



**WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE  
CORPORATION BOARD**

**Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 5pm**

**GOVERNORS PRESENT:** Sean Lyons, Chair  
Charles Heaton  
Neil McDonald  
Rebecca Joyce  
Sardip Sandhu  
Andrew Cropley, Principal & CEO  
Kate Truscott  
John Gray  
Steve Sutton  
Tony Westwater  
Mary Mamik  
Paul Frammingham  
Spencer Moore  
Melanie Stirland  
Andrew Spencer  
Elliott Parker  
Rebecca Chambers

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance  
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  
Gavin Peake, Director: IT, Estates & Learning Resources  
Mike Firth, ESFA Observer  
Ian Ashman, External Observer

**1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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 NEW GOVERNOR APPOINTMENTS**

<b>ACTION by whom</b>	<b>DATE by when</b>

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

Date: 10/12/2020

The director of governance drew the board's attention to her written report and the proposal to appoint one new staff governor (business support), two student governors, and four independent governors.

She advised that, since the last meeting, Mary Mamik has tendered her resignation, which then provides sufficient vacancies within the number set out in the Instrument and Articles/Standing Orders: i.e. maximum board size of twenty, of which fifteen are to be independent members. She indicated, however, that the board may in any event wish to consider the removal of this upper constraint.

The director of governance explained the recruitment processes undertaken for each vacancy. The board, whilst supportive of the proposals presented, did indicate that it was important to further recruit an individual who has the education skills and experience that Mary Mamik brought to the board. It was agreed that this would be further explored outside the meeting and in consultation with members of the Standards Committee.

The interview panel provided a summary of the skills and experience for the four individuals that they wish to put forward as recommendations for appointment.

The board all agreed that there needed to be a balance struck between the educationalist versus business experience on the board, although it was acknowledged that the committees do a lot of work on behalf of the board and, therefore, breadth and depth is needed, which would justify a large board. Following Mary's resignation, an observation made by one governor was that there is a need to have someone who is a bit closer to the 'trenches' in terms of teaching and learning, and it was agreed that this would be a focus for future recruitment. Mary Mamik confirmed that she was willing to remain for a period and until such time as the board is able to find a replacement for her skills and experience.

**AGREED:**

- a) To approve the appointment of Andrew Spencer as the staff governor (business support) from 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 until 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (or until such time as he ceases to be a member of staff, whichever is the earlier).
- b) Approve the appointment of Rebecca Chambers and Elliott Parker as student governors from 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021 (or until such time as they cease to be students, whichever is the earlier).
- c) Approve the appointment of Anna Teal, David Gillies, Keith Spiers and Nathan Clements as independent governors from 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ Chair Date: 10/12/2020

- d) Delegate authority to the chair and CEO to agree committee membership for the new appointees.
- e) Amend the Instrument and Articles and Standing Orders to remove the current upper limit regarding the number of governors on the board.

**3 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence, with all governors in attendance. Andrew Spencer, Rebecca Chambers and Elliott Parker were welcomed to the meeting and their earlier appointment was confirmed. Ian Ashman, who is undertaking an external review of governance, was also welcomed to the meeting as an observer.

**4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2020**

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

There were no matters arising.

**5 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The board were happy to note the content of the update provided.

**6 REPORT FROM THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE CHAIR FOLLOWING THE MEETING HELD ON 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

The committee chair drew governors' attention to her summary report and also the detailed minutes of the meeting. Key aspects that she brought to the board's attention were:

- Student outcomes – there is a more detailed report due at the next meeting, given some outstanding data.
- OneFile and compliance is a repetitive point and is something that really needs to be addressed.
- COVID-19 isn't slowing the pace of improvements and activity is continuing to take place. COVID-19 is not being used as an excuse by staff or students.

The board discussed OneFile, and it was explained that it is quite a complex system and that the levels of compliance have also been affected by high staff turnover in the apprenticeship team. The board were given assurance that compliance has improved but not at the pace that senior staff would have hoped for. It was noted that electrical installation has been a particular area of high staff turnover and has negatively impacted upon data, i.e. staff are trained on the use of

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ Chair Date: 10/12/2020

OneFile but then leave and the process has to be repeated.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the summary report provided
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting
- c) Note the content of the updated Quality Improvement Plan.

