



**WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD**

Minutes of the Board meeting held in the Board Room at the Derby Road site on Thursday 12th March 2015 at 5.00pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Ian Baggaley
Chris Bodger (until 6pm)
Nevil Croston
John Holford
Dame Asha Khemka
Beverley Nita
David Overton
John Robinson
Colin Sawers
Chris Winterton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal
Andrew Martin, Deputy Principal
Sacha McCarthy, Director of Employer Engagement
Andrew King, Director of Strategy and Innovation
Louise Knott, Director of Communications Marketing & Learner Engagement
Tracey Thompson, Director of HR
Gavin Peak, Director of IT
Elaine Martin, Director of Quality and Performance

	ACTION by whom	DATE by when
<p>16.01 <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></p> <p>The Chair reminded those present to declare at the start of the meeting any interests in items to be considered. No interests were declared.</p>		
<p>16.02 <u>WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Kate Allsop, Tim Clarke, Terry Dean, Malcolm Hall, Diana Meale, Hari Punchihewa, Theresa Upton and Matthew Robinson.</p>		
<p>16.03 <u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH FEBRUARY 2015</u></p> <p>The minutes were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.</p> <p>AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2015. These were signed by the Chair.</p>	Chair	12.03.15

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

As a matter arising the Board requested a list of groups that the College is associated with. This arose following a reference at page 12 of the minutes that the College had withdrawn from its relationship with the 157 group. It was agreed that the Principal would email out details at the earliest opportunity.

Principal

March
2015

16.04 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

Members reviewed the action progress table at page 1 and agreed that matters were progressing as required.

16.05 MIDYEAR REVIEW OF COLLEGE STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE

The Principal introduced this item and provided a presentation to the Board. Key items noted:

1) The national context

- The sector is in a worrying position with some significant challenges ahead. SFA has reduced the adult skills budget by 24%. Whilst there are some areas of protection within this e.g. apprenticeships, the impact on a number of Colleges will be significant. The level of impact will vary depending upon the level of priority work/provision delivered.
- In 2013/14 more than 50% of Colleges were classed as 'inadequate' in financial terms. There is expected to be approximately another 30 Colleges that the SFA will review following reclassification of financial status. This impact will be seen in 15/16.
- EFA have confirmed that they will not be changing the funding rules in relation to rates and methodology but there will be a 2% reduction overall because of reducing numbers and the end of the transition protection period.
- General election
- Apprenticeship funding reform
- Qualification reform – this will include GCSE's, A-Levels and Technical Advanced qualifications. At every level maths and English is a focus.
- The prognosis for the sector is continued challenge with increasing costs in relation to national insurance and pension. A number of Colleges will really have to think very hard about how they will survive.
- New inspection framework – in 2014 Ofsted provided 66% of Colleges with a grade 3 or 4. This will challenge the sector as these Colleges will be revisited every year and it is very hard to make an impact within this time frame.
- Colleges within Nottinghamshire are experiencing difficulties with the FE Commissioner visiting New College Nottingham because of their severe financial position. In addition to this, quality is an issue at Bilborough College with a grade 3 at inspection provided.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

The Principal indicated that within this context she was pleased to advise that West Nottinghamshire College was heading in the right direction and aiming to regain its outstanding status. Although 13/14 was a weak financial year the team are turning things around. The SFA have agreed with the College's own financial health assessment of 'satisfactory'. Moving forward the College is in a solid, strong position.

In terms of the likely impact of a general election and a change in government it was explained that there is not much differentiation regarding the policies being publicised at the moment. There are key consistencies in relation to; a) apprenticeships, b) maths and English & c) young people.

Apprenticeship frameworks are changing and the shape of funding to employers is different than originally envisaged. The Government has had to accept that SMEs simply do not have the capacity to access funding directly and take on additional responsibilities.

The Principal confirmed that a new inspection framework will be in place from September 2015. The College needs to be 'inspection ready' as it has been 3 years since the last inspection. She explained that there were a number of Ofsted themes to focus on:

- Study programmes, key areas are maths and English. This needs to be embedded within vocational elements of all courses.
- Marking, has to be correct and proper feedback given to students.
- Work experience, this must be planned, structured, external and relevant.
- Tutorials. Academic focus of tutorials needs to be individualised with clear target setting, monitoring and tracking.
- A key Ofsted theme is: their view that study programmes are not effective and are a weakness in the sector. What they are looking to test is consistency. The second element to tutorials is qualification and destinations. Students must be given clear advice and guidance and proper recording mechanisms in place to identify destinations. Students are also expected to undertake volunteering activities.

