

Minutes of the meeting of the Northampton College Corporation held at 1700 hrs 30 November 2021.

Present	Pat Brennan Barrett (Principal)	Conor Carr	Rob Davey	Tracey Griffiths
	Philip Hilton	Patrick Leavey	Mark Robbins	Geraldine Schofield (Chair)
	Helen Scott	David Smith	Rod Wood	
In Attendance	Becky Bradshaw (Observer)	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Patrick Leavey (DP)	Steve Rankine (DP (FCA)) (Items 13-15)

13/21 OPENING

- CMT members (JH & PoH) were absent through Covid, the DP (FCA) also had Covid but would attend for Items 7&8, which would be at the start of the meeting.
- No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, despite the high Covid attrition the meeting was quorate and there were no agenda related interests declared.
- Chair's Opening. The Chair welcomed all, in particular Becky Bradshaw, a potential Board member.

The information was received and noted.

14/21 FINANCE REPORT

- Management Accounts. The management accounts up to 30 September 2021 were explained and discussed; the comprehensive document comprised a narrative informed by graphical and tabulated detail, which was explained and considered. Key Performance indicators (KPI) had been tabulated and were noted. At this early point in the year performance was in line with the budget and accordingly, there were no variances and ratios were all as previously notified. The detail was generally discussed and the significance of the c100 shortfall in enrolments (c£400k in funding terms for next year) could be amortised by additional recruitment in January and March. A breakdown of the expenditure elements which constituted "Non-Pay Costs" (featured below "Total Pay Costs" in the Executive Summary) would be provided for the Chair. **(Action 1)**

Q	<i>What constitutes "Outstanding" financial health in ESFA terms?</i>
A	The basis is 3 elements "Profitability (Sustainability); "Solvency" (Current ratio); and "Gearing" (Debt ratio); each attracts points score and the resultant indicates the outcome. Outstanding 240/300 points; Good 180/230; Satisfactory 120/170; and Inadequate <130.

- Annual Financial Statements. The External Auditors had completed the financial statements and regularity audits of the College with clean opinions and a full and thorough consideration of the detail had been completed by the Audit Committee (AC) on 16 November and they had recommended acceptance (attached AC Minute 04/21 refers). The information was then considered and discussed partly informed by those Minutes. The AC had also considered the Internal Auditors' Annual Report, the External Auditors' Letter of Representation, the Audit Findings, and the AC Annual Report, all of which had also been recommended to the Corporation and would inform consideration of the AFS. The RSM Engagement Letter had not been included since previous version remained valid; Letters of Representation would be circulated for information; these had been recommended for signature by the AC. There had been no changes to the Audit Findings Report received

and considered by the AC and that was noted; the AC Annual Report (ACAR) and the included associated assurances were received, welcomed, and noted. The Final Account numbers were included in full in the papers, the surplus, before other gains and losses (e.g., actuarial pension adjustments), as £243k (2020 -£881k) including the FRS 102 adjustment of -£1799k (2020 -£1555k). The clean surplus without these costs was £2002k (2020 £647k). The strong financial position and the full narrative, including the Corporate Governance Statement had been considered in depth by the AC including required changes to the statements including, but not limited to, carbon declarations, fraud prevention and various changed legal processes. The Committee had recommended the AFS to the Corporation for acceptance, approval, and signature; that was accepted (subject to any information relating to the RSM Engagement Letter noted above at Action 1) and the following was approved **(Action 2)**:

- (i) AFS for the year to 31 July 2021 was approved for signature;
- (ii) RSM Engagement Letter was approved for signature;
- (iii) The Letter of Representation – Regularity was approved for signature; and
- (iv) The Letter of Representation – Financial Statements was approved for signature.

The information was received and noted.

Actions had been identified (Register at 22/21 below)

15/21 **ENROLMENT**

The definitive date for LR data is in early December when R04 will be published, however full-time (FT) students had now passed the 42-day funding trigger. Comparisons showed that all age FT enrolments are 5.6 (225) lower than last year and 17% down on stretching “Coursefile” targets; 16-18 are expected to be 2.6% (90) below allocation. Some areas had done well, for example, ICT and Forensic Science had seen a >10% increase, whilst others had suffered the reverse and had seen <10% reductions. Adult funding will be confirmed at R04 but if, as expected it is similar to last year, the sub-contracting arrangement with “Learning Curve” would continue. On the brighter side apprenticeships look to achieve budget by the end of the year. HNC / HND recruitment was similar to the previous year but year 1 had reduced from 75 to 62. This detail had been tabulated by curriculum area and comparative data with reduced areas highlighted in red and growth areas in blue.