**7 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE CHAIR FOLLOWING THE MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

The committee chair drew governors' attention to his summary report and also the detailed minutes of the meeting. Key aspects brought to the board's attention were:

- A thorough review undertaken of the internal audit reports completed.
- 2020/21 internal audit plan agreed.
- Thorough review of the risk register, with it being acknowledged that this is likely to change given the turbulence seen as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis.
- One instance of subcontractor suspected fraud reported to the meeting.
- Good progress being made on actions agreed.
- Risk register continues to evolve.
- Risk strategy to be reviewed in February 2021.
- The external audit this year will have additional reporting and disclosure requirements.

The board discussed the college's engagement with employers and questioned whether this should be more prominent and/or referred to in the risk register. It was acknowledged that this is a really critical piece of the college's strategy for the future and, therefore, the Audit Committee were asked to review this particular point at their next meeting. The principal advised that the college does have some capacity challenges in terms of apprenticeship delivery and classroom-based activity, with some areas being oversubscribed, and this does impact on employer engagement activities. A challenge from one member of the board was that the risk register should provide a line of sight to the strategic objectives and the balanced scorecard, including the risks associated with the college's ability to deliver and how these are mitigated. It was agreed that a development session would be scheduled for February 2021 in advance of the Audit Committee meeting so that the risk appetite can be reviewed in a structured way by full board.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the summary report
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting
- c) Note the content of the updated Risk Register for 2020/21.

Director of  
Governance

Feb. 2021

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Date: 10/12/2020

8

**REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE FOLLOWING THE MEETING ON 29<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

The committee chair drew governors' attention to her summary report and the detailed minutes of the meeting. She advised that there had been a little delay in terms of papers being circulated but that this had been rectified. Key aspects considered at the meeting included:

- HR systems and the teams capacity
- Planned review of the appraisal process will include succession planning; this was also something discussed by the Remuneration Committee at its meeting earlier in the day.
- The level of CPD budget and the committee challenged whether this was sufficient
- Public sector equality impact report to come to the December 2020 board meeting.

The director of HR and organisational development confirmed that some progress had been made this week in terms of the IT/HR systems and sign-off has been provided to purchase some of the module updates. In addition, there will be support and training regarding the payroll system. She confirmed that there was real excitement within the college regarding the Rising Stars programme and it is being seen very positively in terms of progression opportunities.

The board noted the planned review of the appraisal processes and all agreed that a poor appraisal process could be a real demotivator. They therefore asked whether staff are appropriately trained to carry out appraisals. It was acknowledged that there was benefit in undertaking refresher training. The board indicated that it was important to ensure a rounded approach to appraisals and also clarity in terms of the link to college strategy.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the summary report
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting
- c) Receive the public sector equality impact report at the December 2020 board meeting.

9

**REPORT FROM THE FINANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE CHAIR FOLLOWING THE MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

The committee chair introduced this item and drew governors' attention to his summary report and also the detailed minutes of the meeting. He indicated that there were a number of matters requiring board approval. As an overview, he drew a number of aspects to the board's attention, including:

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- The annual accounts process is on track.
- Board will need visibility regarding some potential new risks, e.g. clawback.
- An estates and IT update was provided, and it is clear that a huge amount of work has been done over recent months. Checks and balances seem to be in place and the committee were given assurance in relation to this.
- One to watch is the timing of the bksb sale and the impact that this may have on bank covenants.
- Bank covenants are a critical area to monitor and the college is currently in discussion with stakeholders in relation to these.

In terms of the items requiring board approval, he drew governors' attention to the summary note prepared by the finance director, and each aspect was considered individually.

- 1) Rationale and Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy – the board were happy to approve as presented and recommended by the committee.
- 2) Change to subcontractor allocations – the board's attention was drawn to appendix 2, which provides a summary of allocations and the changes. It was confirmed that they continue to be in line with the college strategy, and assurance was given that they are well governed. On this basis, the board were happy to approve the proposed changes to allocations as set out in Appendix 2.
- 3) Revised budget – governors' attention was drawn to Appendix 3, and it was explained that, whilst unusual, an early revision to the budget is required. The finance director indicated that the increase in student numbers means that additional staff costs need to be expended and that additional income is anticipated to offset some of this.