Q The Board questioned whether it was possible to separate out the students who need focused maths and English support. It was confirmed that this could be done and offered through traineeships, however the challenge would be in attracting students to study at College for what are their least favourite subjects and which they have already tried several times and failed to pass at school. The Principal indicated that at the current time she is also of the belief that the College does not have enough qualified and trained staff to teach maths and English. It was noted that the College is starting to offer traineeships at Ashfield Centre.

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Q In terms of the maths and English challenges Governors questioned whether West Notts is a 'typical' College. The Principal confirmed that the College is the 17th largest in the country. In terms of a typical spread of provision it was confirmed that West Notts College is fairly typical and therefore it would be reasonable and realistic to apply the national averages. That being said, the 16-18 cohort enrolled at College are less likely to have achieved a C or above at GCSE in maths and English when compared with the national average. In addition to this there are also a greater proportion of students from areas of deprivation than the national average.

In terms of the next inspection, Ofsted will look at the overall impact and success rates are just one measure to be assessed.

Q The Board asked the question that, if the College is not to be inspected for another 12 month period, then how can the Board and Senior Managers predict what might change. The Principal confirmed that she was in regular contact with inspectors and has ongoing dialogue regarding changes to Ofsted focus.

(Chris Bodger left the meeting at 6pm)

2) Our journey to outstanding

- Key Ofsted themes are;
 - a) Study programmes – Governors were reminded that these were created to address the issue of employability skills
 - b) English and maths
 - c) Outcomes and destinations
 - d) Teaching and learning (basics) – the Principal explained that there were still some inconsistencies seen in lessons. Teachers have to be able to engage every student in every lesson and must also be able to appropriately demonstrate stretch and challenge. She confirmed that she and the team were working very hard to move teaching in the right direction but that during inspection week it will all be about what Inspectors see.
- Classroom based learning. Qualification success rates for 2013/14 overall. 2013/14 was 87.5% when compared with a national figure of 84.7%. It was explained that nationally in 13/14 all percentages went down because of the negative impact of including functional skills and maths and English in the success rate calculation. Governors indicated that in future reports they would like to see the national average for each year so that they could assess the trends. It was explained that the College was in line with the national average for 11/12 and 12/13 and 13/14 was a positive 3% increase when compared to the national position.

CH

Dir Q&P

Each
Quality
Report

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Date:

- Classroom based learning – qualification success rates for 2013/14 timely. 13/14 was 86.1% when compared to a national figure of 83.5%. This is 3% above the national average so a similar trend to the overall position.
- Apprenticeship qualification success rates for 13/14 overall – 13/14 position was 75.9% when compared with a national position of 68.9%. All agreed that this was a very pleasing result albeit that it was noted that the national average had gone down.
- Apprenticeship qualification success rates for 13/14 overall timely – 13/14 was 62.2% when compared with a national figure of 54.7%. It was noted that there was a significant dip in 12/13 and assurance was given that a lot of hard work has taken place to ensure an improved position.
- NVQ's qualification success rates for 13/14 – College position for 13/14 was 96.7% when compared with a national of 84.5%, some 12.2% above the national average. All agreed that this was a very good story.
- NVQ's qualification success rates for 13/14 timely. College 13/14 position was 83.9% when compared with a national of 79.6%. Again the College is above national average although it was noted that there was a marginal dip when compared with the 12/13 results.

Members were advised that the data tables are produced by the SFA and as a consequence they will have a very clear idea of where the College is performing well and conversely where the College faces challenges.

- Retention – for 16-18 and adults there is a slight increase when compared to the prior year position. In relation to HE there is a reduction. Members reviewed the data table and acknowledged that there was not a significant difference in relation to where the College was at this point in the prior year. When discussing overall timely statistics it was acknowledged that there is a concern both for College and partner delivery. It was explained that generally partner delivery is better than College because partners are motivated by cash. The Principal confirmed that the senior team were reviewing how College delivery is provided to improve practices and motivation.

Q

The Board questioned whether staff openly discussed statistics like retention, success etc. It was confirmed that they do and that live data is available on Staffnet. In addition to this, staff receive feedback from mock inspections. The Principal indicated that to date the mock inspection results were worrying and performance was just not good enough. The inspection teams are focusing on areas for improvement as what happens in the classroom is key at inspection. The Board were advised that within Employer Engagement two separate inspections have taken place. All College staff have been observed but partners are still to be inspected.

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The Principal indicated that it was critical to get to 80% good or better in terms of the observation profile and that improvements were needed in all areas. The Board agreed that the number of grade 4's is a concern and has to be addressed. The Principal explained that it was a case of getting the basics right.