<i>ICT and Media have enrolled fewer than in last year, surprising as the digital centre is operational?</i>
The Local Authority have recently removed support from certain age groups and there is now a specialist LA SEND School in Daventry. Additionally, we have not been able to maximise the Digital Academy through lack of open days.
<i>It appears that there is a cross-curricular decline, is this true?</i>
Yes, particularly at L2. Through the inflated GCSE results and a vibrant job market with “Low skill – high pay” opportunities
<i>It is forecast that the Digital Academy will benefit >1000 students, this does not seem to evidence that - can we specify how?</i>
All curriculum areas will benefit from the academy, it is difficult to be specific, but the alignment is linked to SEMLEP priorities,

The information was received and noted.

The DP (FCA) left the meeting.

16/21 **STANDING ITEMS**

- a. The attendance register was amended, and the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2021 were confirmed for electronic signature, Clerk to Action. **(Action 3)**
- b. Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.

- c. Outstanding Actions. Actions from the previous meeting had been completed or were in progress.

See referenced minute for full action.		Status
Action 1	re 02/21a. Last minutes (22.06.21) confirmed.	Complete
Action 2	re 05/21b(i). SDC appointed as main contractor.	
Action 3	re 05/21b(iii). Revised costing accepted.	
Action 4	re 06/21b. Sub Contract Policy approved.	
Action 5	re 07/21. Report on enrolment to next meeting.	
Action 6	re 08/21b. HAS Policy Statement to be signed.	
Action 7	re 09/21. Appreciation recorded to Gary Brough.	
Action 8	re 10/21a. RC ToR approved.	
Action 9	re 10/21b(ii). QTLA Cttee thanked for work.	
Action 10	re 10/21c. Membership Register amendments agreed.	
Action 11	re 10/21c. Revised register to be circulated.	

- d. Urgent Business. It was agreed to consider an item of urgent business from the DP(FCA).

The information was received.

Actions had been identified. (See Register 22/21 below.)

17/21 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The unconfirmed Committee Minutes were then considered:

- a. Governance Committee (GC). The unconfirmed minutes of the last GC meeting were considered for information and noted:
 - (i) re Minute 04/21. the Remuneration & Governance TORs were approved wie; **(Action 5)**
 - (ii) re Minute 04/21. The wording would be amended for consideration at the next GC meeting tbh 8 March 2022.
- b. Audit Committee (AC) The unconfirmed minutes of the last AC meeting had informed paras14/21a &b and the whole document was noted.
- c. Quality of Teaching Learning and Assurance (QTLA). The draft minutes of the meeting held the previous day were being processed; a verbal report would be provided by the Committee Chair to inform Item 7 (19/21).

The information was received.

Actions had been identified. (See Register 22/21 below.)

18/21 PRINCIPALS REPORT (INC COVID UPDATE)

The Principal's Report included a verbal update on current issues together with a progressive colour coded table Blue, Red, Amber, Green (BRAG); blue coding was Covid related.

- a. Covid. The sector was in maximum reactive mode, the recent emergence of the Omicron variant had layered another sequence of precautionary requirements on to the existing regime. Locally, staff and students observed protocols, which included selective working from home (WFH), social distancing and testing; more effective (and expensive) facemasks had now been made available. The College had recently suffered proportionately more heavily than other local sector colleagues, however it will remain open and operational.
- b. FE Reforms. At a recent national strategy day focusing on the post-16 legislation, including T Levels and discontinuance of BTEC (Level 3 (L3)) qualifications in 2023, the discussions focused on pressure through the Association of Colleges (AoC), for reconsideration of the scheme and there appeared to be some dilution of the previous DFE position mainly in showing more flexibility.
- c. GCSE Ranking. Nationwide the GCSE results had improved by 8%, probably through inflated Teacher Assessed Grading (TAG) assessments. This College's assessed grades had been strictly moderated, and quality controlled to be more realistic and will result in a demotion in the national ranking. When examinations are resumed the results will fall and

there would be a corrective promotion; full detail would be presented to the next QTLA meeting. **(Action 5)**

The Strategic Objective Report was then considered and discussed. Serials 1.3 and 1.5 had moved to blue ratings and were explained in the narrative. The general assumption that students had lost 3-6 months progress had not been borne out after extensive testing under the DP direction; that process was explained and had shown a learning deficit of c3+ years. This had prompted establishment of specialist provision, with well-qualified and experienced leadership; the DfE had advised of an information gathering visit in the near future. The remaining objectives were discussed and noted.

The information was received.
Actions had been identified. (See Register 22/21 below.)

19/21 SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR)

The College SAR, a comprehensive document comprising 11 elements (including the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)), had been extensively scrutinised and moderated by an Ofsted qualified staff member, and the QTLA Committee and was ready for validation. The QTLA had closely considered the documents in the broader concept with due regard to the pandemic/lockdown complexities and general difficulties throughout the year. Completion had been complex and detailed, reflecting the widest possible input and interests to ensure responsive, high quality and relevant provision; the document had been prepared to reflect the current Education Inspection Framework (EIF), which had been determined before, and unaware of, the coming pandemic. The SAR narrative took account of all influencing effects and was supplemented by a comprehensive suite of tabulated data and areas of note. Local assessment and assurances had been supplemented by comments and information from external sources. The self-assessed grades were:

Area	2020.21
a. Overall Effectiveness Judgement	2
b. Quality of Education	2
c. Behaviour and Attitudes	1
d. Personal Development	2
e. e. Leadership & Management	2/1

These suggested outcomes were comprehensively explained in the narrative, and each was then individually considered and discussed, informed by feedback and comments from the QTLA Chair as necessary. The strongly moderated and controlled Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) process could be relied upon as valid. Quality of Provision had clearly focussed on the curriculum ambition and purpose dedicated to local requirements, and students' outstanding behaviour and attitudes had been drawn out. Leadership and management (L&M), which had been provisionally graded as 1/2 (S7 page 22), had prompted lengthy QTLA consideration; it was strongly felt preferable to decide between "Good" and "Outstanding" and it had been decided to continue the considerations in this wider forum. Strong and positive influences for the top grade, included executive/CMT performance throughout the difficult period; alongside successful and positive leadership relating to the numerous pandemic related issues they had maintained focus on the wider strategic aims, for example, progression of the Digital Academy. The Committee had tended heavily towards Grade 1 and after further consideration that was unanimously supported and agreed; the SAR was then approved. **(Action 6)**

The information was received.
Actions had been identified. (See Register 22/21 below.)

20/21 LEARNER DATA MONITORING

The Learner Data Monitoring comprised six comprehensive data tables considering numbers of starts, retention and pass rates leading to the achievement and then compared with the latest (2018/19) National Averages (NA). The information had informed the SAR, which had been

considered earlier in this meeting; the data recorded over the last 6 years clearly evidenced the incremental improvements and had partly informed the TAG processes also discussed earlier. The information was discussed, and Members took comfort from the outcome.

The information was received and noted.

21/21 URGENT BUSINESS AND NEXT MEETING

- a. The DP(FCA) request for urgent business had been agreed and the necessary full detail had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. The LIBOR interest rate was being phased out and, as this affected the current loan with Santander, they had offered a no cost alternative; transition to base rate which was the recommendation. That was agreed and signatories were authorised to sign the LIBOR Transition Amendment Agreement. **(Action 7)**
- b. The next meetings would be the:
 - (i) Corporation Strategic Event tbh on 26 January 2022 (details to follow); and
 - (ii) Corporation meeting at 1700 on 8 March 2022.

The information was received.

Actions had been identified. (See Register 22/21 below.)

22/21 ACTION REGISTER

ACTION REGISTER			
See referenced minute for full action.		Resp	By
Action 1	14/21a. Breakdown of non-pay costs to Chair.	DP(FCA)	wie
Action 2	14/21b. AFS & associated documentation approved.	Chair	
Action 3	16/21a. Last minutes (05.10.21) confirmed.	Clerk	
Action 4	17/21a(i). R&G TOR approved.		
Action 5	18/21c. Present ranking detail to the QTLA meeting.	DP	07.03.22
Action 6	19/21. SAR approved.	Chair	wie
Action 7	21/21a. Transition from LIBOR to Base Rate approved.	DP(FCA)	






Corp Minutes Part1. 30.11.21.RD

Final Audit Report

2022-03-10

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