



**WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE  
CORPORATION BOARD**

**Minutes of the Board meeting held in the Board Room at the Derby Road site on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2015 at 5.00 pm**

**GOVERNORS** Ian Baggaley  
**PRESENT:** Tim Clarke  
 Nevil Croston (Chair)  
 Terry Dean  
 John Holford  
 Dame Asha Khemka OBE DBE  
 Diana Meale (until 6.00 pm)  
 Beverly Nita  
 Hari Punchihewa  
 Colin Sawyers  
 Matthew Robinson

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation  
 Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal  
 Andrew Martin, Deputy Principal  
 Sacha McCarthy, Director Business Development and Employer Engagement  
 Andrew King, Director Strategy and Innovation  
 Louise Knott, Director Communications, Marketing and Learner Engagement  
 Tracy Thompson, Director of Human Resources  
 Brian Malyan (for the presentation item)  
 Elaine Martin, Director Quality and Performance

**15.01 ENGINEERING AND TRANSPORT SKILLS PRESENTATION**

Brian Malyan attended the meeting and provided an update in relation to his area of provision. Key information brought to members attention included:

- 1) Areas and Staffing
  - Engineering level 2 to level 3 – 101 learners and 11.4 staff;
  - Fabrication and Welding level 1 to level 3 – 43 learners and 2 members of staff;
  - Motor Vehicle level E3 to level 3 – 215 learners and 11.4 staff it was explained that these 3 areas were full time provision;
  - HE Engineering level 4/5 – 67 learners;
  - Apprentices (day release/block) level 2 to level 3 - 175 students;
  - Studio School level 2 to level 3 – 35 students;
  - Total students 636.

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

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It was explained that the latter 3 were part time courses.

- 2) Recruitment and Growth (full time only) – members’ attention was drawn to the summary table which shows a good growth in numbers over the last 4 years. It was explained that the department has capacity for more and that 600 students per week access the centre. It was explained that one of the reasons for moving into the new premises was to give the department increased capacity.
- 3) Income and Contributions – it was confirmed that the contribution from the school has increased in percentage terms over the last 3 years. It was explained that surpluses have also increased once the apprenticeships are taken out of the data tables.
- 4) Area Success
  - Members’ attention was drawn to the success data tables for Engineering and Welding, it was explained that these are the schools long courses and are consistently above the national figures.
  - Motor Vehicle – in 13/14 the school was above national rates in relation to all courses.
- 5) Teaching, Learning and Assessment Grade Profile – internally for 14/15 the judgements were 100% good or better. At mock inspection the external view was 81% good or better. It was explained that at the mock the inspectors looked at 3 areas:
  - a) Outcomes for learners
  - b) Teaching, learning and assessment
  - c) Leadership and management.

Overall a grade 2 was awarded

1. Strengths

- For classroom based Engineering programme, success and retention rates are generally very high. High proportions of learners achieve their learning goals and gain qualifications.
- For classroom based Motor Vehicle learners, success and retention rates are high and in some cases very high.
- Skills development is good and learners are gaining confidence as they progress on to higher level programmes. All acknowledged that this was a critical achievement.
- At the Ashfield site they are fully prepared for progression onto programmes at the Oddicroft Lane site.
- Learners with barriers to learning are supported well.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good which is reflected in the high proportion of learners who are successful in completing their goals and achieving their qualifications.
- Tutors are knowledgeable, experienced and have high

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expectations for their learners.

- Workshop sessions are well planned and managed and learners receive good support and guidance.
- Tutors clearly assess the standard of performance of each piece of work and also provide detailed information on how work can be improved to a higher standard.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally thoroughly checked and corrected.

## 2. Developmental areas

- For those learners undertaking Functional Skills in English and Maths from entry level 3 to level 2 success rates, although in some cases around the national rate, require improvement. It was explained that this relates to fulltime learners who have not obtained a grade C at GCSE.
- The promotion and reinforcement of Equality and Diversity taught sessions is insufficient.

6) Employability – this is developed in a number of ways with visits, speakers and work placements. Members were advised of the visits and speakers who have attended to date, also summarised were the work placement opportunities.