A question and challenge from the board was whether or not the college was taking too many risks all at the same time, e.g. Thoresby Street, Chesterfield Road, and recovery. The finance director indicated that the college will receive an additional £464k grant and the expectation is that this will go to support students. He confirmed that staff are being recruited to fixed-term contracts so that the risks in relation to this are mitigated. It was explained that 16-18 numbers are high and the college needs to ensure that the staffing structure is in place for this year and next year to ensure a quality experience. In addition to this, the college is seeing an increase in its market share and there is a need to ensure that there is sufficient space to accommodate this. The board were advised that the college is creating larger group sizes rather than a larger number of groups, which is a method for managing and mitigating the risks. The finance director advised that the college is generating a really good margin but needs to ensure that this

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is balanced with a high-quality learner experience.

The board then asked for further details regarding the £1.3 million capital element referred to. The finance director advised that the college has received an unplanned £1.33 million grant, with a need to spend this by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. He explained that there was a need to track its release, which is why it has been extracted out as a specific line. Most of the areas of spend planned will not be capitalised and include a lot of minor refurbishment requirements, e.g. flooring, plumbing, etc. He explained that it is a matter of accounting for the spend/costs throughout the year. In addition to this, the college budget for capital commitments is £600k with an additional amount of £673k received from the LEP.

A question and challenge from the board was for greater clarity in terms of current percentage capacity, i.e. class sizes, and they asked whether the college was 'spreading itself too thin'. The principal confirmed that Derby Road is full for most of the week and that, if the COVID situation eased, it would help but that there would still be space pressures. The board were advised that the space at Chesterfield Road has been identified to respond to the demands, and governors were reminded that space has been lost to NTU with the lease of the HE centre. Utilisation of Thoresby Street is a response to a temporary need and to provide COVID recovery support. A challenge from the board was to ensure that the college is appropriately resourced and that there must be careful management in relation to this.

The finance director confirmed that the objectives of the capital grant provision are to:

- a) Accelerate small-scale improvements that may have been postponed
- b) Stimulate the local economy.

One of the student governors present made the observation that there is more space at Chesterfield Road that could be utilised. The principal explained that the plan has always been to bring this site back to life as a sixth form centre in September 2021 and that, if students moved now, it would need to be a whole cohort which was just not feasible. He advised that, for this academic year, it will continue to be adult provision as planned.

The principal advised that Station Park and Oddicroft are full to capacity and that the college has made a conscious effort to minimise class sizes at a 20-22 average and not go beyond this, to ensure quality. He indicated that the aim really is to drive down the class sizes.

The second student governor asked for greater clarification regarding the social distancing rules that apply in classrooms versus communal areas and outside. The principal acknowledged that it was a real

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challenge to get the balance right but that, so far, there have been a low number of COVID cases and no instances of student-to-student transmission, which would indicate that the arrangements in place are working. He confirmed that he was really proud of what the college has achieved including the high level of student compliance, it being the case that, on the whole, students are responding very well and responsibly.

On the basis of the information provided, the board were happy to approve the revised budget and the increase in the capital budget as proposed.

- 4) Transfer of provision to JTL – the board were advised that the proposal is for the college to cease to be a direct deliverer of electrical apprenticeships. This is because current provision is below standard, and the proposed partnership with JTL will maintain the college’s role in the area as it delivers classroom-based provision for JTL. The board were happy to approve this proposal.
- 5) Delayed sale of Thoresby Street – it was explained that the college proposes to enter into a contract for sale but with a deferred completion date. This is to ensure that the college has the needed space in the short term. The finance director confirmed that there would be no major expenditure at Thoresby Street. The board were happy to agree the committee recommendation that the sale of Thoresby Street for £260k take place on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022 (or before, if the college can release the site earlier).
- 6) Going concern – the finance director explained that a specific statement regarding going concern was required by external auditors this year. It was confirmed that this evidence was provided to the committee and they were content to recommend that the board approves the statement that the college continues to be a going concern. One member of the board indicated that, as governors are liable regarding college solvency, they would therefore need to be a detailed report at the point of final sign-off. It was agreed that the accounts would be prepared on a going concern basis but that there would need to be a further review regarding the college’s ability to confirm going concern at the point when the accounts are approved and signed.
- 7) Standing Orders – the board were advised of the proposed minor amendments, which were highlighted in red on the document. The board were supportive of the changes proposed as well as the removal of the upper limit regarding the number of governors on the board discussed earlier in the meeting. The director of governance confirmed that identical changes will also need to be made to the Instrument and Articles, and it was agreed that the same changes would be made.

