



Minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 13th February 2020 at 5pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Sean Lyons, Chair
 Kate Truscott
 Neil McDonald
 Jane Hawksford
 Tony Westwater
 Sophie Welbourn
 Rebecca Joyce
 Charles Heaton
 Paul Frammingham
 Andrew Cropley, Principal & CEO
 Clive Pitt
 Steve Sutton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
 Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement & Student Experience
 Jon Fearon, Finance Director
 Matt Vaughan, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
 Suzanna Smith, Director: HR & Organisational Development
 Mike Firth, ESFA Observer

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

1 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Williams, Melanie Stirland, Sardip Sandhu, Mary Mamik, Jessica Stowe, Lee Radford and Spencer Moore.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH JANUARY 2020

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an

Signed : _____ 

Chair

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accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2020.

There were no matters arising and the Chair took the opportunity to thank Kate Truscott for chairing that meeting in his absence.

4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The Board were happy to note the update provided. In relation to the Chesterfield Road site, it was confirmed that this would be discussed as part of agenda item 5 later in the meeting.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

5 **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES – PROGRESS REVIEW**

The Principal introduced this item and confirmed that this was last reviewed by the Board in November 2019, and that the document presented today gives a progress update led by members of the Executive.

Strategic objectives were broken down individually and an update provided in relation to each.

- 1) Develop, implement and fully embed the ASPIRE curriculum across all aspects of delivery

The Board were advised that progress has been made in this area and a three-pronged approach taken to ensure this is in place for next year. The intention is that the curriculum will allow for more flex and be more interactive. The current view is that the curriculum is too 'top heavy' and this needs to be addressed to ensure student engagement. What is being delivered is all about industry sector behaviours. More flex is required at level 1, with provision needing to be 'livelier'. A challenge from one member of the Board was whether this means 'dumbing down' the curriculum at level 1. It was confirmed that this is not the intention and that what needs to improve is student engagement to help them prepare for level 2. The Principal expressed the view that staff have perhaps been risk averse in the past, and what they now need to create are more hands-on activities. This is something that spills over into maths and English, which negatively impacts on attendance. What he would hope to see is all students getting out and about on work experience; currently, there is too much theory in year 1.

- 2) Increase by 10% the proportion of students meeting their target grades year on year

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He confirmed that targets have been increased as agreed at the last meeting. He advised that, in English and maths, there are some students well below their predicted/target grades, therefore there is much more to do. There remains concern regarding the integrity of some teacher progress checks being actioned. He confirmed that internal checks do take place and the college is moving towards these being more robust. There are five checkpoints in the year and, through this process, every student should know their target grades and progress.

He explained that, on the whole, the accuracy of predictions is very good, however, there are some students who do not attend for their assessments and staff give them the benefit of the doubt and maintain that they are 'on track'. This is predominantly in English and maths. It was acknowledged that this was all about changing the custom in the teams and to move away from staff reluctance to give bad news.

- 3) Increase the proportion of students progressing to level 4 or above programmes (including apprenticeships) by 10% year on year

The Principal confirmed that the college's work with NTU will really help to drive this forward.

- 4) Implement the use of OneFile consistently across all apprenticeship provision, to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction and repeat business

The Principal advised that work in this area has now become broader than just OneFile. Staff are looking at the apprenticeship lifecycle from beginning to end, and he acknowledged that OneFile is a key tool for measuring and monitoring quality. He explained that OneFile needs to be set up accurately from the very start of a learner's journey. This will give information to employers very quickly and will address some of the current employer frustrations. He confirmed that data on the system, if used properly, would give clarity to employers, and apprentices can then be tracked much more easily. He confirmed that there was some education work to do with staff to enable real understanding of the apprenticeship standards. This is a piece of development work with curriculum staff and assessors. He confirmed the intention to involve employers in this training.

A question from the Board was whether or not the better performing areas/staff are being used to support and mentor colleagues. It was explained that this is being done in some areas, however, there is a need to build capacity.

- 5) Having meaningful and successful partnerships with 25% more employers with addresses in Mansfield and Ashfield districts

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year on year

The Board were advised that the college is developing some interesting opportunities for the future; these include:

- Internships
- Employer-based academies
- Insurance (in particular apprentices who service insurers: carpenters, bricklayers etc.)
- Community-based apprenticeship academy

The Board were advised that activities are gathering traction and the reputation locally with employers seems to be improving. There are exciting opportunities to develop a curriculum in relation to automation and robotics, and the college is looking to pull together an employer focus group to progress this. It is hoped that they will help the college to build a programme from the ground up.

