

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 28 APRIL 2020

Present:

Pat	Brennan Barrett	Principal	✓
Sharon	Bunker	Staff Governor	✓
Ellen	Buttler	Governor	✓
Bill	Chalker	Governor	✓
Shane	Crouch	Student Governor	
Robert	Davey	Governor (Chair)	✓
Tracey	Griffiths	Governor	✓
Philip	Hilton	Governor	✓
Gabriele	Makaraite	Student Governor	
Mark	Robbins	Governor	✓
Geraldine	Schofield	Governor	✓
Helen	Scott	Governor	✓
David	Smith	Governor	✓

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>No apologies were received.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the first Corporation 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>	
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 25 February 2020 and any matters arising	
	3.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minute 6.1 – second bullet point – delete ‘the’ and insert ‘this’ 	
	3.2	Matters Arising Minute 7.1 - Self Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) – it would be an action item for the Quality, Teaching and Learning Committee to follow up on the practices observed with Harlow College in China in the teaching of Maths to see what techniques could be applied in the College.	QLTA Committee
4		Determination of Any Other Business	
	4.1	There would be an additional item regarding the application of the College Seal.	
5		College Response	
	5.1	Instead of the normal overview report, the Principal had circulated a report setting out the College’s response to the Covid 19 emergency. Staff were fully engaged in the work to maintain student learning remotely. The College was continuing as far as it could, given a frequently changing set of circumstances. The College was working closely with the DfE and the AOC.	
	5.2	<i>The report shows a positive position, with staff working hard. Are more learning technicians needed?</i> There is backup for digital work, with other staff in the College providing support for this area. There would be investment in this team with further recruitment. The College would be looking for staff with pedagogy knowledge to enhance teaching and learning. The team would now report to the Vice Principal (Curriculum and Student Progress). The College was working diagnostically. <i>Are there any challenges to working on line?</i> Knowledge levels varied and this information would be used to better support staff and students. A strong percentage of students were engaging with online learning.	
	5.3	<i>Has any information been made publicly available regarding an exit strategy?</i> The College was working with the AOC and was already forward planning looking at different ways of working taking account of a range of factors including classroom zoning, staff wellbeing and employer obligations. <i>Has there been help/guidance?</i> The College was working with other colleges to support re opening. There was a lot of aspects to consider and planning was taking place ahead of guidance being issued. The College was in a strong financial health to respond to the crisis. Final plans would be shared with the Corporation prior to implementation.	Principal
	5.4	<i>Telephone interviews are suspended?</i> This is temporary and being kept under review. It would start again. There would be a college place for everyone. Enrolment procedures were being reviewed in the light of current circumstances to ensure students received appropriate information, advice and guidance. RESOLVED C[11/20] The Corporation resolved to note the report on the College’s response to Covid 19. The Corporation expressed its thanks for the	

		<i>hard work and resilience of the staff. The planning being done and finding alternative ways of working put the College in a proactive and positive position.</i>	
6		Curriculum Update	
	6.1	The Deputy Principal presented his report – there were 2 aspects – an overview of the changes to teaching and the accreditation requirements of the awarding bodies in the absence of summer examinations.	
	6.2	As isolation measures started, staff got through as much work as was possible and moved to the rapid delivery of remote learning. Normal timetables have remained in place. A laptop loan scheme ensures all students have the digital hardware they need.	
	6.3	A tracker system was put in place to monitor student engagement. Staff are in contact with students where there are concerns about engagement. Students are making progress and there were some excellent examples of innovative practice.	
	6.4	The Vice Principal – Curriculum and Student Progress ran a video presentation to the Corporation show casing the work of teachers and students during lockdown across a variety of platforms. The transition to google classroom had gone well.	
	6.5	Awarding bodies were now giving details of the process for accreditation. There would be a considerable amount of work for colleges. For the small number of students where there were concerns, staff were working hard to support them. The process for GCSEs was more geared towards schools than colleges. Each student in the cohort would need to be individually ranked and there were over 1,000 students each for Maths and English. Details were awaited for Functional Skills qualifications and vocational qualifications.	
	6.6	In some subjects there could be teacher assessments (which staff felt was a better option than exams being taken at home and were lobbying against that proposal). However, this may not be possible where judgements were needed on a practical workshop activity for example. These were likely to have to be done in College. Before lockdown, as much workshop activity as possible was completed.	
	6.7	More detail on assessment on vocational qualifications was expected in the next 2 weeks. For now, staff were focussing on GCSEs and functional skills. Several staff had indicated their willingness to be in College later in June and July to support the assessment process. The Corporation welcomed this response as did the Executive Team and the situation would be handled carefully and flexibly. <i>RESOLVED C12/20] The Corporation resolved to note Curriculum Update.</i>	
7		Safeguarding	
	7.1	The Vice Principal – HR and Student Services, presented her report on the work being done in College to support students and staff during the current emergency. The position was moving all the time and a lot of guidance was being issued. Vulnerable staff were identified before lockdown. Taking steps to protect the welfare of students and staff had gained their confidence.	
	7.2	All safeguarding activities had continued. The student services team had put in a helpline and continue to collate data for vulnerable students. Some staff and students are shielding and there may be extensions to this.	
	7.3	Counselling support was available for staff. Safeguarding protocols had been adapted to cover teachers working from home. Staff were reminded of this. Practice is kept under constant review as the situation evolves.	