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AGREED to:

- a) Note the content of the summary report provided
- b) Note the detailed minutes of the meeting
- c) Approve the Rationale and Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy as presented
- d) Approve the revised subcontractor allocations as presented
- e) Approve the revised 2020/21 budget and the increase in the capital budget as proposed
- f) Approve the transfer of learners to JTL and that the college enter into a subcontract agreement with JTL to deliver classroom-based provision
- g) Approve the recommendation that a contract be entered into for the sale of Thoresby Street for £260k on or before 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022
- h) Confirm the statement that the college continues to be a going concern
- i) Approve the amendments proposed to the standing orders (with the same changes also to be made in the Instrument and Articles).

**10 DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOLLOWING THE VBSS MEETINGS HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> JULY AND 29<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

The chair of the Board of Directors drew governors' attention to the summary report and also the detailed minutes of the meeting, and she asked the board to approve the proposed changes highlighted to the Terms of Reference. The board were advised that the company and the college are intending to undertake a review of staff terms and conditions and that this is part of planned activity for this academic year.

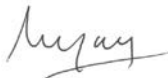
AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the summary report
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meetings
- c) Approve the amended Terms of Reference as presented.

**11 STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES – 2019/20 YEAREND REPORT AND 2020/21 MONITORING BASED ON THE BALANCED SCORECARD**

The principal introduced this item and drew governors' attention to Appendix 1, which gives a summary of performance against the objectives for the prior academic year. He indicated that there were three aspects where the college has self-assessed as not complete; these are:

- Implement the use of OneFile consistently
- Identification of a buyer for bksb
- Self-assess as a grade 2 – he confirmed that the college was on

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Date: 10/12/2020

track to achieve this in 2021.

Governors' attention was then drawn to Appendix 2, which is a reminder of the strategic plan and objectives set for this year. The board asked for an update on the position regarding T Levels. The principal indicated that, currently, the college is prevented from delivering T Levels until 2023, although this is being monitored as the sector position may change. He indicated that there are a number of 'outstanding' colleges who are struggling with some aspects of T Level delivery and, therefore, policy may change. He expressed the view that the college is right to be cautious in relation to these. He confirmed that development of the curriculum strategy will include a review of T Levels at a future point in time.

A question and challenge from the board was the process of review for the strategic plan. The principal confirmed that this would be considered annually and that this will lead to a number of iterations throughout the lifecycle of the plan. He confirmed that the aspirations, mission, vision and values remain unchanged.

Governors were then asked to review the updated balanced scorecard and particular aspects were noted:

- Pink sections are the strategic objectives
- Blue sections define the four quadrants
- KPIs are set in three rings, with pink items being those provided by way of an annual update once per year. Green are not measurable targets and revolve around a plan with regular updates being provided to the board and/or committees. He confirmed that reports will also include RAG proposals. The yellow areas have dynamic numbers which will change at each board meeting and also will be RAG-rated. He explained that the RAG ratings should help to draw the focus to areas requiring detailed analysis.

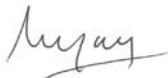
A question from one member of the board was how this scorecard will be presented visually. The principal confirmed that the next version will use Power BI and that it will be updated as and when data becomes available. He confirmed that a large proportion of the scorecard will be derived from automated processes.

AGREED:

- a) To note the achievement of strategic objectives for 2019/20
- b) Approve the proposed strategic objectives for 2020-23
- c) Note the progress made in developing a fully functioning balanced scorecard to inform future meetings.

12

## **ANNUAL KPI REPORTING**

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Date: 10/12/2020

The principal presented this item and confirmed that the reports agreed for October were:

- Percentage achievement
- Percentage achievement on study programmes
- Overall performance in English and maths compared to starting points
- 16-18 enrolments.

He advised that three of the four targets were significantly impacted by COVID but, notwithstanding this, the college has done well when compared to previous years. An observation made by the board was that maths and English clearly continues to be a challenge, particularly in relation to Functional Skills.

(Spencer Moore left the meeting at 6.45pm)

Key matters that the principal brought to governors' attention were:

- Fewer students on apprenticeships this year
- The college has seen increased numbers for 16-18 and 19+. As of today, there are 3,232 active enrolments against a target of 2,961 and a funding allocation of 2,911. This may mean that the college has a strong case for in-year growth support.
- 42 day point is now important in terms of retention.
- Enrolment is really encouraging and the teams are working well with students.
- Undertaking enrolment via Microsoft Teams is safer for both staff and students.
- Across the piece, numbers are looking strong with 19+ at 120% of target and HE at 100% of target.
- It is estimated that, by the 42 day point, there may be 80 or 90 more withdrawals, although the college is working hard to ensure that students swap rather than drop. The principal advised that there has been really good work in terms of the code of conduct and, through this, staff have been able to deal with any low-level behaviour issues quickly and improve the experience for all.
- There is now a range of new offers in place to suit all and at all levels.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

### 13 **EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020/21**

The vice principal introduced this item and took the opportunity to thank Sardip Sandhu and John Gray specifically for their help in developing this. She explained that the strategy is based on three key pillars which are:

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- Agile
- Renowned (reputation)
- First choice (quality)

So where are we now?:

- Strategy agreed by the board
- Improving picture in terms of quality
- Developing relationships with key employers
- Growing partnership with NTU for single offer
- Clear focus and direction for work placements
- Increasing focus in curriculum on work ready
- Capitalising on recent government incentives

That said, the college is still on a journey with a number of key aspects to consider, including:

- Employer engagement culture
- Relevance and responsiveness
- Product development and evaluation
- Consistent service levels

She confirmed that there is a work placement task and finish group now in place and that a gap analysis will be completed in terms of the college's offer to ensure relevance and responsiveness. It is intended to use employer feedback in the gap analysis.

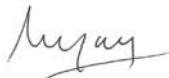
The next level of the strategy is:

- Employer segmentation; this will involve those determined to be:
  - a) Strategic employers – joint value relationship, including investment at senior level, existing, and those that the college wants to target
  - b) Critical – generates significant value and income with risk management a key focus
  - c) Transactional – the 'bread and butter' relationships which may be short-term and/or one-off.

She then provided a summary of the different services to be provided to the different types of employer and indicated that, for discussion, the college now has to determine:

- What is our value proposition?
- Our USP – the work-ready college? The college will need to ensure:
  - a) Relevant curriculum
  - b) Recruitment for employers from within
  - c) Swift to respond to a changing landscape
  - d) Quality works both ways.

The board all agreed that they had found the presentation useful and it

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Date: 10/12/2020

was agreed to establish a small task and finish group to support the vice principal further.

VP CE&SE

Oct 2020

The board indicated that they would find it helpful to better understand the numbers and level of turnover for the employers in each tier. In terms of USP, a suggestion was to cross-reference with the strategic objectives, particularly in terms of where the college does best and how it can build upon a reputation for excellence.

(Rebecca Chambers left the meeting at 7.10pm)

Governors expressed the view that the USP should be at the heart of what the college is. In terms of the proposals, governors indicated that:

- CPD should be a joint offer for both the college and employers
- Ensure a tripartite approach, including HE
- Use staff to gather the good ideas.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided
- b) Establish a task and finish group to support further development of the strategy.

#### 14 **SIXTH FORM CENTRE BRANDING**

The vice principal introduced this item and provided a presentation regarding the 'Mansfield and Ashfield Sixth Form College'. She indicated that the brand proposition centres around:

- Academic community – adult, partnership of equals
- Best results in the local area
- 'The Brilliant Club' – building aspiration for the Russell Group and Oxbridge
- Preparation for university and next steps
- Independence, personal growth, aspiration and excellence
- Safe space to grow, learn and develop
- Expert subject tutors – passionate about their subject area
- A Level extra – so much more than a school.

A number of methods will be utilised, including:

- User-generated content:
  - a) Yearlong social media video campaign – the voices of our students past and present
  - b) Snapchat filters for applicants who have accepted.
- Try it on for size – the applicant virtual classroom – tasters in subject areas offered from April onwards.
- Targeting influencers – parents and grandparents with more traditional media targeting.
- The ability to touch it and feel it:
  - a) COVID-safe tours of Chesterfield Road from January

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

Date: 10/12/2020

onwards

- b) Virtual tour of the new centre from January.
- Capitalise on the college's strengths but make it distinct:
  - a) Logo that lives the family
  - b) Separate prospectus
  - c) Separate landing page on the college site
  - d) Separate social media presence where appropriate
  - e) Separate promo video that can be used on college and other sites.
- Targeting ad shells, mailshots and social media:
  - a) Schools without sixth forms
  - b) Ad shells near to larger sixth forms in our area
  - c) Digital ad screens in key sites across Mansfield and Ashfield.

