

MOULTON COLLEGE

CORPORATION

Minutes of the Corporation meeting held on Thursday, 4th July 2024 in the Kelmars Room, Moulton College, 1.00pm

Present:	David McVean (Chair)	Independent Governor
	Charles Matts	Independent Governor
	Ashley Clarkson	Independent Governor
	Pauline Hawkesford	Independent Governor
	Lucille Knapp	Independent Governor
	Suzanne Ijewsky	Independent Governor
	Andy MacCaig	Independent Governor
	Alastair Thomson	Independent Governor
	Mark Wakeford	Independent Governor (Teams)
	Craig Ablett	Independent Governor
	Michael Knibbs	Staff Governor
	Karen Squires	Staff Governor
	In attendance:	Faye Williams
	Alicia Bruce	Chief Operating Officer
	David Aldridge	Executive Director of Human Resources
	Catherine Duro	Head of Governance
	Oliver Symons	Principal Designate (Teams)

SECTION A – ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS:

24/45 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Prof. Elaine Limond, Dr Mohamed Saeudy, George Crick, Ivy Knowles and Matt Smith.

24/46 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

24/47 Minutes of last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on **Thursday, 25th April 2024** were approved as a true and accurate record.

24/48 Actions from last meeting (Agenda item 4, Paper B)

All due actions were complete.

SECTION B – TRIANGULATION – STUDENT AND STAFF FEEDBACK

24/49 – Link Governor Visits (Agenda Item 5a)

Two governors shared their experience of a learning walk at the Higham Ferrers campus which they were pleased to report was no longer underutilised. It had been a positive visit. Future resource challenges for the site were discussed and governors were **assured** they were being addressed.

The Health and Safety link governor shared **positive feedback** from recent visits. The challenge of encouraging people to report near misses was discussed. The development of a culture where everything was reported however small was encouraged. Governors were reminded of the college's mandatory training programme which was well adhered to and monitored via the PDR process.

24/50 – Staff Governor Feedback (Agenda Item 5b)

It was **reported** to governors that there were two main areas of conversation amongst staff. One being the new principal and the other being Ofsted. Staff were reported to be discussing both with positive anticipation. Workload pressures and IT efficiencies were also regular topics of discussion.

The importance of student support beyond the classroom was raised a matter of importance to curriculum staff. There was a **robust and lengthy debate** over the impact on achievement and retention and the staff and resources available and needed to excel at this. Governors **asked** for a more detailed breakdown of the data and mitigating actions to be provided following the meeting. **(Action FW)**

24/51 – Student Governor Feedback (Agenda item 5c)

There were no student governors present.

Megan Smith had now left the College. Governors expressed gratitude for her contribution.

SECTION C – STRATEGIC UPDATE

24/52 Strategic Plan and Operating Plan Update (Agenda Item 6, Presentation)

The Vice Principal and COO gave an update on the final half term of the year which they had jointly covered.

The highlights of the term were shared, including the staff awards and CPD day, and the student awards ceremony.

The key highlights from the data and KPI's were discussed. Staff absences were **challenged**. It was asked why the year was reported, rather than a rolling 12 months It was explained that this was to enable comparison with the AoC benchmarks, but the possibility of alternative measures would be **considered**.

The incoming principal was asked to review the KPI's, ensuring appropriate data scrutiny and asking if we are measuring the right things in the right way. **(Action OS)**

SECTION D – CORPORATION MATTERS

24/53 External Review of Governance (Agenda item 7, Paper C)

The External review of governance report was received. The report was taken as read. Governors were **reassured** by the positive reflections looking at the past three years and looked forward to receiving a forward-looking report in the Autumn.

Resolved: that pages 10 and 11 be **approved** for publishing on the website with the full report available from the Head of Governance on request.

24/54 Strategic Risk Register (Agenda Item 8, Paper D)

The risk management report was taken as read. It was confirmed it had been scrutinised and approved by the Audit Committee. It was understood that this was a revision of the current risk register which it had been agreed would undergo a full review to align with a new strategic plan.

Clarity was sought around the safeguarding risk. Governors were **assured** that there was no risk to students at the present time, there were appropriate skilled post holders in place. The

risk was with regard to any of the safeguarding team moving on and the potential gap that may be left.

24/55 Written Resolution (Agenda Item 9, Paper E)

The written resolution, concluded at midday on 30th June. with 12 approvals **Resolving** to approve the proposed Accountability Statement for publishing, was **ratified**.

24/56 Policies (Agenda Item 10, Papers F – J)

The following policies were received for approval. All were confirmed as read having been circulated in advance of the meeting. Questions were invited.

- a. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- b. Apprenticeship Policy -
- c. Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions Policy -
- d. Careers Education, IAG Policy
- e. Student Bursary Policy.

It was **clarified** that typographical errors highlighted before the meeting had been amended.