- 6) Increase the number of adults developing their skills at WNC by 15% year on year

The college has introduced a first in care sector. This is linked with employers with 80% progression into employment. The college is now looking to expand and replicate this in retail, hospitality and business. It was explained that programmes are in place with Qualitrain and Bombardier; these are really successful in terms of progression and this is something to develop further. The college has a really good relationship in place with Jobcentre Plus.

- 7) Deploy at least 65% of our AEB allocation to learners with addresses in D2N2 and 35% to learners with addresses in Mansfield and Ashfield district

Good progress is being made on this and, where possible, the college is replacing any under-delivery by subcontractors with directly delivered local provision.

- 8) Implement the employability framework so that 90% of 16-18 learners have met basic standards and 25% of 16-18-year-olds have met good team member standards by the academic year end

It was confirmed that work in this area is well on track and the college is about to use the processes in place for the recruitment of apprentices too. The hope is to extend to schools and NTU in the Mansfield and Ashfield area. It was confirmed that personal presentation is part of the programme, specifically aligning expectations with the profile of the employer.

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- 9) Complete with HE partners a strategic review of the HE curriculum in order to ensure that it supports our provision, with at least two new offers being agreed for introduction in September 2021.

It was confirmed that there will be two new offers in September 2020: these are nursing and computing. It was confirmed that the college is currently working on mapping progression routes.

- 10) Meet our key financial targets relating to staff cost, operating surplus, EBITDA, cash balances and bank covenants

The Finance Director confirmed that the college is broadly on track and has completed the reforecast. Confirmation of allocations is expected by the end of the month. The Finance & Estates Committee, at its last meeting, considered the EBITDA target for next year. A budget for 2021 will be presented in June 2020 to the Finance & Estates Committee and in July 2020 to the Board.

He confirmed that he and the team were currently working on the balance sheet required for the ESFA model. It is believed that the college can maintain EBITDA for the foreseeable future and the forecast allows the college to build up investment/cash. This will mean that the college can slowly build up its cap ex provision (in 18/19 this was £65k, in 19/20 £350k – the aim is to get to +£600k and beyond). However, the Finance Director indicated that the college will have to have the cash in the bank first before it is spent.

The Board questioned whether there are any capital grants available to the college: it was explained that there aren't in relation to core rolling expenditure, e.g. IT equipment. The sector has not seen funding for capital works for the last five years, however, there may be some funds available for condition improvements. It was noted that the vast majority of the college estate is in category A and B, however, there are internal areas which require more investment.

- 11) Identify a buyer for BKS B at or above the target price

It was acknowledged that this was scheduled as a separate agenda item later in the meeting.

- 12) Market and dispose of Chesterfield Road and Thoresby Street sites

It was confirmed that an offer has been received and accepted in relation to Thoresby Street. Options regarding Chesterfield Road continue to be discussed as part of curriculum developments.

The Principal confirmed that, for Thoresby Street, the college has

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received an offer that is within the acceptable range. In relation to Chesterfield Road, the college has been verbally advised that the documentation required to terminate the lease with the DfE has been signed by the Secretary of State. Local solicitors have been appointed to agree the lease surrender documentation. It was confirmed that the Chesterfield Road building is in a nice condition with good infrastructure in place following investment in it as a studio school. The college strongly believes that it will need to retain the space to use to accommodate students. In terms of costs (based on known data for the Vision Studio School), it cost £65k-£95k to run between 2016 and 2017. On the basis of this, it seems sensible to reopen the site and put some curriculum into this building. It was explained that one of the college's aspirations is to do more direct delivery with adults in Mansfield and increase direct income rather than subcontract; this then means that the college would be able to derive more income from the use of this building.

One member of the Board made the observation that it could be used to support T-Level planning. The Principal confirmed that the options analysis needs to carefully consider the net value versus the cost of replacing the classrooms in the future.

It was agreed that governors would be offered a tour of the facilities and that, in the near future, the Executive team would put forward concrete proposals for use at this site.

Principal

March
2020

13) Complete those estates works identified in the college's condition surveys

The Board were advised that the college is making good progress in relation to this.

14) By identifying existing good practice, develop a plan for using technology to enhance the learner experience, develop independent learning and equip learners for the future workplace.

This is in progress, but there is still more work to do.

15) Have it confirmed by our staff that college leaders are exemplifying and living our values

The Principal confirmed that the team were developing a 'visibility programme' for each member of the Executive. Anecdotally, he expressed the view that staff were definitely seeing a change, with more staff approaching the Executive on a day-to-day basis.