7) Accommodation – in 2014 the College closed down Sovereign Way (Engineering) and Acorn Way (Motor Vehicle), this is accommodation that the College had used for over 10 years. In September 2014 the Engineering Innovation Centre opened for students at Oddicroft Lane, this is in tandem with Motor Vehicle provision that remains at Ashfield College.

To conclude the presentation members reviewed a clip from the East Midlands Today programme which showed a very positive environment and opportunities for learners in this area.

Brian Malyan left the meeting at 5.20 pm.

### **15.02 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the start of the meeting any interests in items to be considered. No interests were declared.

### **15.03 WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Allsop, Chris Bodger, Malcolm Hall, David Overton, John Robinson, Chris Winterton and Theresa Upton.

### **15.04 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015**

The minutes were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.

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AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015. These were signed by the Chair.

Chair

23.04.15

In terms of a matter arising Governors questioned whether a report would be provided in relation to the leadership conference which took place in March. The Principal confirmed that this would be covered as part of her report later in the meeting.

#### **15.05 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

Members reviewed the action progress table and were satisfied that matters were progressing as requested.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### **15.06 KPI UPDATE**

The Director of Strategy and Innovation introduced this item and drew members' attention to the data dashboard. He explained that it was similar in terms of format to that used at BKS. He explained that he and the team are always looking for ways to improve and in the future it is his intention to incorporate detail of the position when compared with national averages.

Key matters brought to members attention:

- Learner numbers – there continues to be steady growth in learner numbers, taking the College above the total learners from 11/12 but still short of the total learners of the last 2 years, this is in line with expectations.
- 16-18 learner numbers – the number of 16-18 learners has remained fairly constant but below the Colleges original target of 3,054. The focus has been on making sure these learners are retained and achieve. The comparison with previous years shows that the number of 16-18 learners has reduced slightly which is consistent with local demographics.
- Total apprenticeships – the total number of apprenticeships continues to increase in line with the pattern of previous years, the College would expect this recruitment to continue through to the end of the year in line with the trends for previous years.
- Success rates – the success rates have not changed from the previous KPI report – although the College have focused on the key measures of overall classroom based learning (CBL), apprenticeship timely success and work place learning (WPL) timely success. All 3 measures are above national averages for 12/13, although overall classroom based has fallen slightly from 12/13 to 13/14.
- Customer satisfaction – the customer satisfaction data has not changed since the previous report as there have been no further surveys undertaken.

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The process of surveying work place learning for 14/15 has changed and the College currently does not have sufficient survey returns to provide any results. He explained that the target for all areas was 95% satisfaction. The Board took the opportunity to question how the process of surveying work place learning has changed. The Director of Strategy and Innovation explained that the College has tried more of an online approach but unfortunately did not get the numbers/responses required. What the College wants to do is make sure that it collects information regularly rather than just at one off points in time. The plan is to enable assessors to ask the questions of learners whenever they are with them and the College is in the progress of developing IT to support this. It was explained that this will be in addition to the two paper based surveys undertaken throughout the year.

- Lesson observations – in previous reports the College has had limited numbers of graded observations to report on. They have increased significantly and there are now 160 graded observations. For College based, 78% of which are good or better which is below the target of 85%. 70 graded observations have been undertaken of partners and 69% are good or better, this is an improvement on previous reports but still below the target of 75%. The Board questioned whether there was any particular reason that the lesson observations profile has declined. It was explained that some staff have been given grade 3s and 4s and assurance was given that improvement support is now in place.

Q

Q

The Governors questioned whether there was any chance of hitting the targets set given the point in time. The Director of Strategy and Innovation indicated that for on campus delivery it is unlikely that the target will be achieved as almost all members of staff have now had their observations.

- Learner destinations – this is the first time that the dashboard has included information on destinations within the report. The team have included destinations collected within the last 3 years as well as destinations collected in 14/15. These destinations relate to learners undertaking courses in College rather than apprenticeships or work place learning. Learners are now surveyed directly after a period of 4 months when they finish the course in order to capture their actual destination. This has taken longer to capture and there are still a significant number of unknowns that are being pursued. The team have shown destination by level as there is the expectation that there will be much higher levels of progression to employment and HE at higher levels.
- Financial measures – the in-year operating surplus position continues to improve and is in stark contrast to the position at the end of 13/14.

