

Minutes of the Corporation meeting held in the Conference Centre in NCS at 1730 hrs on 16 May 2018

Present	Martin Ballard	Peter Fraser	Jasmine Kelly-Gobuiwang
	Janet Meenaghan (Principal)	David Pennell	Phil Smith
	Allison Sunley (Chair)	Jack Thubbron	Paul Wingfield
In Attendance	Andrew Clare (VPFR)	Ralph Devereux (Clerk)	Alison Fox (APPS)
	Rachel Nicholls (DPCQ)	Louise Perry (VPFR desig)(58/17g on)	
Observer	Vincent Brittain (Inspire+)		
Apologies	Rob Cottrell	Anne Earle	Charlotte Favill
	Alison Grant	Sarah Hobbs	Anthony Partington

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular:

a. Vincent Britain, from Inspire+, who was observing; and

b. Louise Perry (from 58/17g), who had recently resigned from the Corporation on her appointment as VPFR designate and who would attend meetings until taking up post on 1 August 2018;

56/17 ELIGIBILITY, QUORUM AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- a. The apologies were accepted.
- b. No notice had been received of any Member becoming ineligible to hold office, the meeting was quorate and there had been no declared interests.

57/17 STANDING ITEMS

- a. The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2018 were confirmed for electronic signature, Clerk to Action. **(Action 1)**
 - b. Matters Arising. Re 45/17e. In response to a query, it was confirmed that matters related to the Bordeville Gym were progressing satisfactorily, Members would be updated after the next F&R Committee meeting.
 - c. Outstanding Actions. All actions from the previous meetings had been completed or were in progress.
 - d. Urgent Business. There was no Urgent Business informed or requested.
- a. **The information was received.**
 - b. **Actions had been identified.** (See Table 65/17 below.)

58/17 PRINCIPAL

The previously circulated Principal's report was considered, members were now familiar with the general content, but some matters prompted further and wider discussion.

- a. Adult Funding. The Adult Education Budget (AEB) issued by the ESFA, when consolidated with previously announced growth funding would increase by £350k over the current year; in parallel with plans to vary the local adult education arrangements and a more relaxed approach by the ESFA, this would permit increased responsiveness and flexibility with adult provision. Government plans for devolution of AEB funding to Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA) were progressing, the scheme effective in 2019/20 would see 33% of NCS funding devolved to Greater Cambridgeshire since that proportion of learners were based there; MCAs were developing individual adult education plans, which would not include input from NCS. After close discussion it was agreed to record concern that future funding could favour colleges within the MCA to the NCS detriment and it was agreed that representative(s) should attend forums when such matters were to be discussed. **(Action 2)**
- b. Ofsted. The updated Ofsted FE Skills and Inspection Handbook allowed for a 5-year inspection cycle for “good” colleges, annual risk assessments remain unchanged. The amendment to the schedule had resulted from the increased cost and workload through necessary inspections of the increasing number of apprenticeship providers. The change implied that NCS next inspection would be in 2022. After enquiries, it had been confirmed that there was no arrangement for an advanced inspection and after consideration it was agreed that a private alternative would be unduly expensive and would not have the standing of an Ofsted assessment. There was some associated discussion regarding the use of Quality Achievement Rates (QARs), the Ofsted preferred measure of quality of the education and training, which could prompt an earlier, risk-based inspection. It was also noted that 77% of the sector was now graded “Good or Better”.
- c. Gender Pay. The Education Training Foundation (ETF) had recently reported a pay gap in the FE sector as preferential to males by 14.4%. The English average is 11.6%, at NCS the gap is 8.2%; however, the high proportion of low paid jobs filled by women disproportionately affected both numbers; on “like-for-like” at NCS there is no gap.
- d. Construction Staff. In an attempt to overcome the difficulty with lecturer recruitment consideration was being given to revising the employment terms and conditions of employment for these posts to make them more attractive, possibly facilitated by a change of employer to the Joint Venture Company (JVC); appropriate legal advice was being taken and unions would clearly be involved if the programme emerged. Discussions around the recruitment difficulties prompted some useful suggestions, for example whether regular secondment from partner companies, to enable their potential future workforce, might gain some traction.
- e. University Centre Peterborough (UCP). It had recently emerged that the UCP would in fact be a full independent university with a Vice-Chancellor and organisation, clearly that was an area for concern and it was important to reinforce marketing immediately in preparation; the unique local heritage status could form an integral and attractive element of the programme.
- f. Office for Students (OfS). A new regulator for higher education, incorporating the functions of HEFCE, OFFA, the DfES and the Privy Council had been created on 1 April 2018; the organisation, the OfS would be fully established wef 1 August 2019. Applications to be registered with OfS were currently being prepared for submission by 25 May (concurrently the date for implementation of the GDPR); information required included full personal details of all Corporation Members over which the OfS retained validation rights to evidence as “fit and proper” persons. Members expressed disquiet over this and it was agreed as urgent to determine “how, what, and for how long” in relation to the arrangement. **(Action 3)**