Members' attention was drawn to the top five performers subjects (SSAs) in 13/14. This was compared with the worst performing subjects. As a general point the Principal indicated that the issue is College delivery and not partners. It was noted that in some cases the College is actually above the national average performance statistic even though the areas fall within the worst performing subjects. Members also reviewed the top and worst 5 performing apprenticeship and NVQ subjects. Assurance was given that the senior team examine the statistics in detail to better understand where the issues are and how to address. In relation to the worst 5 performing apprenticeship subjects it was noted that they are all below the national average.

CH

Members reviewed the data table regarding mock inspection outcomes. All agreed that the percentages hovering between 50%-60% percent were simply not good enough. C&BS and E&TS are a positive position with above 80% good or better. Key themes following mock inspections are:

- a) Strengths
 - Personal and academic support for students
 - High quality resources and facilities (this demonstrates the £40 million investment made)
 - Development of employability skills and industry links
 - Learner voice
 - Ashfield provision

- b) Key weaknesses
 - Embedding English and Maths
 - Individualised target setting
 - Work placements
 - Good or better teaching and learning
 - Promotion of equality and diversity.

In relation to this latter point the Principal indicated that the result was a surprise and a disappointment. What appears to be the case is that the College is good at promoting E&D through set pieces but staff are not taking enough advantage of naturally occurring circumstances to incorporate within teaching.

In summary and to conclude the presentation regarding College quality/performance the Principal provided assurance that she and the senior team know the areas to focus on and that efforts will be directed to these areas to ensure that the College is 'inspection ready'.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

16.06 FINANCES – BALANCING THE BUDGET

Members attention was drawn to the full year reforecast for 2014/15. Income is expected to be £60.217 million. By comparison income in 13/14 was £57 million. A surplus is forecast of £1.453 million, this should be compared with the £4.9 million deficit outturn for 13/14. The Director of Finance explained that £1.2 million surplus was forecast within the original budget, therefore the College is now anticipating an improved position. It was acknowledged by all that the College had seen a fundamental shift in its financial position following the decisions taken in May 2014 in relation to VWS. The College has now got stability back.

Likely impact in 2015/16 (on a worse case basis):

- 25% funding cuts to non-apprenticeship adult provision. Protected areas are apprenticeships, traineeships and English & maths.
- £2 million income reduction in adult funding (£570k impact)
- £142k reduction in 16-18 income (£142k impact)
- TPS pension costs increase (£238k impact)
- ERNI changes in April 2016 (£105k impact)
- Overall £1,056k impact

The Principal indicated that tomorrow the team have a leadership conference to discuss changes and options required. Predominantly this will mean doing business differently rather than solely based on redundancies. The College will need to find cost savings as the opportunities for growth in terms of income are very limited. It was acknowledged that partners provide both flexibility and contribute positively to the quality statistics.

16.07 SUBSIDIARY PERFORMANCE

a) BKSB

- Another record year for BKSB with £2.6 million of sales and an operating profit of £1.2 million
- A step change in year moving to a new more resilient delivery platform
- Consistent interest in the product and support for English and Maths solutions
- New office in India with great potential

b) Vision Apprentices

- Maintained strong local employer relationships
- Behind on income target but with robust plans to improve
- Created 201 new apprenticeship jobs in the year to date

c) Vision Studio School

- The positives are a good learning environment. Positive impact on young people and positive feedback from students. Challenges are:

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Date:

- delayed start to work placements.
- Outcomes for students.
- Employer engagement and recruitment for 2015.

The Principal explained that there are some issues to address in relation to the Studio School and of concern at the minute is recruitment for September. It was explained that for year 12 there are 30 applications to date, for year 10 there are 23 with the possibility of another 11. In relation to year 10 it was explained that the PAN is 75. It was explained that the year 10 recruitment window is now, so the figures are worrying. The year 12 position is not so much of a concern as there is time to make up the short fall. It was confirmed that the Studio School met its PAN of 125 in 13/14 but it is the recruitment for the second year of operation that is proving more challenging. Assurance was given that extra resources have been committed in this area.

Members reviewed the financial update provided and the reforecast position for both the College and the subsidiary companies. They were happy to approve the midyear reforecast presented.

AGREED: to approve the 2014/15 midyear reforecast.

In relation to BKSb the Principal confirmed that there had been recent positive communication regarding the Skills Conference. She confirmed that her PA will email out a link to this communication. The Board took the opportunity to discuss the contribution that BKSb makes to the Colleges overall financial position. It was acknowledged that if the College did not have BKSb within the group then the financial position would be much weaker. It was acknowledged that BKSb is a fundamental part of the group. Governors indicated that they would find it useful to have one College Board meeting held at the BKSb centre so that they could see the product in operation. They felt that it would be useful for the Managing Director to provide a demonstration/presentation. The Clerk confirmed that she would make the appropriate arrangements.

Clerk 2015

16.08 **PROPERTY STRATEGY**

Members' attention was drawn to the progress made in terms of all of the aspects of the property strategy. In relation to the 6 story tower it was confirmed that 2014/15 has been the first winter where the College has not received one single complaint from students regarding the windows and the classroom temperatures. Whilst the building has significantly changed outside Governors questioned whether it has changed inside. In relation to the 6 story tower it was confirmed that some parts have been changed and that the College has addressed issues such as health and safety and insulation. All acknowledged that it was now an inspirational building.

CH

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Date:

In relation to the other elements of the projects e.g. Visual Arts, the Engineering and Innovation Centre it was confirmed that all of the facilities are substantially different inside as well as out.

Members attention was drawn to the timescale proposed for the University Centre. It was noted that this is the only College type project which is being progressed as part of LEP funding. The planning application has been sent and to date local school feedback is very positive and supportive. It was confirmed that development of the University Centre would be brought back to the Board at the June residential where things would be revisited.

Dir CP&E

June 2015

The Principal explained that the College is working well to respond to local priorities both regional, national and local which include:

- a) Increasing apprenticeship and traineeship delivery
- b) Increasing delivery to key D2N2 growth sectors and key local employment sectors
- c) New University Centre will increase STEM capacity and delivery of leadership and management.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

16.09 PEOPLE STRATEGY

The Director of HR provided a presentation to the Board and confirmed that this had been reviewed in detail by the Finance, Resources and Estates Committee at its recent meeting. Members' attention was drawn to College strengths, it was explained that the apprenticeship cohort is very important to succession planning as are interns. In terms of challenges it is clear that the College has to develop its own talent pool, this will be progressed over a number of years. It was explained that the College is planning to undertake a staff survey on a formal basis.

Priorities for the future are:

- Provide a talent pool for the next generation
- Equip leaders to inspire and motivate their teams and provide meaningful feedback to drive up standards
- Support managers to appropriately manage and resolve performance issues of capability and absence
- Meet the future funding challenges to better equip staff and managers to cope with change
- Be an outstanding employer

Members were reminded that a full copy of the strategy is available on the portal. Governors questioned how the suggestion box system works. It was confirmed that there is a suggestion box accessible via Staffnet. This is used in addition to feedback opportunities from Employee Council and the union representatives.

Q

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

CH One comment made by the Board was that from the presentation they didn't really get a sense of how the workforce will need to change in the future. It was explained that key skill changes identified within the strategy are:

- Use of IT
- English and maths
- Quality of teaching and learning
- More blended learning delivery
- Resilience of staff.

The Board were happy to approve the People Strategy in principle but did request additional time to provide feedback comments. It was agreed that a copy of the full People Strategy would be emailed out to Governors with any comments back to Director of HR within 14 days.

Governors

March
2015

AGREED:

- a) to note the update provided,
- b) approve the People Strategy 2015-2018.

Q

Governors questioned whether the need for financial savings would have an impact upon the strategy. The Principal explained that how the College adapts to forthcoming challenges is what is important. Resilience from the workforce is required. At every stage the College will carry out consultation as appropriate and then move forward. It was accepted that pensions are a significant challenge for the public sector generally with significant increases in employer costs expected. The College will review options and potential models to see if it can be more creative in relation to its way of rewarding staff. All acknowledged that cost pressures were all upward.

16.10 **MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29TH JANUARY 2015**

AGREED: to note the content of the minutes.

16.11 **MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2015**

Members were advised that the Audit Committee are looking to go out to tender for both internal and external audit services. It is expected that a report following the outcome of the tender process would be provided at the April Board meeting.

AGREED: to note the content of the minutes.

16.12 **MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, RESOURCES AND ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24TH FEBRUARY 2015**

The Clerk drew members' attention to the recommendation from this Committee to approve amended Terms of Reference.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

The Board were satisfied that the amendments proposed were appropriate and reflected the changing circumstances of the College.

AGREED:

- a) to note the content of the minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2015,
- b) approve amended Finance, Resources and Estates Committee Terms of Reference as presented.

16.13 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

16.14 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting is Thursday 23rd April 2015 at 5.00pm

16.15 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded separately. Staff Governors remained for the confidential discussions.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date: