



MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 22 June 2021

Present:

Pat	Brennan Barrett	Principal	✓
Sharon	Bunker	Staff Governor	✓
Bill	Chalker	Governor	✓
Shannon	Clarke	Student Governor	
Robert	Davey	Governor	Apologies
Tracey	Griffiths	Governor	✓
Philip	Hilton	Governor (Chair)	✓
Ummahani	Mohammed	Student Governor	✓
Lorna	Papé	Governor	✓
Mark	Robbins	Governor	✓
Geraldine	Schofield	Governor	✓
Helen	Scott	Governor	✓
David	Smith	Governor	Apologies

The quorum for the meeting was six Members.

In attendance:

Steve Rankine	Deputy Principal - Finance and Corporate Affairs
Patrick Leavey	Deputy Principal
Phil O'Hara	Vice Principal – Curriculum and Student Progress
Jan Hutt	Vice Principal – HR and Student Services
Gary Brough	Vice Principal (Resources)
Julie Brasier	Clerk to the Corporation

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams and started at 5.00pm.

1		Welcome and Apologies	Action
	1.1	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting to be conducted via Teams. It was agreed that in the event that the Clerk was unable to be part of the meeting for technical reasons, the meeting would be recorded.</p> <p>It was also agreed that microphones would be muted unless a person wished to speak.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Rob Davey (Chair) and David Smith. In the Chair's absence, it was agreed that Philip Hilton (Vice Chair) would chair the meeting.</p>	
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 9 March 2021	
	3.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2021 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair.	
4		Determination of Any Other Business	
	4.1	There was 1 additional item – see minute 16	
5		Covid Update	
	5.1	The Vice Principal – HR and Student Services gave an update. There had been a quiet period between May and the beginning of June. There had been more cases and isolations since then. Northampton had seen an increase in cases. Daily testing of staff and students took place as appropriate. One curriculum area has had a 2 day circuit breaker. The LA and Public Health England were content with the actions taken by the College.	
	5.2	These actions went beyond the requirements of the Government guidance to reduce the risk to staff and students whilst at the same time limiting the impact on the delivery of the curriculum.	
	5.3	Staff and student testing would continue and expectations in relation to this would be underlined. Staff will be asked whether they have been vaccinated as part of risk assessment. <i>Has the DfE advice changed?</i> The College has always gone beyond the guidance in terms of what is necessary to protect staff and students as a reasonable and proportionate response. RESOLVED C[29/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Covid Update	
6		Principal's College Overview Report.	
	6.1	<p>The Principal presented her report on progress towards the College's Strategic Objectives. Attention was drawn to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2 – Learning walks have been completed and some lesson observations have been done – these have been reported to the Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee. Full grade lesson observations would resume next term. The new school of Learning Support will help students who have lost learning as a result of the pandemic • The Ed Tech strategy is in place for September. All 16 -18 programme students will have a laptop or Chrome book on loan. Teachers will use technology to enhance Teaching and Learning pedagogy. Staff had been appointed to lead on this • 1.5 – Development of English and Maths – see item 7 • 2.4 –The College's financial position remains strong, there is a possibility of ESFA clawback • 3.1 – see item 7. Retention and achievement predictions are encouraging. Covid and the assessment framework for 2021 have affected attendance. There will be some gaps in learning and the College is addressing how best to support this. This will include diagnostic testing to tailor support and course advice • 3.3 - the level of applications indicate that the College's reputation remains good. (there is no independent performance data for 2020 or 2021). The Marketing Team continue to work hard to promote the College. 	


	6.2	<p><i>Is there a situation whereby a student may not have sufficient skills for the next level course because of learning gaps caused by Covid disruption? How will this impact on the College?</i></p> <p>Students are mostly up to speed but there may be some gaps. This is a national issue. Universities may decide to put in additional support.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[30/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Principal's College Overview Report</p> <p><i>Unmahani Mohammed and Helen Scott joined the meeting during this item</i></p>	
7		Learner Data Monitoring – Retention, Attendance and Progress	
	7.1	The Deputy Principal presented his report. Retention was in line with last year and a small further improvement may occur. There was concern for the impact on students of the centre assessed grading required by the awarding bodies when they returned to full time study on 8 March. This was because of the assessments needing to be completed to support this process. Students had shown good resilience.	
	7.2	<p>The College was looking at both how to continue to achieve good outcomes, as well as strategies to reduce the very small proportion of students who do not gain their qualification even further. Strategies for this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of Ed Tech to support Learning • Refreshing the approach to Maths and English – an improvement in these subjects improves the outcomes for all qualifications. 	
	7.3	A report on Maths and English, taking into account the impact of Covid and potential lost learning, had been done. Its recommendations were being implemented in 3 phases. The first phase, being put in place now, included more opportunities in the timetable for catch up sessions and the use of software as tools for revision and support, but this would not replace face to face teaching.	
	7.4	Phases 2 and 3 would look at pedagogy and reflect on the changes made. In the last national data available, the College was ranked 15 for Maths and 18 for English. Whilst this performance was credible, the College wanted to secure a greater percentage of students achieving higher grades in English and Maths- and thus refreshing our English and Maths Strategy is now necessary.	
	7.5	Collaborative work with Harlow College had been helpful in building the staffing structure needed to enhance the digital aspects of the curriculum. There were two appointed leads on this with digital leaders (advocates) across all areas of the curriculum.	
	7.6	The College continued to focus on building consistency even further across the College.	
	7.7	<p>Covid had impacted on attendance. The report set out details of progress against the BRAG rating system.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[31/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Learner Data Monitoring Report – Retention, Attendance and Progress.</p>	
8		Management Accounts and Commentary for the period up to 31 May 2021	
	8.1	The Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs) presented his report. Income was ahead of budget and this was projected to be the position at the end of the financial year. Some areas of provision had been affected by the pandemic and an element of clawback was expected. Catering income had dropped due to the pandemic.	

	8.2	Pay costs were below budget – the additional provision put in last year for Covid had not been needed. Pay costs had increased due to annual increments, pay rises, new posts and additional hours worked.	
	8.3	Non pay costs were ahead of budget due to the purchase of Chromebooks and laptops ready for the start of term. Cash remained high and includes capital grants.	
	8.4	<p><i>Why is there a difference between the in year surplus and the projected year end surplus?</i></p> <p>Income in June and July is less. Fees are not being collected then but staff costs continue at the same level.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[32/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Management Accounts up to 31 May 2021</p>	
9		Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee	
	9.1	<p>The Chair of the Committee gave a verbal update of the meeting held on 21 June 2021. The key points raised were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The QIP had been reviewed and it gave a good overview of activity in the College • Data showed student outcomes were good and holding up well • Good progress was being made with apprenticeships – the strong focus on this area was paying off, especially given the impact of Covid. Lots of support has been given to apprentices that have been furloughed to keep them on track • Feedback from the student survey was positive • The Committee was updated on Careers Information and Guidance for students • There was a lot of work for staff to complete the centre assessed grades process, particularly for the Deputy Principal and the Assistant Principal, Teaching Learning and Quality. There was a lot of marking for staff. There might be questions following external moderation. The award of grades was evidence based. This process could be repeated next year for second year students. The Committee wanted to recognise the hard work done by staff to support the centre assessed grade process 	
	9.2	<p>The Committee had looked at its Terms of Reference to see if any changes were required. It was about getting the balance in both recognising the excellent work being done and challenging those areas that still need to improve. The terms of Reference will be revised to refine this further to ensure focus improvement continues.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[33/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee Report.</p>	
10		Audit Committee	
	10.1	The minutes of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 15 June 2021 had been circulated. The Response to the Self-Assessment Questionnaire had also been circulated. The Committee received a Health and Safety Report and the implementation of the recommendations coming out of that. Good progress was being made in this.	
	10.2	The Committee had discussed the risk appetite, in that this may be different for different risks. The committee agreed that this questionnaire would be circulated to all Governors to complete and the results would then be considered further.	

	10.3	There would be an independent review of safeguarding.	
	10.4	The Committee had had an in depth look at Cyber Security. An Internal Audit report had been received, 2 recommendations had been made for further action and these were being considered. The report and the information given by the Head of ICT gave the Committee assurance. Feedback from the internal auditors indicated that the College was doing well in this area compared to many other areas.	
	10.5	Internal Audit reports were also received on Counter Fraud, Payroll and Follow Up. There were no recommendations for immediate actions.	
	10.6	The External Auditors had gone through the approach to Audit for the current year. The Post 16 Code of Practice had been updated and the changes outlined. One of these is need for External Auditors to present their report to a board rather than just the Audit Committee. RESOLVED C[34/21] The Corporation resolved to note the Audit Committee Report and approve the Self Assessment Questionnaire	
11		Emergency Governance Procedures	
	11.1	Emergency governance arrangements had been put in place at the start of the pandemic in March 2020 to give more governance capacity in the event that quick decisions were needed in an emergency situation. One of these was to have a second vice chair and it was agreed that this would be dealt with at this meeting – item 15 refers	
	11.2	The other emergency governance arrangements in summary are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contingency arrangements for Principal's absence Emergency governance strategy Resolutions A and B - The key elements of these resolutions were the temporary reduction in the quorum for Corporation meetings from 40% to 30% and that there was a checklist for emergency decision making, which included an additional step of a committee of 3 Governors rather than go straight to the Chair. So far, the emergency governance measures had not been needed. RESOLVED C[35/21] The Corporation resolved that the Emergency Governance Procedures outlined in the bullet points above continue until Easter 2022.	
12		Committee Membership and Terms of Reference	
	12.1	It was agreed that the new Chair of the Corporation, when elected (Minute 14 refers) and the current Committee Chairs talk to individual governors about this. This would be an agenda item for the next meeting.	Agenda
	12.2	The revised Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee had been circulated. The revisions took account of the changes to the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice. RESOLVED C[36/21] That the Corporation approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee	
13		Corporation Calendar	
	13.1	The Corporation Calendar for 2021/22 had been circulated. RESOLVED C[37/21] that the Corporation approve the Corporation Calendar for 2021/23	
14		Election of Chair	
	14.1	A nomination had been received from Geraldine Schofield which had been proposed and seconded.	

		<i>RESOLVED C[38/21] The Corporation resolved to elect Geraldine Schofield as Chair for a period of 2 years from 1 August 2021</i>	
15		Election of Second Vice Chair	
	15.1	A nomination had been received from Helen Scott which had been proposed and seconded <i>RESOLVED C[39/21] The Corporation resolved to elect Helen Scott as Chair for a period of 2 years from 1 August 2021</i>	
16		Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs)	
	16.1	The Principal advised the Corporation that the Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs) would be retiring at Christmas. He is an excellent Deputy Principal having taken the College from a deficit position when he joined to it being outstanding against ESFA financial measures. The process to appoint his replacement had started.	
17		Clerk	
	17.1	The Corporation wished to record its thanks to the outgoing Clerk.	
18		Date and Time of Next meeting	
	18.1	The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 5 October 2021 at 5.00pm <i>The meeting finished at 19.00</i>	

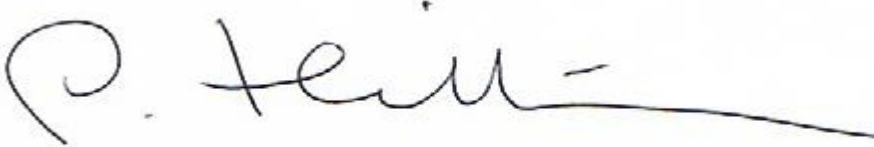
Julie Brasier
Clerk to the Corporation
Northampton College

Signed by the Chair:	
Date:	05/10/2021

19		Digital Academy Update	
	19.1	The minutes of the Task and Finish Group meeting held on 11 May 2021 had been circulated with the agenda. The Vice Principal - Resources advised that the technical fit out of the Digital Academy was almost complete. All the classrooms have been set up. The IT equipment had been delivered.	
	19.2	The College had an opportunity to extend the bricklaying and wet trades area in the ACE centre. A concept drawing had been done for a 306sq metre building to support the bid for funding. It will look similar to the ACE centre. A planning application had been submitted and a tender document is being prepared. It would be a smaller project than the main build and a local contractor could be used. The rationale for space was to accommodate provision for higher level courses and demand generally for construction courses. <i>When will there be a response to the bid?</i> Later in the summer. <i>What about the cable running through the site?</i> The building missed it by 3 feet.	
	19.3	<i>How is recruitment progressing for the Digital Academy?</i> The target for new courses is 54 students, so far there have been 60 applications from 16 – 18 year olds. The HE target for new programmes is 30, 21 applications have been received so far. RESOLVED C[40/21] that the Corporation note the Digital Academy Update	
20		Management Accounts and Commentary for the period up to 31 May 2021	
	20.1	<i>The Profit and Loss account shows reserves dropping, is this due to pension liabilities and Booth Lane costs – are there any solvency points here?</i> The account shows the estimate for the LGPS liability that the actuaries advise to be added on. There are two factors, the actuarial calculation and the actuarial valuation. This is not a cash item. The costs for Booth Lane will be capitalised into fixed assets.	
	20.2	<i>Is there an erosion of Reserves?</i> No – this information perhaps needs to be displayed differently. <i>What do the 'X's mean against the Bank Covenants on the Finance KPIs?</i> The Balance sheet must show over £20million <i>Is there a danger of breaching the bank covenants?</i> No due to the value of the net assets. The pension liability would need to exceed £7million for there to be a risk. Were this to happen, a discussion had been held with the bank and a retrospective waiver would be issued, The Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs) would look at the KPI criteria to see if any figures needed clarifying.	Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs)
21		Budget 2021 -22 and Financial Forecast	
	21.1	The Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs) presented his report which contained the draft budget for 2021/22 and the 3 year Financial Plan. . Funding for 16 -18 year olds would increase by £800,000. This was due to a 2.5% increase in student numbers and the increase in the weighting factor for some programmes. The Adult Education Budget was for a full allocation. There was confidence that this could be achieved due to the new school within the College. It was driven by the Maths and English part time provision. The new school would be offering a provision designed for adults.	

21.2	<p>The budget allowed for a small recovery in the apprenticeship revenue. There would be a small increase in fees for non funded courses. A range of part time courses were due to start. The budget also allowed for some recovery of catering revenue.</p> <p>Overall the budget showed a 5% increase in income.</p>	
21.3	<p>The budget included a 4% pay rise for all staff. Allowing for increments, the total increase would be 6.1%. Operating costs were increasing – there was a 1% allowance for inflation. There were some additional costs for PPE etc. The EBITDA for next year was projected at £1.8million as opposed to £1.7million this year</p>	
21.4	<p>The budget and the financial plan had been reconciled to each other and were driven by the College's four strategic priorities. On the balance sheet, fixed assets increase in value because of the completion of the Digital Academy project and cash reduces because of the capital grants received. The Reserves reflect a pension deficit of £1.5million, net assets are £8.8million and loans stand at £3.8 million. Net assets including the pension deficit cannot be less than the indebtedness of the loans. The College holds £5million over this amount.</p>	
21.5	<p><i>Is there any inkling that the pension deficit could lead to an increase in Employer contributions?</i></p> <p>This is reviewed every 3 years; the last review was last year. The deficit depends on the asset valuation of the fund.</p>	
21.6	<p>The capital budget reflected bids made by staff. This included a refurbishment of the science laboratories. The funding shown for the ACE Centre was matched funding. The extension of the ACE Centre is not included in the budget – this will come back to the Corporation as a separate project for approval.</p>	
21.7	<p>The financial plan no longer needs to be submitted to the ESFA. This is however a useful document predicting the position for the next 3 years. there is an upturn in the demographics for 16 – 18 year olds which should mean the cohort increases. Recruitment for 2021/22 looks positive.</p>	
21.8	<p>The balance sheet shows the changes to the cash position over the next 3 years. The ESFA financial health measure remains outstanding throughout this period. The report also included a sensitivity analysis for certain scenarios and the impact on cash and the ESFA finance measure if no action were taken. This however would not be allowed to happen – should a situation arise that will damage the financial health of the college, remedial action would be taken so that cash reserves are protected.</p>	
21.9	<p><i>There is a difference between the capital expenditure and the payments for non current assets in the cashflow?</i></p> <p>Expenditure on the condition allocation and the Digital academy have inflated this and there is also the potential extension to the ACE centre, which is not being approved as part of the budget process.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[41/21] that the Corporation approve the budget for 2021/22 and the financial plan.</p>	
22	Pay Award 2021 -22	
22.1	<p>The Deputy Principal (Finance and Corporate Affairs) presented his report. Staff have been awarded a 1% pay increase for the last 4 years. It had been hoped to award a higher increase in 2021 but this was delayed because of the then unknown financial impact of the pandemic.</p>	
22.3	<p>The cost of the proposed increase of 4% was £866,000 per annum. The report showed the trajectory of other costs and income. It was hoped that Adult</p>	

		<p>provision would recover next year, barring a further lockdown. Income is moving in the right direction. What is affordable now should remain so. The cash position remains strong. The demographic data shows increasing numbers of 16 -18 year olds over the next few years. The pay increase is an investment for the future as a way of retaining skilled staff.</p> <p><i>RESOLVED C[42/21] that the Corporation approve a 4% pay increase to all staff with effect from 1st August 2021</i></p>	
23		Appointment of Clerk	
	23.1	<p>The Clerk left the meeting.</p> <p>Interviews had been held for the new clerk following the resignation of the postholder. The Principal reported on the outcome of the interviews. It was recommended that Ralph Devereux be appointed Clerk to the Corporation</p> <p><i>RESOLVED C[43/21] that the Corporation appoint Ralph Devereux as Clerk to the Corporation from 1 July 2021 with remuneration of XXXXXX</i></p>	

Signed by the Chair:	
Date:	05/10/2021