Louise Perry joined the meeting.

- g. The Dashboard was almost complete and the data was considered and discussed. Enrolments continued with strong 19+ numbers and a consequent positive implication for 2018/19 funding. Attendance was showing an increase of 0.4% over the previous year. Disappointing HR numbers evidenced the challenges in recruitment of construction lecturers.

h. Strategic Plan. There had not been an opportunity to consider the Strategic Plan at the recent awayday as lively discussion on other issues took longer than expected. Management had considered the plan and had recommended no substantial changes from last year as essentially the aims and direction of NCS remained as written and all had cross college traction. This position was unanimously supported and the Plan would be finalised for final consideration in July. **(Action 4)**

a. **The information was received.**

b. **Actions had been identified.** (See Table 65/17 below.)

59/17 CURRICULUM AND QUALITY

a. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Progress with implementation of the QIP had been considered by the Quality and Standards Committee (CQS) and was explained informed by a comprehensive report and a RAG rated table; the College had self-assessed as “Good” in November 2017. Progress was discussed, additions since the last consideration were highlighted in blue; all actions continued and no difficulties in satisfactory completion were foreseen. However, response rates to the request for apprentice employer feed back had been poor (13/300) and personal visits by staff to the defaulters to gain answers to the 5 questions were in progress.

b. National Achievement Rate Tables (NART). The NART had been scrutinised by the CQS, members were reminded that the parameters did not include a “Value Added (VA)” element; the data essentially compared NCS performance (retention/pass rates/achievement rates) against the national average (NA) and other providers, 6 appendices contained focused information. There were some areas that did not directly compare, for example NCS focus on Functional Skills (FS) in preference to GCSE for some students. However, in response to a challenge it was agreed that the numbers were not sufficiently robust and would prompt additional attention in several areas. Several points were raised in the GCSE v FS debate and the impact on the Quality Assessment Report (QAR), which was a key element of Ofsted’s risk assessment process. Primacy of learners’ interests over data tables was strongly re-affirmed, but to satisfy both objectives would be ideal. Close study into possible alternative ways to address teaching of GCSE for learners that would normally take the FS route would be scrutinised and thoroughly evaluated, the outcome of that process would be considered by the CQS for comment to the Corporation. **(Action 5)** The Association of Colleges (AoC) summary data tables were considered and NCS emerged as a “Grade 2”.

c. Predicted Outcomes. Predicted outcomes were valuable to maximise achievement and indicate need for intervention and extra guidance, the data also informed on effectiveness of T&L. The total Education and Training (E&T) outturn was 86.84% (2016/17 84.1%) and for Apprenticeships, the numbers were estimated as:

(i) worst case, overall 72.2%, timely 61.6%;

(ii) best case, overall 89.2%, timely 75.1%;

(iii) National Average (NA) overall 67.7%, timely 59.4%;

(iv) 2016/17 results overall 63.3%, timely 50.5%.

Members took comfort from the improved achievement but noted inconsistencies across areas and the consequent continuing strong support for those at risk.

The information was received.

60/17 FINANCE REPORT

a. Management Accounts. The comprehensive management accounts accurate to 30 April 2018 (Month 9) had been carefully considered and discussed by the FRC. The overall end of year variance was c£33k against budget with income by c£188k with all variances clearly tabulated, expenditure was adverse c(£232k); again with all variances clearly tabulated in the detailed Summary of Financial Performance (Key Performance Measures). The additional Adult Skills (now Education) Budget (AEB) funding of £350k was welcomed. The

balance sheet remained positive with a strong cash balance. Identified Risks and Opportunities were discussed and all Bank Covenants were noted as in-scope.

- b. Learner Numbers and Funding Reports. The comprehensive Learner Number/Funding comprised tabulated data for each funding stream and apprenticeship targets for the current year and had also been carefully considered by the FRC. Apprenticeships were likely to be over-delivered, although it was unclear whether any additional ESFA funding would be available. The positive effect on 2018/19 was recognised.
- c. Risk Register. The RAG rated table of 13 Red Risks was considered; the table was noted.

The information was received and noted.

61/17 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The 8% increase in apprenticeship starts at the end of period 8 was welcomed. The concentrated work with Levy paying employers was now returning results, with new employer partners (all listed in the paper) now providing apprentices, and work with sub-contractors also widened to include Inspire+ (PE) and Lagat Training (IT) with the strong possibility of more partners in the near future. The unique selling point (USP), which would continue to make a significant contribution, was the close attention to personal contact and individual development; members took comfort from the performance. Associated areas were fully detailed in the paper, they were noted as all positive and the widening contact and networking was welcomed. The RAG rated Apprenticeships Action Plan was scrutinised and the absence of any red ratings was noted and welcomed. Questions on individual elements were taken and dealt with satisfactorily.

The information was received and noted.

62/17 GOVERNANCE

- a. Scheme of Delegation (SoD). The SoD was circulated to remind members of responsibilities.
- b. Appointments.
 - (i) Anne Earle. Anne Earle had been recommended for appointment (Chair's Action, which was approved) and she was appointed w/e for a period of 4 years. **(Action 6)**
 - (ii) Jonathan Teesdale. Jonathan Teesdale had met with the Chair and Principal and was enthusiastic about becoming a Corporation member. His application would be considered by the SG Committee at their next meeting on 4 July.
 - (iii) AC. The appointment of Louise Perry as the VPFR w/e 1 August and her consequent resignation from the Corporation meant that the AC did not have a Chair, Martin Ballard agreed to act as Chair for the next meeting. **(Action 7)**
- c. Forthcoming events of interest to Members were tabulated and noted.

a. The information was received.

b. Actions had been identified. (See Table 65/17 below.)

63/17 URGENT BUSINESS

- a. There had been no Urgent Business requested.
- b. Chairs Comments. The Chair thanked all involved in the successful Development Day at the William Cecil Hotel on 12 May, the electronic presentations would be circulated to all members. **(Action 8)**

64/17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be at 1730 on 4 July 2018.

65/17 ACTION TABLE

For full information see referenced minute.		resp	date
Action 1	57/17a. Last meeting Minutes (21.03.18) confirmed for signature.	Clerk	asap
Action 2	58/17a. NCS representative to attend selected MCA meetings.	JM	

Action 3	58/17f. Further detail to be sought from OfS re Members' data.		
Action 4	58/17h. Strategic Plan to the next Corporation meeting.	Clerk	04.07.18
Action 5	59/17b. Approach to GCSE v FS provision to be scrutinised by CQS.	RN	asap
Action 6	62/17b. Anne Earle appointed to Corporation for 4 years.	Clerk	wie
Action 7	62/17b. Martin Ballard to Chair next AC meeting.	Clerk	wie
Action 8	63/17b. Development Day presentations to be circulated.	JM	asap

Ralph Devereux (Clerk) for Allison Sunley (Chair)

Ralph Devereux (Clerk) for Allison Sunley (Chair) (Jul 10, 2018)



NCS Corporation minutes 16.05.18

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10/07/2018

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