

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2017

Present:

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| Tracey | Branson | Governor | ✓ |
| Pat | Brennan-Barrett | Principal | ✓ |
| Ellen | Buttler | Governor | ✓ |
| Bill | Chalker | Governor | ✓ |
| Robert | Davey | Governor | ✓ |
| Henrietta | Farrugia | Student Governor | ✓ |
| Mark | Hall | Governor | ✓ |
| Julia | Harley | Governor | Apologies |
| Philip | Hilton | Governor | ✓ |
| Martin | James | Staff Governor | ✓ |
| Geraldine | Schofield | Governor(Chair) | ✓ |
| David | Smith | Governor | ✓ |
| Adam | Stone | Student Governor | ✓ |

The quorum for the meeting was six Members.

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| In attendance: | Patrick Leavey | Deputy Principal |
| | Steve Rankine | Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs |
| | Gary Brough | Director of Estates |
| | Jason Lancaster | Interim Vice Principal |
| | Julie Brasier | Clerk to the Corporation |

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

Text in italics indicates questions from Governors

| 1 | | Welcome and Apologies | Action |
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| | 1.1 | Apologies were received from Julia Harley. | |
| 2 | | Declarations of Interest | |
| | 2.1 | The Chair reminded Members to declare their interests as and when necessary on the agenda. | |

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| 3 | | Minutes and Matters Arising | |
| | 3.1 | The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair. | |
| | 3.2 | <p>Matters Arising – 10 October 2017 –</p> <p>Minute 17.3 – Governance Committee – the minutes of the Committee held on 10 October included feedback on the Governor Appraisals.</p> <p>Minute 17.4 – Governance Committee – the Clerk and the Deputy Principal were producing a programme of events for Governor link visits.</p> <p>Minute 17.5 Governance Committee – the Clerk had met with the Chair of the Governance Committee to look at 360 degree reviews via survey monkey.</p> | Clerk/ Deputy Principal Clerk |
| 4 | | Determination of Any Other Business (urgent and necessary only) | |
| | 4.1 | There were no items of any other business. | |
| 5 | | Overseas Visit Approvals | |
| | 5.1 | Details of three overseas visits to Disneyland Paris, Los Angeles and Auschwitz had been circulated with the agenda. The Disneyland Paris trip was for Media and was a repeat trip. It would involve 40 students and linked to Year 2 units of study. | |
| | 5.2 | The trip to Los Angeles for also for Media students. It was scheduled for 2019. Planning was happening now due to cost. The Deputy Principal would check whether two or three members of staff would be accompanying the trip. The correct student staff ratio needed to be shown on the risk assessment. | Deputy Principal |
| | 5.3 | <p>The Auschwitz trip was a repeat trip. It was noted that College staff may not be joining the visit. The trip was organised by a partner organisation to the College.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[70/17] <i>That the overseas visits be approved, subject to the clarification requested.</i></p> | |
| 6 | | Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan | |
| | 6.1 | The Deputy Principal presented the Self Assessment Report (SAR) and the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Quality Teaching Learning and Assessment Committee (QLTA), which had met earlier before the Corporation meeting, had considered both documents in detail. | |
| | 6.2 | The SAR concluded that overall effectiveness for the College was a grade 2. There had been considerable discussion and reflection by staff in reaching this conclusion, bearing in mind Ofsted judged the College to be a grade3 when it inspected the College in April. The first Support and Challenge visit from Ofsted in October gave more confidence in terms of where the College was now 6 months later, particularly in terms of the outcomes for 2016/17. | |

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| 6.3 | The SAR considered the four key Ofsted areas to be a 2. All areas of provision were also a 2 except for Apprenticeships, which were graded 3. The next Support and Challenge meeting was 20 March 2018 and it was hoped that some areas may move to a grade 2 or beyond. This could be High Needs and Personal Development Behaviour and Welfare. Changes in grade would need to be supported by evidence; this would be from both 2016/17 and the current year. | |
| 6.4 | QLTA Committee had also had the data pack comprising both internal and external data, which corroborated each other. In terms of the Department for Education's value added data, the College's position was improving, for example English and Maths GCSE results. There was also an increase in the higher level A level Grades. Value Added measures were linked to level 3 courses – this was strongly emphasised in the April Ofsted Inspection. | |
| 6.5 | The AOC produced MIDES data, which reflected information from 200 Colleges. This gave a benchmark and included reports on English and Maths. The College's higher grades in these subjects were above national averages; in English, the College was 20% above national average. | |
| 6.6 | The publication, FE Week, publishes a league table using 4 metrics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner satisfaction • Employer satisfaction • 16 -18 positive progression • Adults into employment | |
| 6.5 | The College was second in this league table which was a significant jump from last year. Looking at the top 16 Colleges in the table, all except Northampton were a grade 1 or grade 2. The College was benchmarking against grade1 providers. | |
| 6.6 | Feedback from the Ofsted Support and Challenge visit in October was that there was significant good practice in the College with outstanding features emerging, for example student behaviour. The HMI had looked at the outcomes for 2016/17 and will look at the progress for the current year in March 2018. In monitoring progress, the College was now using a 'BRAG' system which had a rating for students making progress ahead of targets. | |
| 6.7 | The Post Inspection Action Plan was linked to the QIP and focussed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiation • Target setting • Stretch and challenge • BRAG system | |
| 6.8 | The Chair of the QLTA Committee gave an update on the Committee's discussions. The College had a solid programme to build upon for the next Ofsted visit in March. The College was considering the timing of the next Inspection. The Committee had looked at the SAR in detail and the external data. The Committee felt the SAR was an accurate reflection and looked particularly at the grading of the Apprenticeship provision. The conclusion of those discussion was that the provision, with the interventions now in place was a grade 3. It was not a grade 4. | |
| 6.9 | The High Needs should be a grade 2 or beyond with an achievement rate of 95%. The Deputy Principal advised that more work could be done on supported internships and teaching learning and assessment for this to be the case. In March 2018 the College's position should be stronger. | |

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| 6.10 | <p>The Committee wanted to congratulate staff on the quality of the data set provided. Attainment gaps were closing and solid judgements could now be made.</p> <p><i>How far have the College got in terms of having clean and reliable data, bearing in mind this has been a key project for the College?</i></p> <p>There was still work to do. A key question was is the data adding value to the delivery teams. Data could now be broken down into individual curriculum areas which then enabled interventions. Since April the College had been working to show that internal data was corroborated by external data. There was a three year upward trend shown in the College's data.</p> <p><i>The Principal joined the meeting</i></p> | |
| 6.11 | <p>The attainment gap was closing for the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Needs • Looked after children • English and Maths • Students in receipt of free school meals • Young Carers <p>There was a lot of evidence to support a grade 2 judgement.</p> | |
| 6.12 | <p>It was helpful for the Post Ofsted Action Plan and the QIP to be linked. The College was now using the Markbook software. This would assist with the closer monitoring of targets. The first progress meetings would be held next week. The BRAG system was positively received. Notes on the QIP indicated actions taken.</p> <p><i>How is Markbook explained to students?</i></p> <p>Targets will be set on Friday and staff would then talk to students.</p> | |
| 6.13 | <p><i>Is Apprenticeship Provision a marginal 3/4?</i></p> <p>The College had looked at the entire apprentice provision. All areas were progressing, some significantly so. Overall the College was 4% below the national average. The provision was not inadequate and the measures now being taken were having an impact.</p> | |
| 6.14 | <p><i>Is there a different approach to study programmes?</i></p> <p>There were different timeframes. Some apprenticeships were 4 year programmes. Performance was inconsistent in some areas, but there was good provision. Employers had confidence in the College's offer and the College was the first College to be delivering the new standard for the Rail industry.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[71/17] That the Corporation formally accept and agree the SAR for 2016/17 and the QIP for 2017/18.</p> | |
| 7 | Principal's College Overview Report | |
| 7.1 | <p>Following feedback at Governance Committee, the Principal had revised her report and now only covered points having impact.</p> <p><i>Does this reflect the Strategy Day discussions?</i></p> | |

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| | | <p>Yes – it helps Governors as a guide so they are aware of developments in the College and not taken by surprise.</p> <p><i>Is there a throughput from the Strategy day?</i> The Strategy day was about the development of the Curriculum – this report was about impact.</p> <p><i>Looking at the RAG ratings for 1.2, 1.3 and 1.8, how can the College be green for classroom performance?</i></p> <p>The Teaching and Learning outcome would be finished by January when graded observations were complete. Stretch and challenge was looked at separately.</p> <p>The Ofsted update had been given as part of item 6. The Stretch and Challenge meeting with the HMI in October had been positive.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[72/17] <i>That the Corporation note the Principal’s College Overview Report for the academic year to date.</i></p> | |
| 8 | | Audit Committee Report | |
| | 8.1 | The Audit Committee’s annual Report had been circulated with the agenda. This report was sent to the ESFA and summarised the work of the Committee for 2016 -17. The report set out the Internal Audit Service Reviews for 2016 - 17. Of the 8 areas reviewed, 5 had an assurance opinion of substantial and 3 reasonable. The External Audit Service provided assurance around Regularity and the future of the College as a Going Concern. These together with the financial statements were the basis of assurance for the Corporation. | |
| | 8.2 | The Financial statements were judged by the External Audit service to be a fair and true view of the College’s position. An addendum to the report was circulated showing the outcome of the Funding Assurance Review by the ESFA. The adjustment required as a result of the review represented 0.1% of the College’s Funding Claim indicating that the College data is clean and accurate and this reinforces the report from the Internal Audit Service in this area. | |
| | 8.3 | The report also took into account the risk management processes within the College. The Report had been agreed by the Audit Committee to come forward to the Corporation. The report was signed by the Chair of the Audit Committee | |
| | 8.4 | <i>Assurance on Performance Management was reasonable – are points to be picked up?</i> There were some gaps in the Appraisal system, which are being addressed; there were no concerns regarding Governance | |
| | 8.5 | <p>The Audit Committee had concluded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College’s systems of internal control are adequate and effective • The College’s arrangements for risk management, control and governance processes, securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money) are adequate and effective <p>RESOLVED C[73/17]</p> | |

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| | | <i>The Corporation resolved to approve the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2016/17</i> | |
| 9 | | Letters of Representation, Audit Findings and Financial Statements – Approval for the year to 31 July 2017 | |
| | 9.1 | The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs reported on these matters. The total comprehensive income for the year 2016 -17 was higher than the previous year due to the Actuarial Gain in respect the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and the land sale at Daventry. After stripping out notional LGPS costs, the College continued to be in surplus although it was less than last year. This was due mainly to income being less than budget. Both pay and non pay costs were worse than budget. The College had maintained both a EBITDA surplus and an operating surplus although these were less than in 2015 -16. The Department for Education’s prime measure is EBITDA. | |
| | 9.2 | It was noted that the arrangement fee shown in the Accounts was the figure paid when the loans were taken out and was a portion of the outstanding loans figure. | |
| | 9.3 | The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs advised that RSM UK LLP had presented the Audit Findings Report and the annual Financial Statements for 2016/17 to the Audit Committee. The Report provided a clean audit opinion, no impropriety issues were identified, no significant deficiencies in internal control were noted, no issues with accounting policies, disclosures and estimates were discovered, and the Auditors concur with management’s view that the financial statements are drawn up on a going concern basis. | |
| | 9.4 | The Audit Findings Report also includes two letters of representation (one relating to the Financial Statements, one relating to Regularity) which are to be signed by the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Accounting Officer (Principal). <i>RESOLVED C[74/17] The Corporation resolved (a) To approve the Letters of Representation, Audit Findings and Financial Statements for the Year to 31 July 2017; (b) To delegate authority to the Chair of the Corporation to sign these documents as necessary</i> | |
| 10 | | Student Recruitment and Enrolment (latest) 2017/18 | |
| | 10.1 | The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs presented his report. The figures given represented the position as at the end of October 2017. All age full time recruitment was comparable to 2016 -17. 16 -18 full time recruitment was 1% ahead of last year and 2% ahead of allocation. Adult Loan provision was less than last year, largely due to a reduction in access students. Adult recruitment was comparable with last year and ESOL recruitment was buoyant. Approval from the Corporation would be required to continue last year’s subcontract arrangements with Learning Curve which should ensure that the College achieved its Adult Education Budget. | |
| | 10.2 | Apprenticeship funding was down on last year and this reflects the national position. The reduction was due to the new funding methodology introduced in May 2017. It was likely that the shortfall would be made up over the year. | |
| | 10.3 | The part time engineering programme continued to grow although full time Higher Education numbers were down compared to last year. It was estimated that the Higher Education fees budget would be £125,000 behind budget. | |

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| | | <p>Schools are encouraged to set challenging recruitment targets but budget targets are more realistic.</p> <p><i>Can we support the increase in a subject where the outcomes were not strong?</i></p> <p>Yes – this is a management issue.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[75/17] The Corporation resolved to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the report on recruitment 2. To approve the continuation of the subcontract with Learning Curve up to a value of £300,000 | |
| 11 | | Management Accounts up to 31 October 2017 | |
| | 11.1 | <p>The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs presented his report. There would not be a full funding report until RO4 so accurate predictions were difficult at this stage. However trend were emerging:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently Apprenticeship income is behind budget, this may recover over the year, but to be prudent there was a shortfall forecast • Adult recruitment, particularly ESOL is buoyant and continuation with the franchise was approved at item 10. Therefore a shortfall was not forecast at this stage • Higher Education income was down which should be offset by an increase in full cost fees • Pay Costs and Non Pay costs were currently within budget and are forecast to be within budget at the year end • Cash will reduce towards the low point in March and will also reduce as some loans are repaid. • Operating conditions were expected to continue to be difficult this year and the College would need to continue to apply downward pressure on its cost base. | |
| | 11.2 | <p>Apprenticeships, which previously had been at no cost to employers, now attracted a 10% fee for non levy payers. The College did not receive any income until the employers' 10% fee had been paid. Smarter processes were needed.</p> <p><i>Is this a marketing issue?</i></p> <p>No it was more about communication – employers needed support to understand the new system.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[76/17]</p> <p>That the Corporation note the Management Accounts up to 31 October 2017.</p> | |

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| 12 | | Strategic College Improvement Fund bids | |
| | 12.1 | The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs presented his report. The following bids for funding had been submitted in November: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEMLEP Skills Capital Fund • Strategic College Improvement Fund • Work Placement Capacity and Delivery Fund | |
| | 12.2 | The SEMLEP Skills Capital Fund bid related to the construction of the Advanced Construction Engineering Centre and includes a sum for capital equipment. | |
| | 12.3 | The Strategic College Improvement Fund bid was to work with partner colleges following the April Ofsted judgement. The partner colleges were Harlow (for value added) and Milton Keynes for Apprenticeships. The College's contribution would be 25%. | |
| | 12.4 | The bid to the Work Placement Capacity and Delivery Fund was to support the development and delivery of quality, substantive work placements. This was preparation for T levels where 50 day work placements would need to be provided. The College needed to deliver 172 of these placements. | |
| | 12.5 | <i>Can these bids be set against existing activity?</i> Yes – where appropriate RESOLVED C[77/17] <i>That the Corporation note, agree and support the bids made as outlined in the report.</i> | |
| 13 | | Governance Committee | |
| | 13.1 | The minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 10 October were noted. The Chair of the Committee and the Clerk had met to look at 360 degree reviews. There would a Governor Recruitment campaign through the business community. A meeting with a potential governor had been held yesterday. It was noted that the action relating to the constitution of the Students Union was still outstanding. RESOLVED C[78/17] <i>That the Corporation note the report from the Governance Committee.</i> | Clerk Clerk Clerk |
| 14 | | Audit Committee | |
| | 14.1 | The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2017 were circulated and were noted. The internal Audit plan had been revised and agreed. There had been a very robust discussion on the conclusions in the Internal Audit report regarding financial planning – the Committee felt the judgements in that report to be harsh. The remaining reports reflected well on the College in terms of its operation and systems. | |
| | 14.2 | The External Auditor had indicated that some information was not ready when the Audit process began. It was noted that the team was a person short and there had been some operational challenges in implementing the new payroll system. The College had received a clean audit. The Committee had also looked at Health and Safety. RESOLVED C[79/17] <i>That the Corporation note the report of the Audit Committee.</i> | |

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| 15 | | Quality Teaching and Learning Committee | |
| | 15.1 | The verbal report from the Quality Teaching and Learning Committee was considered at item 6. <i>RESOLVED C[80/17]</i> <i>That the Corporation note the verbal report of the Quality Teaching and Learning Committee.</i> | |
| 16 | | Letter from Peter Lauener - ESFA | |
| | 20.1 | The letter from Peter Lauener, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of ESFA to Chief Executives and Principals of FE Colleges was circulated. It was noted that the College's financial controls were good. <i>RESOLVED C[80/17]</i> <i>That the Corporation note the letter from Peter Lauener.</i> | |
| 17 | | Date and Time of Next Corporation Meeting: | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporation Meeting – 6 February 2018 at 6pm • Strategic Event and Corporation Dinner – 18 January 2018 | |

Julie Brasier
Clerk to the Corporation
Northampton College

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| Signed by the Chair: | |
| Date: | |