16) Achieve an Ofsted and/or self-assessment grade of good

The Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality confirmed that the aim is to

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secure continuation of a grade 2 at next inspection, and that the new EIF requires a different way of thinking.

(Paul Frammingham and Suzanna Smith joined the meeting at 5.45pm)

He explained that in the new framework the focus is on sequencing and long-term memory. Inspections are no longer a snapshot: before, judgements were made on 20- to 30-minute observations in the classroom.

One member of the Board questioned whether student performance is influenced by memory and/or research skills. It was confirmed that it is a balance and that students need to understand rather than being taught to pass. He confirmed that there was a real move away from teaching to distinction or merit criteria.

One member of the Board made the observation that little information has been provided in relation to destinations. It was agreed that, for the next meeting, the Board would receive a report setting out the process for data collection and also a summary of the data available.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

VP
Curriculum
& Quality

March
2020

6 **COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT – FINANCE & ESTATES 30TH JANUARY 2020**

The Committee Chair presented this agenda item and confirmed that he would take it as accepted that everyone had read the summary report and the full minutes of the meeting. He therefore drew the Board's attention to the recommendations; these were:

- To note the content of the report and the full minutes of the meeting.
- Note the content of the monthly Management Accounts for December 2019. He described the position as being broadly on track with a healthy position in relation to cash.
- Note the progress made in terms of the updated 3-year financial plan and delegate authority to the F&E Committee to approve a final version at their meeting on 27th February 2020. He confirmed that the Committee had been able to look at a high level reforecast and were satisfied that a prudent approach has been taken. The reforecast looks to be on track, however, there is more detail to populate before it can be signed off.
- Note the content of the ILR audit management letter. He confirmed that this has provided evidence of good work and progress.
- Approve the proposed changes to the Financial Regulations and procedures. He confirmed that there had been debate regarding the capital approval process and it was felt that, when the

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Chair

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college moves into the more fortunate position of being able to invest capital, a review of the process is required.

- Approve the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy. It was confirmed that this is based upon good practice and is fairly standard. The compliance checker on page 11 of 12 is scheduled to go to Audit Committee for review tomorrow
- Approve the Data Retention Policy. The Board was reminded that this is the second opportunity for the Committee to review and all members are now satisfied regarding the content. On this basis, the Board were happy to approve the Data Retention policy as presented.
- Approve the recommendation that the Committee Terms of Reference be slightly amended so as to provide for quorum of three rather than four. The Board were satisfied that there were appropriate reasons for doing this and were therefore happy to approve the proposal as presented.

AGREED

- A. To note the content of the update provided
- B. To note the content of the monthly Management Accounts
- C. To provide delegated authority to the committee to approve the final version of the ESFA 3-year financial reforecast model
- D. To note the content of the ILR audit outcome
- E. To approve the updated Financial Regulations
- F. To approve the Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy
- G. To approve the Data Retention Policy

7

COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT – WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE 30TH JANUARY 2020

The Vice Chair introduced this item and, as with the previous agenda item, took it as accepted that the full detail of the minutes had been read. She specifically drew the Board's attention to the areas that require Board review and monitoring and raised a concern regarding HR capacity generally. It was acknowledged that the team need to be able to prioritise and that the impact of this will be a delay in some projects. She passed on congratulations to the team for picking up the level of work required, specifically the improvement projects in place. This was described as 'a product of staff identifying what needs to change'. She advised that there were issues regarding workforce data and the ability to produce reports, and that assurance has been requested specifically in relation to publication duties. It was confirmed that there is a really good staff development day planned for 24th February and it was agreed that Governors would be invited.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

Signed : _____ 

Chair

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CHAIRS UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update and confirmed a number of matters:

- Kate Truscott will stand down from the Finance & Estates Committee and move to the Standards Committee instead. The Board were happy to support this change as proposed.
- Since the last meeting, Martin Rigley has resigned because of capacity issues, although he remains engaged in a number of projects with the college. The Chair confirmed that he would write a note of thanks on behalf of the Board.
- FE Commissioner's Annual Report for 2018/19 – the Board were happy to note the content.
- The Chairman restated the additional role that he is taking on at the NHS. He confirmed that this would not diminish his commitment to the college.
- Governors were reminded that there are a number of mandatory training requirements, and he confirmed that compliance was critically important.
- Scheduling of meetings for 2020/2021.

Chair

Feb 2020

The Clerk put forward some broad principles which were agreed; these are:

- Each month, there will be either an F&E Committee meeting or a Board meeting.
- F&E Committee to be towards the end of the month and scheduled for September, November, January, April and June.
- Board to be on the second or third week in October, December, February, March, May and July.
- Two strategy days in the year: March and June.
- Standards Committee to be every other month on a Friday afternoon in September, November, January, March, May and July (to be scheduled at the beginning of the month).
- Audit Committee to remain 'as is' with meetings in September, November (plus the joint meeting with Finance & Estates), February, April and June. Potential to dispense with the September meeting in future years if no carryover internal audit reports need to be considered.
- Remuneration Committee to be scheduled in October, March and July on the same day as the Board meeting.
- Workforce Development Committee to meet three times a year in September, January and May, and to be scheduled in the last week in each month.

The Board were supportive of the proposals and the Clerk confirmed that she would now work up actual dates.

Clerk

March
2020

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

Signed : _____ 

Chair

Date: 12/03/2020

PRINCIPALS REPORT

The detailed written report from the Principal was noted and there were a number of particular items that the Principal wished to bring to the Board's attention:

- Enrolment – he confirmed that the position in relation to continuing learners is still down when compared to the prior year. The college is narrowing the gap regarding school leavers, with the gap decreasing from 100 to 38. Historically, the college has a 90-92% conversion from acceptance and a 60-69% conversion from applications (this tends to be a lot of the A-Level provision).
- SAR 2018/19 and QIP 19/20 – he explained that it had been refreshed to reflect the new EIF and that it embodies a cultural change in terms of focusing on what matters. He specifically drew the Board's attention to the document highlighted in purple and explained that:
 - The position now is all about cause and effect.
 - It is a far more succinct document.
 - It entirely focuses on the impact for the learner.

He reminded the Board that this is a reflection of the 18/19 year and that, at next inspection, position statements will be provided for 19/20. Sitting alongside this is the QIP, which has far more data and qualitative measures.

AGREED: to approve the updated SAR for 2018/19 as presented.

It was confirmed that the QIP has been rewritten to align with the EIF and that the focus is on the five key areas requiring improvement. He described the actions as incisive. A challenge from the Board was that there appears to be a lot of amber and red RAG-rated items. It was explained that this is because there is a significant amount of improvement work still to do. There are two particular areas of provision causing concern: these are a) construction and b) maths and English. In relation to both areas, the Principal confirmed that good progress is being made in relation to recruiting strong staff, however, maths is still an area of challenge. He confirmed that there are still some areas not improving at the pace required and gave assurance that these are the focus.

In relation to apprenticeship provision, he described this as a 'mixed picture'; a real concern is in relation to construction; therefore, new starts have been put on hold. He confirmed that this was a staff capacity issue at the current time. He confirmed that, for every line of activity, the college is assessing the impact and not the actions, hence the amber or red RAG-rating if the college cannot yet see the impact evidence.

Standards | March,

Signed : _____ 

Chair

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The Board all agreed that they had found the QIP very useful and requested that it continue to be shared with all governors. It was agreed that this would be through the Standards Committee chair's report following each Standards Committee meeting.

Comm
Chair

May & July
2020

The Board asked if there were any particular staff and student views regarding the stops placed on new starts in construction apprenticeship provision. The Principal confirmed that staff are pleased to see the stops as they simply do not have enough capacity. The intention is to build in overcapacity as the college has a very strong pipeline in place and has strong relationship with employers in this area.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

10 **SAFEGUARDING, PREVENT AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY – EXCEPTIONS REPORT**

The Vice Principal introduced this item and, in relation to the information provided on students with county lines-related concerns, advised that a second learner has now withdrawn. In relation to the remaining learner, his attendance is now 30%: this is still low but is better than it was. She confirmed that the team have worked really hard to reengage him.

In terms of partner providers, she confirmed that she has now met with the Inspire and Achieve Foundation and reviewed their safeguarding process and procedures: these are compliant with current guidance. There had been an internal communications issue that had prevented safeguarding concerns from partners from finding their way into the team; this does now seem to be resolved and figures to the end of December are logged. All referrals logged from the start of this year are related to the Inspire and Achieve Foundation.

She provided an update on the Prevent regional picture and explained that there were concerns that the stats may be low. For 12-16-year-olds, there is a big spike in the schools sector; however, the number of referrals for 16+ drops off dramatically: it is likely that these often transition to criminal concerns instead.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

11 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

12 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk reminded that the next scheduled meeting was Thursday 12th

Signed : _____ 

Chair

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March 2020. The draft agenda for this meeting was noted and the Clerk invited feedback on any additions required.

(Sophie Welbourn and Jane Hawksford left the meeting at 7pm).

13

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis.

Signed : _____ 

Chair

Date: 12/03/2020