

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 14 MAY 2019

Present:

Pat	Brennan Barrett	Principal	✓
Sharon	Bunker	Staff Governor	Apologies
Ellen	Buttler	Governor	Apologies
Bill	Chalker	Governor	✓
Robert	Davey	Governor	✓
Tracey	Griffiths	Governor	✓
Julia	Harley	Governor	✓
Philip	Hilton	Governor	✓
Rebekah	Potter	Student Governor	Apologies
Geraldine	Schofield	Governor (Chair)	✓
Helen	Scott	Governor	Apologies
Brook	Smith	Student Governor	Apologies
David	Smith	Governor	Apologies

The quorum for the meeting was six Members.

In attendance:

Steve Rankine	Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs
Patrick Leavey	Deputy Principal
Jan Hutt	Director of HE
Julie Teckman	Head of HE Curriculum services and Quality
Julie Brasier	Clerk to the Corporation

The meeting was held in the Boardroom and started at 6.00pm.

1		Welcome and Apologies	Action
	1.1	Apologies were received from Ellen Buttler, Sharon Bunker, Rebekah Potter, Helen Scott, Brook Smith and David Smith.	
2		Declarations of Interest	
	2.1	The Chair reminded Members to declare their interests as and when necessary on the agenda.	
3		Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 5 March and any matters arising	
	3.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2019 were agreed as a correct record subject to the amendment in minute 19 and signed by the Chair.	
	3.2	Matters Arising Minute 5.7 – SEN Report/High Needs	

		<p><i>What is the position regarding further funding?</i> The decision will be known in September.</p> <p><i>What will happen if this is not received?</i> It depends on each EHCP and the extent to which parents challenge LA decisions. The College has given evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on SEN funding and is involved in the Call for Evidence from the DfE.</p> <p>Minute 7.4 – Principal’s College Overview Report The difficulties over bus passes in school holidays had now been satisfactorily resolved.</p>	
4		Determination of Any Other Business	
	4.1	There were no items of any other business.	
5		Office For Students	
	5.1	<p>The following documents had been circulated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on Governor Responsibilities • Current Access and Participation Statement • Consumer Law Protection Self Assessment • Student Protection Plan • HE Refund and Compensation Policy • HE Terms and Conditions • Freedom of Speech Policy • HE Academic Misconduct Policy • HE Student Assessment Policy 	
	5.2	As explained at the previous meeting, the College had to register with the Office for Students if it wanted to continue to provide HE courses. Part of the registration process required either a review of some existing policies or the creation of new ones. The College had had its documents peer reviewed by another College. The same process applied to all HE providers.	
	5.3	A lot of the focus was about students as consumers and Consumer law applies to HE courses. The College was required to give details about courses such as how long was spent in lectures, what the delivery processes were and how complaints and requests for refunds were handled.	
	5.4	As the College charged at the basic rate for FE courses, the Access and Participation Statement was relatively straightforward. The HE Student Protection Policy was a risk assessment process should a provider close. The risks for the College were small as there was a low number of HE courses. A course that was only part completed would not be closed.	
	5.5	The HE Refund and Compensation policy would apply if there was a recognisable loss. The HE terms and conditions policy covered the financial obligations of a students and contract details between the College and the student.	
	5.6	The ethos for HE at the College and reflected in its policies is that the student is always put first, with access to competitive programmes and that they get value for money. Everything needs to be clearly set out to support students in making choices. The College had had no formal complaints about its HE provision. Feedback from students was positive, and the College followed the National Students Survey to get feedback.	
	5.7	There was a drive to have a diversity of students and this was an area of strength for the College. A large percentage of HE students at the College were	

		from backgrounds where a university qualification was unusual. It offered a different HE experience offering progression.	
	5.8	<p>All policies were shared with student representatives at the draft stage and staff felt confident that the College was delivering what the students wanted.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[16/19]</p> <p>The Corporation resolved to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. note the reports submitted 2. Approve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Access and Participation Statement • Consumer Law Protection Self Assessment • Student Protection Plan • HE Refund and Compensation Policy • HE Terms and Conditions • Freedom of Speech Policy • HE Academic Misconduct Policy • HE Student Assessment Policy 	
	6	Governance Report	
	6.1	<p>The Clerk had circulated the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary report on current evaluation procedures and activities and governance documents to be reviewed • Compliance Report – AOC Code of Good Governance – Musts • Compliance Report – AOC Code of Good Governance – Shoulds • Compliance report – Instrument of Government 	
	6.2	<p>The Corporation noted the reports and the Clerk welcomed further feedback on these.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[17/19] The Corporation resolved to note the reports and confirmed that it would continue its adoption and use of the AOC Code of Good Governance.</p>	
	7	Audit Committee	
	7.1	<p>The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 26 March 2019 had been circulated and were noted. The following points were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Terms of Reference had been revised in line with the latest Post 16 Audit Code of Practice • The external Health and Safety Consultant had attended the meeting and presented his report. Staff were to be congratulated on a score of 85% compliance. There were no points in terms of meeting statutory requirements. There was a disconnect on some information and the creation of a legal register would be a benefit. Actions identified were being addressed. The next visit would look at the site rather than procedures • The Executive summary of the Health and Safety visit would be emailed by the Clerk • The new Internal Audit provider had attended the committee. Their work would start with financial controls and GDPR. An audit plan would then be agreed • The risk register had been reviewed – financial risks remained high due to the lack of growth in funding and increasing costs. Additional risks relating to security had been added due to the external environment 	Clerk

