was a great opportunity for a large market of people to engage with the College and its facilities. Confirmation was received that the College would have a stand. Assurances were received about any damage to the land; compensation would be paid. The Principal had recently received a draft contract.

**Resolved:** To approve the proposal subject to an appropriate contract; approval by the Highways Department; and, the use of the Moulton logo on all publicity.

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

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### **22/71 TLA Committee (Agenda item 14, Paper G)**

The Corporation was informed of a number of key points from the meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022:

- **Data dashboard:** A version of the new dashboard for governors would be available by the end of November 2022.
- **Risk management:** The Committee had requested to inform the Corporation that student and staff experience would be adversely affected without urgent investment in IT.
- **Safeguarding and Prevent annual report:** The Committee was confident by the information provided in the report and that the College was fully compliant with its statutory responsibilities. The link governor for Safeguarding and Prevent reported on a very positive meeting with the team in September. **Recommended for approval.**
- **Compliments, complaints and suggestions: Recommended for approval** with authority delegated to the Committee for future approval.
- **Policies:** The following policy was considered and the Committee agreed to recommend to the Corporation for approval:
  - **Student bursary, discretionary and advanced loans bursary funds:** This was subject to scheduled renewal and had been reviewed by SLT. No changes were requested. The Chair highlighted the importance of bursaries for students and also the need to have plans in place for staff in view of the cost of living increases. The EDHR was currently preparing a report for the next meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee that would outline a number of options for consideration.
- The TLA Committee had delegated authority as per agreed scheme of delegation to approve a number of policies and reports as follows: Attendance; Careers Information Advice and Guidance; Curriculum Review; English and maths; Malpractice and misadministration; Observation of TLA; Prevent; Safeguarding and Child Protection; Stakeholder feedback; Student transfer; and, Transgender.

**Resolved:** To receive the TLA report; approve the Safeguarding and Prevent annual report 2021-22; approve the compliments, complaints and suggestions report 2021-22; and, approve the student bursary, discretionary and advanced loans bursary funds.

## **22/72 Finance and Resources Committee (Agenda item 15, Paper H)**

The report summarised the key discussion points; issues or risks; and, agreed actions from the meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 (Paper Ha) had been circulated previously. The F&R Committee had delegated authority as per agreed scheme of delegation to approve a number of policies and reports as follows: Gender pay report; and, support for continuing studies policy.

Five reports were recommended by the F&R Committee for approval:

- **Banking arrangements:** A revision to the terms for the FY23 along with an 8-year extension to the loan due to mature in December 2023.
- **Financial regulations:** Changes were made to ensure consistency; clarity about authorisation procedures; improvements to the purchase order system; and, clarification of procurement processes for purchases over £50k.
- **Health and Safety annual report 2020-21:** A summary of the key activities from the previous year. Comprehensive and relevant data included.
- **Health and Safety policy and Fire policy:** Minor changes had been made.
- **Fees and charges 2023-24:** Changes made were informed by a market review to support the decision-making process.

Following a discussion around a number of themes, the Chair of F&R outlined the actions agreed at the meeting.

- a. To revise the College budget in light of the Day 42 report and include a sensitivity analysis. The revised College budget should be presented for Corporation approval.
- b. Introduce a KPI to enable monitoring of bank covenants; further stress tests of interest rates to determine full implications of current economic crisis; and, to explore fixed rate terms with other lenders.
- c. Joint scoping document for IT Plan in relation to support from an external organisation.
- d. Ensure valuations were in line with current economic changes.

The COO confirmed that the revised College budget and associated changes linked to the Day 42 report would be completed in time for the meetings in December. The Chair requested that the agenda for the next Corporation meeting should be reordered so that: revised College budget; IT; and, staffing feature at the start of the meeting. Future Corporation agendas should have IT investment plan as a standing agenda item.

**Resolved:** To approve the revised terms set out in the banking arrangements and delegate authority to the Principal and COO to sign revised terms in line with the bank mandate. To approve: the financial regulations; health and safety annual report 2021-22; health and safety/fire policies; and, fees and charges 2023-24; and, to receive the F&R report.

Suzanne Ijewsky left the meeting.

**22/73 Investment Advisory and Appraisal Group (Agenda item 16)**

The Chair of the IAAG thanked everyone on the IAAG for their commitment to date in relation to a procurement process. It was important to progress to the contracting stage as quickly as possible.

**Resolved:** To note the report from the Investment Advisory and Appraisal Group.

**SECTION E – CLOSING ITEMS:**

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**22/74 Any other business (Agenda item 17)**

There was no other business.

**22/75 Date and time of next meeting (Agenda item 18)**

Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 9.30am