There was a **lengthy debate** around governors' involvement in the complaints process and the benefits of having the complaints, compliments and suggestions incorporated into one policy. It was agreed that the complaints process worked well, and no governor's involvement needed to be added. It was asked that the compliments and suggestions section be separated from the complaints policy, as there were examples where it had antagonised complainants. **(Action FW)**

Resolved that the following policies be approved:-

- a. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- b. Apprenticeship Policy
- c. Careers Education, IAG Policy
- d. Student Bursary Policy.

SECTION E – COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR APPROVAL

24/57 Finance and Resources Committee (Agenda item 11, Paper K - Q)

The feedback report and minutes were received from the meeting held on 3rd June and 1st July 2024.

The Chair **reported** that it had been extremely beneficial having members of the TLA Committee present for the review of the Curriculum plan, enabling a more rounded debate.

The Board were **made aware** of the downward pressure illustrated in the management accounts as we approach the end of the year. Governors were **assured** this was being carefully and closely managed.

It was **explained** that whilst the budget showed growth in income there was also an increase in cost. The RI grade was achievable with careful management but would remain under pressure. It was further explained that the attached but complex CFFR document was a reflection of the budget prepared in a way to be submitted to the ESFA.

With this background understanding, the proposed pay award was **rigorously debated**, against what was affordable. **Grave concern** was shared and it was asked what the risks

were. The **need** to drive greater process efficiency and undertake a structure review were **discussed**. The need to increase commercial income whilst reducing costs was **agreed**. The people plan was recognised as an important aspect of retaining staff. The need to carefully manage expectations and communicate the pay award was expressed. With an improving financial position and staff having been informed we anticipate coming out of intervention this year staff may expect a higher pay award, if the background and detail were not properly shared.

An update was provided on the sustainability baseline, which had been accepted as complete and accurate. **Disappointment** was voiced around the level of activity to improve sustainability. It was hoped that this would be **reinvigorated** for new the year. **(Action OS)**

The financial regulations had been reviewed to address the requirements of the new financial handbook. This would be audited later in July.

Resolved that on the recommendation of the Committee the following be approved:

- a. College budget and financial plan 2024-25 including KPIs and pay award (staff)
- b. College Financial Forecast Return (CFFR)
- c. Sustainability Baseline
- d. Financial Regulations
- e. Curriculum Plan 2024/25

24/58 Audit Committee (Agenda item 13, Paper R – U)

The Chair provided a summary of the meeting held on 18th June 2024 including recommendations for approval.

The **positive** internal audit reports were highlighted. The Chair informed the governors that the need for some onsite presence for the internal auditors had been requested. An experienced auditor had been requested to experience the college beyond the desk top exercises that had taken place.

The board were **informed** that insurance premiums were increasing significantly due some recent claims. It was therefore recommended that a one-year policy be entered into with a further procurement exercise later in the new year.

An excellent, detailed health and safety report had been received, again demonstrating excellent reporting and practice.

The fire inspection report had raised no issues. The length of the fire policy was accepted and governors **assured** that it was used appropriately across the site.

Resolved that on the recommendation of the Committee the following be approved:

- a. Insurance
- b. Health and Safety Policy
- c. Fire Policy

24/59 Search and Governance Committee (Agenda item 14, Paper V)

The Chair provide verbal feedback from the Search and Governance Committee meeting that had been held on 4th July 2024, immediately before this meeting of the Corporation.

The previously circulated Meeting Dates & Schedule of Business were recommended for approval, with an additional Finance and Resources Committee meeting earlier in term one.

The minor amendments to the terms of reference were explained and recommended for approval.

The changes to the co-opted governors and link governor portfolio were explained and recommended for approval. The importance of collective responsibility and a suitable skills mix were **agreed**. All agreed that grant funding for recruitment support from Peridot should be sought.

The creation of appointed ambassadors from college alumni was supported.

Resolved that the below items be **approved**

- a. Meeting dates & Schedule of Business
- b. Terms of Reference / Standing Orders
- c. Co-opted and Link Governors

SECTION F – CLOSING ITEMS

24/60 Any other business (Agenda item 16, Verbal)

An update on the T Level grant was provided. Governors were informed that the initial plan was no longer feasible against the recruited numbers. It was recommended that an application be made to the DFE to change the scope of the project, making it deliverable within budget and in a timely way, whilst being beneficial to the student experience. This would not delay the students starting or impact negatively on their early experience.

Resolved that a letter of assurance be provided to the DFE confirming governors understanding that the revised scope could be delivered and was appropriate for the college.

24/61 Impact of Governance (Agenda Item 17, Verbal)

- KPI's challenged for review – are governors measuring the right thing in the right way
- Student support mechanisms discussed in detail and reassurance and action sought
- Pay Award rigorously challenged and debated
- Metronome of accountability preserved through approval regime

24/62 Date of next meeting (Agenda item 18)

Thursday 7th November at 9.30 am.

All members of staff, student governors and observers left the meeting before the confidential part began.

Meeting closed 11.55