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee had agreed a committee effectiveness questionnaire. <p>RESOLVED C[18/19] The Corporation resolved to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the revised terms of Reference for the Audit Committee Note the report of the Audit Committee 	
8		Governance Items	
	8.1	<p>The Corporation considered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reappointment of Geraldine Schofield Chairing arrangements until 31 December 2019 Appointment of Mark Robbins as a Governor <p>The Clerk took items 1 and 2.</p>	
	8.2	<p>Under Standing Orders, the expectation was that Governors could serve up to 2 terms of 4 years each. Standing Orders did allow appointment to a third term where in the particular circumstances it was in the best interests of the College. The College was in the process of recruiting new governors and there would be a new Chair from 1 January 2020. Developments continued locally and nationally for FE. Given all of these factors, retaining experienced governors was felt to be beneficial. The Corporation agreed that the Chair did not need to leave the meeting for the discussion of this item.</p>	
	8.3	<p>Due to specific circumstances, the Corporation had agreed that the Vice Chair would be Chair from 1 August to 31 December 2019. As these specific circumstances were no longer applicable, it was suggested that the Chair, if reappointed, would continue as Chair until 31 December 2019.</p>	
	8.4	<p>Immediately prior to the meeting, the Chair, Vice Chair, Chair of Governance Committee, the Principal and the Clerk had interviewed a prospective Governor, Mark Robbins. He had responded to the recent advert. Mr Robbins had the financial skill set that the Corporation was seeking, the interview panel recommended his appointment as a Governor at the College.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[19/19] The Corporation resolved to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reappoint Geraldine Schofield as a governor for a four year term Appoint Geraldine Schofield as Chair of the Corporation from 1 August to 31 December 2019. Rob Davey would be Chair from 1 January 2020 Appoint Mark Robbins as a Governor for a four year term 	
9		Governance Committee Report	
	9.1	<p>The minutes of the Governance Committee held on 5 March 2019 were circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[20/19] The Corporation resolved to note the report of the Governance Committee.</p>	
10		Corporation Calendar	
	10.1	<p>The draft Corporation Calendar for 2019/2020 was circulated with the agenda. The Strategic event was held twice a year. The meeting in September was to review the College's position in the light of the headline results data that was available at this time and the meeting in January was more focussed on the future direction of the College. Quality, Finance and Community were key to the Strategy.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[21/19] The Corporation resolved to agree the Corporation Calendar for 2019/20</p>	
11		Overseas Visit	

	11.1	The Corporation received a report on a trip proposal for Media students to studios in New York. The previous location had been to Los Angeles; going to New York reduced the costs of the trip. RESOLVED C[22/19] The Corporation resolved to approve the overseas trip for Media students in February 2020	
12		Principal's College Overview Report	
	12.1	The Principal presented her report. The College had been successful in keeping good news items in the local press. English and Maths continued to be RAG rated red because of the national context for these subjects.	
	12.2	<i>What is the position for Public Services?</i> This was doing well at Level 3 and above. Level 2 was not so successful but steps had been taken to address this. These had had impact but results were awaited. Sport was also improving but neither subject had yet reached the national average.	
	12.3	<i>Is Pro solution going well?</i> Yes – there would a demonstration of this at the September Strategy day. <i>Are there savings on admin costs?</i> There had been a restructure in the MIS area. Enrolments were now been reviewed and how much those processes link with Pro solution. Where staff are leaving in this area they are not being replaced. Pro Monitor had been well received by Curriculum teams and was now embedded in practice. RESOLVED C[23/19] The Corporation resolved to note the Principal's College Overview Report.	
13		Learner Data Monitoring – Retention, Attendance and Progress	
	13.1	The Deputy Principal presented his report. Retentions figures were ahead of last year at 96%. This may change by the end of the academic year. Retention was lower on Advanced Level loans with 9 students leaving. The target was to exceed 94.5%.	
	13.2	Attendance was broadly in line with last year. The aspirational target of 90% had not been reached. There had been a lot of intervention to increase attendance and punctuality. The College was looking at new initiatives. Attendance for English and Maths was broadly in line with last year.	
	13.3	Progress – the final assessment point, KA4 was still open. Students seemed to be responding well to interventions. Disadvantaged students were doing well with gaps for High Needs and FSM closing. The BRAG and key assessment point systems were now embedded. Staff know the progress being made as do the students. <i>Why has the retention rate for LAC students increased this year?</i> The increase is not quite as high as it first appears as there were some anomalies last year.	
14		NART Data	
	14.1	The Deputy Principal presented his report. It was noted that the FE Commissioner had strongly encouraged all colleges to benchmark against other providers. The College's overall ranking had gone to 11 for 16 -18 courses for 2017/18. This is a rise of 198 places in 4 years. This was for timely achievement with students finishing programmes on time. The College was the highest ranked College in SEMLEP and its performance compared well to Grade 1 providers.	

	14.2	For 19+ courses, the College had an achievement rate of 90.1% which compared well and in some cases was in excess of Grade 1 providers	
	14.3	For Apprenticeships, the College was second in the SEMLEP region. With successful intervention this part of the provision was expected to improve to a Grade 2 in the next SAR. Locally it was noted that a College graded as a 4 could not continue to offer apprenticeships. Some local providers contracted out their apprenticeship provision.	
	14.4	For GCSEs the College was 33 overall. The College faced a significant challenge with over 1,000 students each taking Maths and English. Its high grade pass rates compared well with grade 1 providers, as did its level 1 Basic Skills for English and Maths	
	14.5	The College was ranked 4 for ESOL courses. The target for 2018/19 was to increase retention but the College was working to small margins now. RESOLVED C[25/19] The Corporation resolved to 1. note the NART Data 2. congratulate staff on their continued improvement.	
15		Student Recruitment and Enrolment	
	15.1	The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs presented his report. There had been little change since the previous report. There was a decrease compared to last year on all age full time courses. There would be a particular focus on marketing for catering and IT courses. Although down on allocation, recruitment to 16 -18 courses remained the same. There had been good recruitment to Adult Learning Loans with more Access students. The Adult Skills budget was down compared to last year but the franchise had been increased to make up the losses.	
	15.2	Apprenticeship recruitment was ahead of last year and HE courses should achieve budget. <i>What are the key trends from last year?</i> Numbers on Adult courses are down <i>Can the report contain student numbers?</i> This can be misleading because of short programmes; budgets are set on values. <i>It would be good to have numbers on apprenticeships.</i> RESOLVED C[26/19] The Corporation resolved to note the Student Recruitment and Enrolment data	
16		Management Accounts and commentary for the period to 30 April 2018	
	16.1	The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs presented his report. Income before capital grants was ahead of budget and this was projected to remain the position at the year end. Income for Adult Skills was ahead of budget overall taking into account the franchise increase, but this would also lead to an increase in non staff pay costs	
	16.2	Apprenticeships were ahead of budget and this included payments to employers. The ESF project had been extended to 2020 meaning more income. Additional High Needs funding had been received. Exams costs had been below budget.	

	16.3	Increases in income were off set by increases in non pay costs, which in addition to the items already referred to, included apprenticeship external teaching costs and ESF costs. Pay costs were in line with budget and by year end were predicted to be slightly below budget. There were increased support costs for High Needs students but these were set against the additional funding received.	
	16.4	Agency costs were ahead of budget. The surplus in terms of EBITDA was ahead of budget and this is a performance measure for colleges. The College was close to the 7% measure and at the top of the 'good' rating. For borrowing and insolvency the College was outstanding.	
	16.5	<p><i>Is it realistic that there will be lower non pay costs over the next 3 months?</i> Yes, June and July tend to be lower as staff do not usually purchase items at this time of year.</p> <p><i>Are agency costs reducing?</i> There has been negative feedback regarding some agency staff from students. The College has looked at alternatives and staff have done more cover. This continued to be a challenge.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[27/19] The Corporation resolved to note the Management Accounts up to 30 April 2019</p>	
17		Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee	
	17.1	<p>The minutes of the meeting of the Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee held on 5 March 2019 had been circulated. Ellen Buttler, absent from the committee meeting, was thanked for taking the time to submit questions for the committee to consider.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[28/19] The Corporation resolved to note Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.</p>	
18		Date and Time of Next meeting	
	18.1	<p>The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 25 June 2016 at 6.00pm in the Board Room at Booth Lane.</p> <p>The meeting finished at 7.50pm.</p>	

Julie Brasier
Clerk to the Corporation
Northampton College

Signed by the Chair:	
Date:	