

## MINUTES OF THE CORPORATION MEETING

**HELD ON TUESDAY 10 December 2019**

**Present:**

Pat	Brennan Barrett	Principal	Apologies
Sharon	Bunker	Staff Governor	✓
Ellen	Buttler	Governor	Apologies
Bill	Chalker	Governor	✓
Shane	Crouch	Student Governor	✓
Robert	Davey	Governor	✓
Tracey	Griffiths	Governor	✓
Philip	Hilton	Governor	✓
Gabriele	Makaraite	Student Governor	
Mark	Robbins	Governor	✓
Geraldine	Schofield	Governor (Chair)	✓
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
Jan Hutt	Director Human Resources
Sally Bamford	HR Manager
Julie Brasier	Clerk to the Corporation

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

1		<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	<b>Action</b>
	1.1	Apologies were received from Pat Brennan Barrett and Ellen Buttler.	
2		<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	2.1	The Chair reminded Members to declare their interests as and when necessary on the agenda.	
3		<b>Minutes of the Corporation Meeting held on 14 May 2019 and any matters arising</b>	
	3.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
	3.2	<b>Matters Arising</b> <b>Minute 3.2 – Learner Data Monitoring – Retention, Attendance and Progress</b>	

		<p>There was further discussion on the comparison of BRAG ratings with actual outcomes. BRAG ratings showed a student's progress towards their targets. When achievement data is finalised, BRAG ratings compared to outcomes are then reviewed. There is not a direct relationship between BRAG ratings and outcomes. Within the context of an ongoing improvement in outcomes, the College continued to work to improve accuracy of BRAG ratings to support student progress</p> <p><b>Minute 12.3 – Student Recruitment 2019 -20</b> Additional information was circulated regarding increasing numbers at Daventry.</p> <p><b>Minute 13.2 – Management Accounts to July 2019</b> Details in relation to changes and savings as a result of the MIS restructure are in the report for item 5 <i>Were these savings in the budget?</i> Yes, and pay costs dropped for 2018 -19.</p> <p><b>Minute 16.2 – Insolvency Regime</b> Further advice had been given regarding the risk of LGPS pension liability creating a potential insolvency situation. AOC advice included 2 tests to determine whether a College was in deficit. These were whether a college could pay its bills and whether liabilities exceeded assets. The College was in a strong solvent position to pay its bills.</p>	<b>Deputy Principal</b>
<b>4</b>		<b>Determination of Any Other Business</b>	
	4.1	There were no any other business items.	
<b>5</b>		<b>HR Report</b>	
	5.1	The Director of Human Resources presented her report. The College had seen an incremental change in its workforce over the last 7 years. A sustainable staff budget was in place within an ethos of securing quality provision. 2018 - 2019 had seen significant change with the introduction of the new MIS system. The system had given major benefits in managing data and enhancing customer focus. High level skills had been increased.	
	5.2	Managing any underperformance continued to be a key area with a tighter approach to probationary periods. If needed, disciplinary proceedings related to professional standards. The College had stringent requirements regarding staff behaviour. Strong action was taken where appropriate.	
	5.3	Grievances in 2018 -19 had dropped significantly. Sickness absence had increased but long term absence had reduced. There had been an increase in staff turnover. However, this had been very low in 2017 -18 and numbers were increased as a result of some redundancies. One of the main reasons given for leaving was promotion.	
	5.4	<i>Does the College do any surveys?</i> The College understands the issues for staff. The total reward is good but there is a gap between pay in schools and pay in FE Colleges.	
	5.5	The Corporation discussed the average age profile nationally and whether this posed a risk for the College. It was noted that some staff have a phased retirement by teaching less hours.	
	5.6	The Corporation requested that the next report contained more year to year trend information.	

