

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING**HELD ON TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2015****Present:**

Pat Brennan-Barrett	Governor (Principal)
Ellen Buttler	Governor
Mark Hall	Governor
Julia Harley	Governor
Philip Hilton (Vice Chair)	Governor
Martin James	Governor
Roger Morris	Governor
Geraldine Schofield (Chair)	Governor
David Smith	Governor

The quorum for the meeting was six Members.

In attendance:

Steve Rankine	Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs
Patrick Leavey	Deputy Principal
Gary Brough	Director of Estates
James Whybrow	Assistant Principal, Employer Engagement and Enterprise
Mark Owen	Head of Student Services
Julie Brasier	Clerk to the Corporation

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

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Tracey Branson and Rob Davey.

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 10 November 2015 and any matters arising

3.1 The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record and were duly signed by the Chair.

3.2 Members noted the action points arising from the minutes. It was noted that the Equality and Diversity Action Plan had been considered by the Quality committee. The Plan had been approved with the addition of a column to show impact. The revisions to the Instrument and Articles of Government were not yet complete. Once completed, they would be sent to the College's solicitors.

4. Determination of Any Other Business

4.1 There was one item of 'any other business', an overseas trip to France, item 19 refers.

5. Post 16 Review

5.1 The Principal gave a verbal update.

5.2 A lot of background work had been done with the LEPS

5.3 It was believed that the College would be included in an Area Review which would cover the SEMLEP colleges and the review was likely to happen in September 2016. This timing would be beneficial as there would be information from those area reviews that had been completed by then. Sixth form colleges were now able to convert to academy status. If they did so, they would not be part of the post 16 Review process.

5.4 The data pack prepared by RCU would be received in the next few weeks.

5.5 It was noted that in one of the completed area reviews, the recommendations had not been taken forward due to lack of resource. The Corporation would decide on the recommendations made in respect of the College. Looking at what was emerging from the area reviews would be included in the Corporation Strategic Event held in July 2016

RESOLVED [C 77/15]

The Corporation Board noted the current position for area reviews.

6. Daventry Project Update

6.1 The Director of Estates submitted the progress reports from the Project Management team, the project timeline and the Risk Register.

6.2 Work had started on site. The relevant planning conditions relating to the start of the development were being complied with.

6.3 £3.6m of SEMLEP funding needed to be spent by the end of March 2016.

6.4 The existing Sports Hall had been demolished. The footings and drainage were being installed. The mild weather was a benefit.

6.5 The key risk at the present time was the completion of the footings in time for the steel structure being delivered. There would be some work over the Christmas period. The register showed the objection from the Environment Agency in relation to a one in 200 year flood risk. This had already been incorporated into the design.

6.6 The s106 agreement was to be varied to allow for the extension of the scheme

6.7 The suggestions of the Audit Committee at its meeting on 10 November 2015 relating to restrictive covenants and clawback had been passed to the College's solicitors

6.8 The Corporation expressed its thanks to the Task and Finish Group, the Director of Estates and the Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs for their work on the project.

RESOLVED [C 78/15]

The Corporation resolved to note the progress on the Daventry Project

The Director of Estates left the meeting at 6.25pm

7. Employer Engagement

7.1 The Assistant Principal, Employer Engagement and Enterprise, reported on the College's Employer Engagement Strategy highlighting the changes and progress made since December 2014. A

'stocktake' of this part of the College's activity had taken place in December 2014. The relevant areas were reviewed again in June 2015 and RAG rated. The December 2015 review had repeated this process so that improvements or concerns could be captured. The details of these reviews were in the report. Engagement and retention from work based activity had improved from 59.41% in December 2014 to 85.15% in December 2015, Growth generated by the work based learning team stood at 19%.

7.2 There was an on- going process of self- assessment, evidentially based. The key findings from this were outlined in the report and these were RAG rated as follows:

Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold Award for Smart assessors E Portfolio • 19% Growth in SFA income • 90% of placed apprenticeship seekers complete the course • Apprenticeship timely success rates 5% above National Average • 95% of learners would recommend the College to a friend • 27% growth in apprenticeship income • 95% of learners stayed in employment after completing the course • 11% progressed into higher level roles • 99% confirmed they were satisfied with their course • 94% of learners stated they were making good progress
Yellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship overall success rates 2% above National Average • 88% of Employers would recommend the College • Apprenticeship market share increased from 3% to 6% • 57% of vacancies filled which is 28 more vacancies than last year • Repeat business improved from 48% to 56% • Top 10 employers represent 11% of income
Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at 79% • Workplace learning 2% below National Average

7.3 It was noted that the College had moved from being over reliant on its top 10 employers and spreading its risk because it was working with more employers now compared to last year.

7.4 The self assessment exercise indicated that the provision offered at the College effectively responded to stakeholder need. The strong training programmes added value to employers, and was giving excellent long term employment destinations to learners. Well managed programmes, with responsive and flexible delivery models, contributed significantly to learner success.

7.5 Work was now focussing on securing highly effective business development growth and wide ranging external communications and engagement strategies and pre course Information Advice and Guidance These would then drive:

- outstanding provision for learners from disadvantaged groups
- good apprenticeship success rates
- excellent skills development
- good progression and development opportunities

7.6 The report included details of the College's analysis of the profile of employers. The proportion of small employers (employed less than 10 people) was increasing. It was important that the College has the correct course offer, tailored as appropriate, to meet their needs and provides a business support package. The College was working actively with around 50 employers in different subject sector areas. There was a challenge in setting the right measures for a course. Part of the self review process was to look at whether the college needed to do more to support small businesses and their needs.

7.7 Both employers and employees were profiled by the industry type and in the case of employees by job type. The largest single area, 26%, was the public sector. The employee profile indicated where

the college had been in the top 10 providers over the last 5 years. More on leadership and management needed to be offered as this featured strongly in the employee profile. The College was looking at both destinations as well as workplace support.

7.8 Stakeholder links were set out, campaigns were designed to get clear messages through to stakeholders as well as identifying any support they may need

7.9 The impact of the measures taken in the current academic year so far are:

- Apprenticeship growth case submitted for additional income for 2015/16
- 24% increase in apprenticeship vacancies filled compared to the same period last year
- 71% of employer opportunities have converted compared to 61% last year
- Quality assurance processes reviewed and refined
- Employer welfare 3:1 compliment:complaint ratio
- Re engagement with withdrawn learner – 9 of 33 now working with the apprenticeship recruitment team, 2 already placed
- Top 10% employers represent 11% of the College's business compared to 22% previously.

7.10 Questions were raised as follows:

Can we keep up with all initiatives, get enough people?

More vacancies were being filled than last year and more quickly. Existing students were moving onto apprenticeships, the college was looking carefully at learner destinations. There were some concerns with the achievement in schools and the extent to which outcomes were meeting employer need. This was a known problem. The College had traditional feeder schools with whom it worked closely; other schools worked in different ways. Employers did go into schools and in addition to any campaigns launched by the College would signpost the apprenticeships available on the College programme

Will the Area reviews have an impact?

Employer engagement was a major and developing strength of the College and its record was improving, which should be a positive element in the review process. Evidence indicated that the College was well received within the Community and the expectation of the Governors' role within that community relationship was noted.

RESOLVED [C 79/15]

The Corporation resolved to note the Employer Engagement Report and thanked the Assistant Principal Employer Engagement and Enterprise, for his work and that of his team

James Whybrow left the meeting at 6.55pm

8. PREVENT STRATEGY

8.1 The Head of Student Services submitted a report updating the Corporation on the implementation of the PREVENT Strategy to date, which the Corporation had approved at its meeting on 12 May 2015. The report also contained the guidance from the Education and Training Foundation for Governors in FE Colleges explaining their role in the PREVENT duty.

8.2 Delivery of the PREVENT Strategy was a very high priority within the College and significant within the Common Inspection Framework as a limiting judgement.

8.3 The College kept in contact with other Colleges to look at implementation: by networking, particularly with Moulton and Tresham Colleges, best practice could be shared.

8.4 The College was now accredited to deliver the Home Office training on raising awareness

8.5 An E Learning package had been launched with students. To date 600 had completed this and all students would have finished the programme by the end of January. The work was led by the Academic Tutors and compared well with other providers. There were good links with the Police and regular contact. There was a joint project between the Police and the performing arts students to produce a video of a radicalisation case.

- 8.6 Staff also received training, PREVENT was part of the Safeguarding duty. Policies and procedures were being adapted where necessary. The training was on line for existing staff; for new staff it was face to face as part of their induction.
- 8.7 Work with guest speakers was on going to highlight particular issues. The inclusion of British Values within the overall curriculum offer was being mapped. IT systems could identify IT usage that gave cause for further conversations on an individual basis.
- 8.8 Training for Governors was planned for 20 January 2016
- 8.9 Questions were raised as follows:
Was the college looking at all students?
The immediate focus was all full time students but this would then include work based learning. Work on an evacuation procedure was in train and all staff would be trained on this, in line with the latest police approach to these situations
What has been the reaction from students?
Students saw the links and were asking question. It was important that staff were appropriately trained and equipped for these conversations.

RESOLVED [C 80/15]

The Corporation resolved to note the progress to date on the implementation of the PREVENT strategy and thanked the Head of Student Services for his report.

Mark Owen left the meeting at 7.05

9. Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

- 9.1 The Deputy Principal submitted the self assessment report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for the academic year 2014 -15. Both had been considered in detail by the Quality Committee. The individual and overall judgements were explained. The layout of the SAR was aligned to the new Common Inspection Framework (CIF) published by Ofsted for September 2015.
- 9.2 Based on last year's data, the SAR indicated a grade 3 overall. Although there were many areas of the College that had improved, three areas were deemed to be a grade 4 and therefore a grade 2 could not be supported.
- 9.3 Whilst there had been some real successes in English and Maths in 2014 -2015, outcomes in functional skills were not yet good enough. In addition the provision of work experience within study programmes had not been consistent or robust enough to support a grade 2 judgement overall. Attendance and Punctuality had missed the 90% target set. The systems for student tracking and progress monitoring in 2014 -15 had not been strong enough.
- 9.4 For all areas of concern, clear intervention strategies had been put in place. Whilst not yet mature, they were starting to demonstrate impact
- 9.5 Ellen Buttler, Chair of the Quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee advised the Corporation that that committee had discussed the findings in the SAR in depth, looking at whether a grade 3 was appropriate based on the performance data for the College for 2014 -15. The committee had concluded that it was. It had also gone through the SAR in detail, suggesting revisions that could be made to improve the document.
- 9.6 In particular the committee had considered the evidence to support the grade 2 given for leadership and management. It felt that the strategies being followed and the impact they were having demonstrated the strength of Leadership and Management within the College as well as its capacity to improve.
- 9.7 It was asked how the College benchmarks/moderates its self assessment findings. The Deputy Principal explained that there were very clear grade descriptors, plus the information from lesson observations and student feedback. For some elements, such as English and Maths, external specialist consultants had been used, giving independence to the findings. Success rates were measured against national averages.

- 9.8 The QIP was derived from the SAR. It identified all areas requiring development, setting out the actions that needed to be put in place. The impact of these actions would be recorded and assessed. The work done since the start of the current academic year illustrated the College's continuing trend of improvement adding value to the student experience in the programmes for each area.
- 9.9 Staff were thanked for their work in compiling the SAR and QIP

RESOLVED [C 81/15]

The Corporation resolved to accept the Self Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan.

10. Learner Data Monitoring - Retention

- 10.1 The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs submitted the Student retention data for the academic year to date. For 2014/15 retention stood at 92%. The rate for 2015/16, at this early stage of the academic year, stood at 98% overall, representing an improvement. Over the holiday period there would be interventions to support students returning.
- 10.2 Governors asked about comparison with the previous year across different programmes. This was difficult to measure as data systems had been strengthened and improved.
- 10.3 Progress checks for students were made at 6 points in the year. After the first two phases of these, improvement could be seen as a result of expectation contracts entered into between the College and individual students.

RESOLVED [C 82/15]

The Corporation resolved to note the student retention data

11. Student enrolment

- 11.1 The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs circulated the updated student enrolment figures. RO4 was a key return as it provided a baseline for the finding for 2016/17. The bulk of withdrawals had now gone through. Enrolment was down 9% against the coursefiles, but targets had been scaled back to match income.
- 11.2 A level enrolment was down but this was due to better advice on course suitability. For 24+ enrolments were in line with targets and the funding received would be in line with the budget.
- 11.3 For the 16 -18 age range, part time recruitments were significantly down, but these grew throughout the year. Actual funding was LAG based so to an extent the figures in the report were notional.
- 11.4 The figures for apprenticeships had been adjusted to allow for funding changes. At present enrolment was 20% short, but apprentices were being recruited on a daily basis. The College were confident targets would be met. These were above the allocation and a growth fund bid had been submitted.
- 11.5 Adult skills recruitment was behind but would increase throughout the year. There was a potential for a shortfall but achievement finding could offset some of that.

RESOLVED [C 83/15]

The Corporation resolved to note the report on enrolment data.

12. Management Accounts and Commentary for the period to 31 October 2015

- 12.1 The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs submitted the Management Accounts for the 3 months to 31 October 2015.

- 12.2 The year end operating surplus was forecast to be 3.8% of the budget before the deduction of LGPS adjustments. Operating income for the year was forecast to be in line with the budget. The reduction in the SFA Adult budget allocation is expected to be offset by higher 16 -18 Apprenticeship income.
- 12.3 Total pay costs were predicted to be in line with the budget, which excluding restructure costs, represented 63.1% of operating income. As at October 2015, permanent staff numbers are 5FTEs lower than budget.
- 12.4 Non pay costs were at the predicted level. Cash balances, including LEP grants for the Daventry redevelopment project and the repayment of a short term loan stood at 102 days cash in hand. Bank covenants were expected to be met at the year end.
- 12.5 The key financial performance indicators showed the EFA funded 16 -18 programmes as red as numbers were slightly behind but this was expected to reduce. This was the same position with Adult skills, but as mentioned in 11.5 above this was expected to increase.
- 12.6 The College retained its 'outstanding' Financial Health Grade.
- 12.7 The two year cash profiles included the Daventry Project. The new build was scheduled to open in December 2016 with the land sale funding due in June 2017. Funding if necessary could be secured from the bank on a short term basis. The revised Treasury Management policy approved by the Corporation at its last meeting was being implemented.
- 12.8 Improved retention rates would impact positively on the College's financial position.
- 12.9 The college had invested in both quality assurance and curriculum to drive improvement.

RESOLVED [C 84/15]

The Corporation resolved to note the Management Accounts and Commentary for the three month period to 31 October 2015.

13. Audit Committee Annual Report

- 13.1 The Chair of the Audit Committee submitted the Annual Audit Report which had been considered by that Committee at its last meeting. There were no specific matters that the Audit Committee wished to raise with the Corporation.

RESOLVED [C 85/15]

The Corporation resolved to approve the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2014/15

14. Letter of Representation, Audit Findings and Financial Statements, Approval for the year to 31 July 2015

- 14.1 The Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs took the Corporation through the report and financial statements. The following points were noted:
- A surplus of 1% was good in the current circumstances
 - Funding body grants have increased, indicating the College was growing income by doing the right things – eg high quality apprenticeships
 - Staff costs were up by 2% which included the pay and the national insurance increases. 3% of the increase had been absorbed
 - The depreciation and impairment entry related to Daventry and reduced the surplus

- 14.2 The Auditors' report was unqualified and the regularity statement signed indicated that funds had been applied for the right purposes. A reconciliation from the SFA was awaited which was mainly

due to ESOL money not being spent. The Auditors were happy that this was not a material consideration.

RESOLVED [C 86/15]

The Corporation resolved (a) To approve the Letter of Representation, Audit Findings & Financial Statements Approval for the Year to 31 July 2015; (b) To delegate authority to the Chair of the Corporation to sign these documents as necessary

15. Governance Committee

15.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2015 were circulated.

RESOLVED [C 87/15]

The Corporation resolved to receive the minutes of the Governance Committee held on 10 November 2015

16. Audit Committee

- a. The draft Audit Committee minutes for 24 November 2015 were circulated. The Annual Report and Statement had been accepted by the Committee.
- b. The Corporation's attention was drawn to item 5.2 – Internal Audit Report – Student journey. The Committee had recommended that the Managements Response to the Internal Audit Service findings be clarified. The action points attached to the minutes needed to be amended to better reflect the position

RESOLVED [C 88/15]

The Corporation resolved to note the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 24 November 2015

17. Report of the Quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee

- a. The main focus of the meeting, held before the Corporation Meeting was the SAR and the Equality and Diversity Action Plan.
- b. The Committee had also received a report from an External Consultant on the quality of teaching in English and Maths and the strategy adopted by the college in these areas. In terms of the quality of teaching, the Consultant found that there had been significant improvement in the profile of good or better teaching from 40% in 2014/15 to 81% in 2015/16. Other progress included the improvement in management and administration of student placement into appropriate Maths and English classes and the developing culture of personalisation with the majority of teachers using personalised targets to develop student independence and promote individual progress.
- c. Teaching, Learning and Assessment strengths included:
 - A good standard of teaching, learning and assessment overall
 - Very effective use of questioning in the best lessons
 - Excellent student behaviour and engagement
 - Teachers used an interesting range of activities and resources that engaged students in active learning
 - Students made good progress in lessons relative to their starting point

- Teachers demonstrated a very good level of subject knowledge
 - Support for students in lessons was good
 - Excellent use made of personal targets maximising stretch and challenge in the best lessons
- d. The report went on to outline areas for development and key recommendations. The report recommended that a range of CPD teaching methodologies be implemented to further support differentiation.
- e. The report endorsed the Maths and English Strategy. The three managers concerned had done a good job in difficult circumstances and this work was making a real impact.

RESOLVED [C 89/15]

The Corporation resolved to note the report of the Quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee

18. Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference

- a. The Clerk reported on the current quorum for the Remuneration Committee

RESOLVED [C 90/15]

The Corporation resolved to revise the quorum of the Remuneration Committee to two Governors

19. Residential Visit

- a. The Deputy Principal circulated details of a residential visit to France for Catering and Hospitality students, it was an exchange visit. The same trip had been carried out successfully last year.

RESOLVED [C 91/15]

The Corporation resolved to approve the residential visit to France for Catering and Hospitality students in March 2016

20. Date and Time of Next Meeting

20.1 The next meeting of the Corporation will be held on Tuesday 2 February 2015 at 6.00pm in the Boardroom at Booth Lane.

20.2 Governors were reminded of the Corporation Strategic Event and Dinner to be held on 20 January 2016

The meeting closed at 8.23pm.

Julie Brasier
Clerk to the Corporation
Northampton College

Signed by the Chair:	
Date:	