To ensure conversion there are a number of developing ideas that make the college stand out, including:

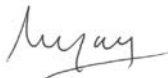
- Welcome message from the head of A Levels sent to every applicant
- Golden ticket
- An acorn – linked to the theme of growth
- Get a head start – reference book, survival kit
- Branded revision planners
- Revision and exam prep sessions for Year 11s prior to their GCSEs
- Specific offers just for A Level applicants
- Industry unearthed – linked to student aspirations (e.g. medicine, law etc.)
- Identifying a buddy from the current cohort
- Summer schools and tasters.

Logo and concepts were then shared.

A question and challenge from the board was whether there is confidence that a separate brand is required and how this will be differentiated from the college. The vice principal confirmed that due consideration has been given to parental perceptions of a sixth form college. She feels that differentiation and the brand proposition is important, particularly in terms of what can be offered as an extra.

The board asked whether there was a distinct marketing budget in place for this. The vice principal confirmed that there is a budget in place but that there is a requirement to look at the marketing team capacity and, particularly, a campaign manager for this.

A challenge from one member of the board was to consult with the emergency services if there is another organisation which has a similar name. The vice principal confirmed that there is no sixth form college within the WNC catchment, although there are school sixth forms.

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Date: 10/12/2020

A challenge from the board was whether or not the branding and marketing is different enough, and they urged caution against 'doubling up on efforts'. The vice principal confirmed that the aim is to make it distinct from the FE offer. The principal confirmed that the vice principal and her team have done a lot of work on the branding and marketing and, therefore, expressed the view that the college needed to trust them in relation to the proposals. John Gray offered to work with the team to support in any way that he could.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**15**      **FINANCIAL INVESTMENT DISCUSSIONS**

The finance director and director of IT, estates and learning resources introduced this item and gave an update in relation to:

- Internal cash investment
- D2N2 – it was confirmed that a submission has been made to the LEP in terms of digital skills. The board were advised that the college has been put on a waiting list for funds from the LEP and, therefore, may get the benefit from any other project underspends.
- DFE funds
- Central government, currently focused via towns funds
- ESFA
- Sponsorship
- Automation and robotics
- COVID response

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**16**      **GOVERNANCE UPDATE**

The director of governance drew the board's attention to her written report and, specifically, the recommendation from the Audit Committee to appoint a co-optee. She confirmed that there were also a number of more operational matters presented for information, including:

- Governor one-to-ones with the chair – summary of outcomes and actions/options
- Board work plan for 2020/21
- Key dates document
- External review of board effectiveness and capabilities.

The board discussed the summary of feedback from the one-to-one sessions and were of the view that a cautious approach needs to be taken in terms of reducing the number of business items that come to board, e.g. monthly management accounts. In the absence of a formal finance director's report each meeting, governors felt that some

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ Chair      Date: 10/12/2020

information needs to be provided given the board's responsibilities in terms of solvency. The board indicated that it was important to have mechanisms in place for being able to ask questions at board meetings, and it was suggested that this could be either through the principal's report or a separate agenda item where key reports are provided, including risk register, monthly management accounts, QIP, safeguarding updates, etc.

The director of governance drew the board's attention to the summary of strategic issues discussed in 2019/20, and all agreed that it would be really useful, as part of the external review process, to have an opinion given on the balance between operational and strategic. A challenge from one member of the board was to be very cautious and clear regarding the board's role in assurance, and that there needs to be a focus on areas requiring assurance but that other matters could be delegated. The board agreed that there needed to be a balance in terms of looking at the here and now as well as future developments.

AGREED:

- a) To approve the appointment of Ann Treacy as an Audit Committee co-optee from 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024
- b) Note the content of the update provided.

**17**      **FEC STOCKTAKE VISIT, 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

The principal introduced this item and provided a summary of key points fed back to the college. He confirmed that the draft report has now been received so that the college can undertake a factual accuracy check. He advised that, largely, the report is in line with the verbal feedback.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**18**      **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The chair confirmed that he did not have any matters to bring to the Board's attention for this meeting.

**19**      **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The principal drew governors' attention to his detailed written report, and an update was given on some specific items:

- The ESFA have now indicated that they will not require clawback for 17/18; however, the caveat is that this is subject to a funding audit and, if any issues are identified, they could look back to the historic.

The principal drew governors' attention to the diary dates included in

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ Chair      Date: 10/12/2020



section 20, and it was agreed that the principal's PA would issue Teams invites to governors.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**20**      **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

**21**      **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The director of governance confirmed that this was Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 5pm.

**22**      **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded separately.

(Staff and student governors left the meeting at 7.45pm)

Meeting closed at 8pm.

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

Date: 10/12/2020