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<sup>1</sup> The Board: Q – questioned/CH - challenged

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- HR measures – the absence rate has increased slightly compared to previous reports and at 3.5% it is slightly above target of 3.4%.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### **15.07 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principal introduced this item and drew members' attention to her written report which all acknowledged was self-explanatory. In terms of the budget for next year she explained that one of the challenges relates to the fact that the ASB budget has reduced nationally by 24%. Within this there is priority provision which is protected and as a consequence non-priority provision is impacted at a higher percentage. She explained that for West Nottinghamshire College the overall impact was a reduction of 8% and the consequence is that the College will have to deliver the same activity with an income reduction of circa £1 million. She explained that the College was not looking at restructure to address this shortfall but instead was looking at how to do things differently.

**Q** The Board asked what the impact would be on adult education. The Principal explained that there would be lower activity in relation to non-protected provision with partners. These are mostly outside of the local area. The intention is to protect the local area and also what the College offers on campus. The reduction is likely to impact on approximately 1200 learners, all who study at differing number of hours. Most will be on employability courses as this is not a priority area for the government. The Principal explained that it was her intention to look at other partners for example the LEP and ESF to try and access funding to support these groups who are affected and who will predominantly be the unemployed and youth. She also explained that there was a lot of scope with 24+ loans to investigate yet. The College has capacity for £2.5 million plus but has hardly used any of this to date. Part and parcel of future developments will be a strategy to promote funding alternatives for adult education.

One other matter discussed was the fact that the College had hosted a fantastic event on Monday evening with 400 attendees accessing the College site and having an opportunity to see the fabulous facilities.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### **15.08 HR 6 MONTH UPDATE**

The Director of HR introduced this item and key matters brought to members attention were:

- In year turnover has increased slightly and is now 24.7% of the workforce and 10.9% of resignations although it continues to stabilise. She provided assurance that the team continue to monitor turnover and reasons for leaving closely.

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Members' attention was drawn to page 22 which sets out the turnover statistics in more detail. In terms of performance management it was confirmed that the College has had three dismissals for the year to date.

- Absence levels have continued to stabilise around those for 13/14.
- Whilst absence levels are 0.3% less than they were in February 2014 they are just over (0.1%) the 3.4% figure for 14/15. She provided assurance that the College is maintaining its good practice in this area in terms of managing health and wellbeing and continuing to review what can be developed. She confirmed that the team are also discussing changes to the absence management procedure with the recognised trade unions.
- Appraisal completion rates for permanent staff at 80% is below the total completion rate expected. The new HR system will be utilised for capturing appraisals next academic year which will enable the team to have a more accurate picture of appraisal completion. She acknowledged that this is an area where she and the team constantly want and need to improve.
- Workforce planning meetings are currently taking place with Heads of Service and Schools in which the HR indicators are a main focus.

**Q** In reviewing the report Governors asked for further information regarding the highest causes of long term absence as detailed on page 23. They were concerned that mental health was such a significant contributor to absence and questioned whether this included work place stress as well as other matters. The HR Director confirmed that the statistics did include work place stress but that was only one part of the reasons for absence. She explained that the Colleges position matches the national position and whilst still the highest reason for absence she gave assurance that the figure has reduced. She explained that the College has improved its process and procedures in relation to support for individuals with mental health issues and she is confident that the College is keeping people at work through support and interventions. She confirmed that there is a raised level of awareness of mental health issues for all staff.

**Q** The Board asked for further information regarding facilities that staff can access in relation to occupational health. The Director of HR explained that the College holds a contract with a local GP practice who have an occupational health service. They support the College in a number of areas including pre-employment medical checks, return to work discussions, absence tracking, counselling services etc.

The Director of HR provided assurance that the College is a very supportive employer and indeed the team have been considering applying for a best practice award.