		<p><b>RESOLVED C[61/19] that the Corporation resolved to note the HR report.</b></p> <p><i>The Director of Human Resources was thanked for her report.</i></p> <p><i>Sally Bamford left the meeting.</i></p>	
6		<b>Principal's College Overview Report</b>	
	6.1	<p>The Deputy Principal presented the Principal's College Overview Report. The following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Self Assessment Report (SAR) showed a 5 year trend of improvements. The focus now would be on the interventions needed to better support the small percentage of students not achieving their qualifications</li> <li>• Robust Curriculum and Apprenticeship monitoring meetings throughout the year meant provision was kept under tight review</li> <li>• High Grade outcomes continue to improve</li> <li>• The joint working with Harlow College as a Maths Centre for Excellence supported good practice. The College had had an audit on the project and this had been positive. Joint working would continue for another 2 years</li> <li>• KPIs for 2019/20 had been agreed with Curriculum Managers which supported the College moving to broad consistency and sustained improvement.</li> </ul>	
	6.2	<p><i>How well are the new MIS systems are embedded?</i></p> <p>There is a weekly update on this. There is ongoing refinement of the systems' features to meet the needs of the College. Staff utilisation of the systems is monitored. The College was seeing increasing benefits from the new systems.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED C[62/19] The Corporation resolved to note the Principal's College Overview Report</b></p>	
7		<b>Self Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)</b>	
	7.1	<p>The Quality, Teaching Learning and Assessment Committee had met immediately prior to the Corporation meeting and had discussed the SAR and the QIP in detail. The Chair of the Committee gave a summary of the Committee's discussion highlighting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff were thanked for the support given to students</li> <li>• Data was good and showed an upward trend</li> <li>• Apprenticeship provision was discussed – there had been a re alignment of staffing with an increase in monitoring</li> <li>• Joint working with Harlow College on Maths – this included a visit to China. The Committee had asked how this can now be used and applied in the College. This would be picked up in a future report to the Committee</li> <li>• Feedback from students on what they feel had helped them to succeed</li> <li>• The Committee had reviewed the SAR which reflected the new Ofsted Framework (EIF)</li> <li>• The Committee had reviewed the judgements made in the SAR and were recommending that the grades for Behaviour and Attitudes, Educational Programmes for Young People and Adult provision be increased to 1</li> <li>• The SAR was a very thorough document</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee discussed apprenticeships within the context of the judgement for Overall Effectiveness. The Committee agreed with the SAR's conclusion that this judgement should be a grade 2</li> <li>Although outside the scope of the SAR, the Committee had also reviewed HE provision in the College. This was a small cohort with good outcomes and progression routes which was important in terms of the criteria for the Office for students</li> <li>The QIP links well with the SAR. The Committee suggested that staff consider whether there was merit in bringing the HE areas for improvement into the QIP</li> <li>The committee had reviewed its terms of reference</li> </ul>	
	7.2	The Deputy Principal advised that the Ofsted judgement in 2018 was that the College was good with outstanding features. The SAR for 2019 concluded that this was still the position because of the data and a 5 year trend of improvement. There were now more outstanding features than in 2018. Joint working with Harlow College continued on the Apprenticeship provision through Strategic College Improvement activity. The College was also working with core areas to get maximum consistency across the College.	
	7.3	<p><i>Is there any risk of complacency in grading an area as 1?</i></p> <p>The College benchmarked its performance against other colleges currently judged as a grade 1 under the new Ofsted Framework. The new framework had more focus on discussions with staff and students.</p> <p><i>Are the achievement figures now final?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p>	
	7.4	<p>Parts of the apprenticeship provision were now good. Where improvements were required, these were being addressed.</p> <p>Staff were congratulated on the continued improved outcomes for the College</p> <p><b><i>RESOLVED C[63/19] that the Corporation approve the SAR and QIP for 2018 - 19 subject to the judgements for Behaviour and Attitudes, Education Programmes for Young People and Adult Provision be amended to Grade 1</i></b></p>	
<b>8</b>		<b>Audit Committee Annual Report</b>	
	8.1	The Audit Committee's Annual Report had been approved by the Audit Committee and was circulated with the agenda. The report outlined the sources of assurance used by the Committee in fulfilling its role and in reaching its conclusions. These included independent Internal and External Audit functions and independent Health and Safety reviews. The College met the ESFA criteria to be financially outstanding. The Committee also looked at risk management.	
	8.2	<p>Taking all the above into account, the Audit Committee had concluded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The College's systems of internal control are adequate and effective</li> <li>The College's audit arrangements and framework of governance are adequate and effective</li> <li>The College's arrangements for risk management, control and governance processes, securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (value for money) are adequate and effective</li> </ul> <p>It also concluded that in its opinion it had effectively discharged its duties as set out in the terms of reference.</p>	
	8.3	<p>The Annual Audit report went to the ESFA. The Audit Committee's report provided assurance to the Corporation in approving the annual accounts.</p> <p><i>Has the caveat from the Internal Auditors now been dealt with?</i></p> <p>Yes – they have seen the External Audit report – there were no issues.</p>	

		<b>RESOLVED C[64/19]that the Corporation resolved to approve the Audit Committee Annual Report for 2018/19</b>	
9		<b>Letters of Representation, Audit Findings and Financial Statements' approval for the Year to 31 July 2019</b>	
	9.1	The Deputy Principal - Finance and Corporate Affairs presented the Letters of Representation, Audit Findings and Financial Statements for approval for the Year to 31 July 2019. He also presented a summary of the financial statements.	
	9.2	Pay costs included the restructure costs following the changes in the MIS systems. There was an increase in the LGPS liability due to changes in the discount rate. A further valuation meeting for the LGPS scheme was due. Taking out provisions for LGPS, the College had a healthy surplus. The College's EBITDA score meant that it above the threshold for outstanding.	
	9.4	There were no issues of concern arising from the External Audit Report. The 2 matters mentioned had been addressed. <b>RESOLVED C[65/19] The Corporation resolved (a) To approve the Letters of Representation, Audit Findings and Financial Statements for the Year to 31 July 2019; (b) To delegate authority to the Chair of the Corporation to sign these documents as necessary</b>	
10		<b>Management Accounts to October 2019</b>	
	10.1	The Deputy Principal - Finance and Corporate Affairs presented his report. The RO4 return was awaited for Adult Education provision. Recruitment had gone well this year and tuition fees were ahead of budget. There had been extra pension costs. Additional teaching support income was expected later in the year. This was not included in the Budget. Further analysis would be done on teaching support pay costs in relation to the budget profile. Non pay costs were on target to stay within budget. The College's cash position was strong. <i>The cashflow position is better than forecast?</i> <b>RESOLVED C[66/19] The Corporation resolved to note the Management accounts up to 31 October 2019.</b>	<b>Deputy Principal - Finance and Corporate Affairs</b>
11		<b>Student Recruitment and Enrolment</b>	
	11.1	The Deputy Principal - Finance and Corporate Affairs presented his report. The figures shown were after the 42 day period so any withdrawals now would not affect funding. Recruitment had increased compared to last year at both Daventry and Northampton. Some courses had starts in January and March so the figures for these courses would increase. Apprenticeship numbers were strong. The apprenticeship allocation only went up to March. HE recruitment had also increased.	
	11.2	<i>It would be useful to have some information on trends and movement between courses to have more context.</i> The Corporation discussed the changes in recruitment to specific courses. Nationally there was a lot of promotion of STEM subjects. <i>Is there a good take up of STEM subjects by females?</i> Yes – there is comparable participation. Some of the College's outreach activities, such as the Big Rig and Ignite the Spark, help with this. Sometimes numbers on courses are governed by the staff available. <b>RESOLVED C[67/19] The Corporation resolved to note the Student Recruitment and Enrolment Report</b>	

<b>12</b>		<b>Audit Committee Report</b>	
	12.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2019 had been circulated and noted. The Annual Audit Report had been discussed at item 8. The Committee had discussed in detail the LGPS pension Fund liabilities. The External Audit report also covered emerging issues for the FE sector nationally. One of these was the ESFA letter regarding governance and financial oversight in the FE sector. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs would prepare the Management response to the letter and report this to the Audit Committee. It was noted that the College's practice already reflected the points in the ESFA letter.	<b>Deputy Principal - Finance and Corporate Affairs</b>
	12.2	In terms of reviewing risk in the College, the Committee was looking at a heat map to monitor movements in the level of risk. The External Audit function was currently out for tender. <b>RESOLVED C[68/19] The Corporation resolved to note the Audit Committee Report.</b>	
<b>13</b>		<b>Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee</b>	
	13.1	The Committee had met immediately before the Corporation meeting. A report from the meeting is included at item 7  <b>RESOLVED C[69/19] The Corporation resolved to note the Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee Report.</b>	
<b>14</b>		<b>Dr Geraldine Schofield</b>	
	14.1	This was Geraldine's last meeting as Chair of the Corporation although she would be continuing as a Governor. The Corporation wished to express its sincere thanks to her for all her work as Chair, her professionalism, her guidance to both the Corporation and the Executive and her encouragement and support of all Governors to contribute to discussion and the work of the Corporation.  The Chair thanked Governors for their support and wished the new Chair, Rob Davey every success as he becomes Chair in January.	
<b>15</b>		<b>Date and Time of Next meeting</b>	
		The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 25 February 2020 at 6.00pm in the Board Room at Booth Lane.  The meeting finished at 8.00pm.	

Julie Brasier  
Clerk to the Corporation  
Northampton College

Signed by the Chair:	
Date:	