		<p><i>Are there any concerns around domestic violence?</i> The helpline details have been well publicised. Support continues where there is a known risk and staff are vigilant for this.</p> <p><i>How is counselling provided?</i> This is through the HR Team – more resource from independent counsellors would be accessed if needed.</p>	
	7.4	<p><i>Have staff been furloughed?</i> Some colleges have a high commercial element. Colleges needed to be careful they did not double claim. 16 -18 and adult funding continued to be received and the College was trying to keep apprentices on programme. There was not a case for the College to consider furloughing at the moment as costs have to be associated with lost income. The College was being proactive in managing the financial impact of Covid 19.</p> <p>RESOLVED C13/20] The Corporation resolved to note Safeguarding Report</p>	
8		NART Tables 2018/19	
	8.1	The Deputy Principal presented his report. The NART data was a national annual measure of performance in FE Colleges. In analysing the data, the College had benchmarked itself against other SEMLEP colleges, colleges that had recently been judged to be outstanding by Ofsted and the colleges it was working with collaboratively.	
	8.2	For 16 -18 outcomes, the College was the highest in SEMLEP and was now 7 th nationally, moving from 11 th the previous year. It was 4 th nationally for ESOL and with a much larger group of students for those ranked 1 – 3. Adult provision was the highest within SEMLEP; apprenticeships were expected to improve further next year. In 2013/14 the College was ranked 209, although there were more colleges then.	
	8.3	<p>Maths and English results for 16 -18 stood at 13th and 18th nationally. Both subjects were securing high levels of performance and this was unusual as many colleges perform much better in one subject compared to the other.</p> <p>The trajectory of improvement showed the strength in the volume of students, curriculum design, delivery strategy and the support given to students.</p> <p><i>This is a very positive picture – are there areas for improvement?</i> Yes, there are some areas and these are being reviewed as well as looking at the approach of some of colleges regarding the awarding bodies chosen. The key message is one of consistency – what can the College learn from the strongest performing areas and ensuring that is applied to other areas that may need support.</p> <p>RESOLVED C14/20] The Corporation resolved to note NART Data Report and wished to record its congratulations and appreciation to staff for the continuous year on year improvement in the performance of the College.</p>	
9		Finance Report	
	9.1	The Deputy Principal - Finance and Corporate Affairs presented his report on the financial impact of Covid 19 and the Management Accounts up to 31 March 2020.	
	9.2	The FE was in many respects protected from the impact of Covid 19. 16 -19 funding continued and funding for 2020/21 was known due to lagged funding. The Adult budget would not be reconciled so there would be no clawback. The	

		position with apprenticeships was uncertain. The Business Centre was working hard to keep apprentices on programme and funding was still being received. Information on furloughing had been given to employers.	
	9.3	<p>There would be an impact on adult loan, access, ESOL and professional course income. Catering income would be less but some costs also were reduced. All staff were being paid as normal. Staff costs were expected to come in at or just below budget. There would be some savings on non staff costs. The report set out a 'worst case' scenario for potential losses but the actual position was looking favourable.</p> <p><i>What will be the impact of the cost of prevention measures – PPE, screens, digital working etc?</i></p> <p>The College must comply with national guidance and the planning is being done carefully to ensure the maximum benefit is achieved. There may be some additional costs for this.</p>	
	9.4	<p><i>Will there be more funding for the additional measures?</i></p> <p>It is not expected that there will be any. The College was managing the situation very carefully. If funding was available, appropriate applications would be made.</p>	
	9.5	<p>The year end forecast included changes to income. The cash position remains robust. EBITDA details were set out in the report. No problems were expected in relation to bank covenants.</p> <p><i>Does the forecast take into account the impact of Covid 19?</i></p> <p>Yes – on a worst case scenario basis.</p>	
	9.6	<p>In terms of recruitment for 2020/21, exam boards had not yet advised on the delivery of practical courses if social distancing is still in place. Costs in relation to income were kept under constant review. Marketing for recruitment continued. Online curriculum delivery was being considered should there need to less students physically in College – the teaching resource could be used for both on remote and face to face learning.</p> <p>RESOLVED C15/20] The Corporation resolved to note the Management Accounts up to 31 March 2020.</p>	
10		Audit Committee Report – Appointment of External Auditors	
	10.1	<p>The Deputy Principal - Finance and Corporate Affairs presented his report. A tendering process had been run and 3 companies gave virtual presentations to the Audit Committee. All 3 companies were capable of delivering the external audit function. Pricing was close. 2 of the companies were larger with more resource and a higher number of FE clients. One tender was lower than the tender from the current provider but less days had been allocated to the work. The recommendation was to re appoint the existing provider. There would be rotation this year with a new partner and manager to ensure independence. The Committee supported this recommendation.</p> <p><i>How many years have we been with the current auditors?</i></p> <p>5 years – the Audit Committee had asked about this – there was no requirement to change, but it was good practice to change the partner and manager within the firm working with a client.</p> <p>RESOLVED C[16/20] The Corporation resolved to reappoint RSM as the External Auditors for the Corporation</p>	
11		Overseas Trip	
	11.1	This item was deferred due to the Covid 19 emergency.	

12		Corporation Seal	
	12.1	<p>To finalise the documentation for the Santander loan, the College seal needed to be affixed to the Charge. The details of the transaction had already been approved by the Corporation.</p> <p><i>RESOLVED C[17/20] The Corporation resolved that the seal of the Corporation be affixed to the Charge in favour of Santander in the presence of the Chair and one other Governor.</i></p>	
13		Date and Time of Next meeting	
	13.1	<p>The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 16 June 2020 at 6.00pm</p> <p>The meeting finished at 7.00pm.</p> <p><i>The Chair thanked everyone for their work and contributions.</i></p>	

Julie Brasier
Clerk to the Corporation
Northampton College

Signed by the Chair:	
Date:	