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**Q** The Board questioned whether the College does have people in work who have mental health issues. The Director of HR was unable to quantify this but it was acknowledged that as national statistics show that one in four people have some mental health issues that it is highly likely to be the case that staff in employment do have issues that they are working through. The Director of HR confirmed that she and the team have a very good working relationship with the counselling service, albeit that this has to sit within the context of confidentiality on each and every occasion.

She explained that as an organisation expectations have been raised and inevitably therefore some staff will feel the pressure. She provided assurance that in these circumstances the College seeks to support as best it can.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

(Diana Meale left the meeting at 6.00pm)

## **15.09** **QUALITY REPORT**

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and drew members' attention to a number of key matters:

### 1) QAA HE Review

- The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Higher Education review is scheduled for week commencing 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015. This is very much a paper based and process driven inspection.
- The College's Self-evaluation Document (SED) was uploaded to the QAA portal by the March deadline along with approximately 100 additional documents.
- Paragraph 2.9 sets out the range of judgements that can be given. The judgements commended and meets UK expectations are considered satisfactory judgements whereas the judgements, requires improvement to meet UK expectations and does not meet UK expectations are unsatisfactory.

### 2) Success Rates 2014/15

- The predicted success rates for 14/15 are based on the current retention and the achievement rates for 13/14. As a general principle, if the College does not lose any students and they achieve as predicted then success rates should increase.
- College only classroom delivered provision in respect of 16-18 learners with 6669 starts, is predicted to be 2% higher than 13/14 College and national rate performance.

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19+ learners with 2403 starts have predicted success of 85%, being 1% lower than 13/14 performance and 3% lower than the national rate. The most significant influencing factor is 19+ level 2 provision with 925 starts and predicted success at 81% is 2% lower than the Colleges 13/14 performance and 5% below the national rate. Combined age and level performance including all functional skills with 9702 starts and predicted success of 84% is 1% higher than the Colleges 13/14 performance and 1% below the national rate.

3) Lesson Observations

- All staff receiving a grade 3 or 4 for the observation are re-observed after a period of support to improve their practice. Grades for re-observation are also included and as at 20<sup>th</sup> March 2015, 161 graded observations have been completed with a grade profile of 78% good or better. 14 staff have been re-observed and the observation profile improves to 81% good or better.

4) Mock Inspections

- During 13/14 the College engaged an external company to conduct lesson observations across a range of provision which included on-campus provision delivered by schools of learning and some work place learning.
- 9 mock inspections have been completed between November 2014 and March 2015, 7 schools of learning, employer engagement and student support. Those carrying out the mock inspections are all practising Ofsted inspectors.
- Section 5.5 sets out the grades for the mock inspections. As a general comment she indicated that some areas have performed well but that some areas were very disappointing. She confirmed that in areas where a disappointing result was seen the College has made some staff changes since the inspection. She confirmed that the mocks had been a very good professional development exercise/opportunity as a lot of staff had not had any inspection experience before.

She confirmed that the teaching, learning and assessment grade is more than just the observation and that what the College looks at is the whole package which includes feedback from student outcomes, learning walks etc.

- 5) Curriculum Review – she reminded the Board that three times in the year every curriculum area is reviewed. She gave assurance that the reviews are very detailed and are based upon identified and agreed themes.

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- 6) Quality Improvement Plan for 14/15 – the Deputy Principal confirmed that the plan was made available to the Board on the portal and was also considered in detail by the Standards Committee which met on Monday of this week.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### **15.10 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2015**

The Deputy Principal: Finance introduced this item and drew members' attention to key matters:

- The College Group performance has delivered an overall operating surplus before interest and depreciation of £2,484k (last month £2,248k). After interest and depreciation the surplus remains positive at £1,029k (last month £991k) and ahead of the forecast result of £925k.
- At the same point last year the College Group recorded an operating deficit of £3.432 million, continuing the marked swing to this year's result of over £4 million.
- Across the component parts of the Group the College's performance is below forecast with a surplus before interest and depreciation of £1,543k (last month £1,526k) against a target of £1,619k. BKSB continues to deliver strong results, with an operating surplus of £670k (forecast £693k) whilst VWS has contributed £235k for the year to date. It was explained that the VWS contribution was not expected nor included within the budget and predominantly influences the surplus seen for the year to date.
- Overall Group income of £34.458 million for the year to date is £31k better than forecast and higher than the £33.444 million recorded in 13/14.
- Overall pay costs are close to the forecast position having adjusted for the significant underspends recorded against the budget in the first half of the year. At the end of February 2015 pay costs of £15.346 million are £110k overspent and well below the £18.208 million incurred at the same point in 13/14. All acknowledged that this was a reflection of the significant turnaround in the financial results.
- BKSB had an improved month in February following a weaker report in January, following a number of specific costs falling in January.
- Vision Apprentices continues to produce a close to breakeven performance.
- The Group balance sheet has continued to build reserves as a result of the improved performance in the year to date. Cash balances as predicted have declined at the end of February 2015 to £6.359 million and will fall further at the end of March 2015 to their lowest point in the financial year.

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April will see a recovery in cash levels by around £2 million as the funding agency payment profiles increase.

- The short-term current ratio solvency indicator remains weak but is supported by sufficient liquidity. This is due to payments to acquire fixed assets, clearance of long term VWS provisions and debt repayments all of which improve short term liquidity.
- Group reserves have increased from £6.744m at the start of the financial year to £7.750m as at the end of February 2015. He reminded Governors that this was important as one of the bank loan covenants requires reserves to be £7.5 million.

In general terms he confirmed that the College continues to see an improving position. In terms of staff costs the overspends are temporary and predominantly relate to sessional staff.

Q The Board asked whether the Pearson in Practice dowry has now all been spent. The Director of Finance confirmed that the College is still holding some monies as there are still properties that have not yet been exited.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### **15.11 BUSINESS UPDATE - EMPLOYER ACTIVITY**

The Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement introduced this item and drew members' attention to her written report. Key matters noted:

- Overall success rates are significantly above national rates across all provision. Timely success rates need to be managed to improve as they are below national rates on apprenticeship and work place learning provision.
- Financial contracts for both internal delivery and partnerships have been realigned following midyear review and awarding of the virement made to the SFA which was successful.
- An additional £3.5 million ESF funding has being secured.
- Financial performance aligned to Adult Apprenticeships through partnerships is of concern, particularly as £1.2 million is still to be distributed to new partners. The virement to move £1.3 million from Adult Apprenticeships into Traineeships has been approved and aligned to partners. Additional allocations of ALR received at mid-year have been allocated.

In relation to this latter point she confirmed that Board support was required in relation to the contract variations proposed and an additional paper was circulated which highlights, by way of colour coding, all of the proposed changes. She confirmed that the contracts proposed for release are only in line with the allocations received. Assurance was given to the Board that the variations proposed were only after very careful consideration by the team.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

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She confirmed that all partners undergo a number of rigorous checks and that contracts are only allocated where there is confidence, particularly in relation to capacity. The Deputy Principal (Finance) indicated that Governors' awareness of subcontracting is becoming more important within the sector and to assist in this regard Steve Cressey has been asked to provide a presentation to the Board at the next meeting regarding the partnership process and activities.

Steve  
Cressey

May 2015

The Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement confirmed that this schedule would normally be presented to the Finance and Estates Committee for review first but that because of time constraints it has had to come direct to the Board in the first instance.

On the basis of the assurance provided by the Director of Business Development and Employer Engagement in terms of the robustness of processes in place the Board were happy to approve the contract variations as proposed.

AGREED: a) to note the update provided, b) approve the contract allocation variations proposed.

**15.12 EXCEPTION REPORT – SAFEGUARDING, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and all agreed that the contents of her report were self-explanatory.

AGREED: to note the content of the report presented.

**15.13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

As a matter of additional business the Chair took the opportunity to encourage Governors to assist in arranging the one to one meetings to enable informal feedback to be obtained in anticipation of the governance discussions at the June residential.

**15.14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting was 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015 at 5.00 pm.

(Members of staff and student Governors left the meeting at 6.20 pm)

Confidential Items – it was agreed that confidential items would be recorded separately.

Meeting closed at 6.35 pm.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date: