



Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 11th March 2021 at 5pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Sean Lyons, Chair
 Andrew Cropley, Principal & CEO
 Charles Heaton
 Neil McDonald
 Rebecca Joyce
 Sardip Sandhu
 Kate Truscott
 Steve Sutton (from 5.25pm)
 Tony Westwater
 Spencer Moore
 David Gillies
 Keith Spiers
 Nathan Clements
 Andrew Spencer
 Mary Mamik
 Elliott Parker
 Bev Whitefoot

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 of HR & Organisational Development
 Gavin Peake, Director: IT, Estates & Learning Resources
 Mike Firth, ESFA Observer

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
1	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>		
	The chair reminded everyone present to declare any interest that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.		
2	<u>WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>		

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

Apologies for absence were received from Anna Teal. The board were advised that student governor Rebecca Chambers has resigned and also Paul Frammingham has confirmed that he is to stand down as a Finance & Estates Committee co-optee. The board all asked that their thanks and appreciation be passed on to Paul Frammingham for his time given to both the Corporation Board and the Finance & Estates Committee.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY 2021

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 11th February 2021.

There were no matters arising.

4 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

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

5 SCENE SETTING

The chair provided a verbal update and confirmed that the theme of this meeting is to continue with a focus on teaching and learning and the student experience, whilst acknowledging that the board needs to remain conscious of the financial position.

6 BALANCED SCORECARD

The CEO introduced this item and confirmed that the written reports focus on the areas RAG-rated as red. Particularly to bring to the board's attention is the position in relation to AEB and apprenticeship delivery, where both are falling behind and are below expectations for the same reasons. The board were reminded that this is largely the same position as reported at the last meeting.

In relation to AEB, he confirmed that the college does have plans in place regarding online learning and new partnerships; both are to address the subcontracting activity gap. He indicated that it is currently hard to predict where the college will get to by yearend as there are some risks with new delivery at this point in the year.

In relation to apprenticeships, the college is expecting to see a growth in starts now that the country is coming out of lockdown, but it will be almost impossible to catch up on lost learning/income.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

One aspect that was RAG-rated as red at the last meeting was the overall EBITDA position; however, this has improved and is no longer deemed to be a red risk. The college has obtained confirmation that it will receive £1.2 million in-year growth funding, which has helped to alleviate some of the losses seen in relation to AEB and apprenticeship delivery.

One other aspect brought to the board's attention was the percentage outcomes of deep dives. The board were reminded that the college stopped grading during lockdown. This will now restart and it is hoped that some improvement will be seen on the current 33%; however, it will be hard to hit the annual target. That said, the college does hope to close the gap.

In relation to the latter, one member of the board asked whether this influences the college's view of Ofsted readiness. The CEO advised that a publication from Ofsted on 2nd March seems to indicate that they will use the summer term to plan their inspections; therefore, it is unlikely that the college will be inspected in summer but highly likely that this will be in the autumn or, very latest, the spring term. The CEO expressed the view that Ofsted have taken the right approach in relation to this. He confirmed that the college is in a good place and is particularly proud of what it has achieved during lockdown.

The vice principal expressed the view that the college is currently on the cusp of confidence regarding a grade 2 but that apprenticeship delivery is one reason why the position is not currently a solid grade 2. Were it not for COVID, the college would have been able to make more progress and would have a greater degree of confidence. That said, the college will be a secure grade 2 by the autumn and, particularly, there are some areas where a return to site is essential, e.g. hair and beauty. He reminded that the college has taken a very cautious and self-critical approach, which prevails, but is making good progress.

The board were advised that COVID has impacted upon the apprenticeship 20% off the job training but that the college and the sector should now start to see this recover.

A question and challenge from the board was in relation to the OneFile system. This was described as a 'stubborn piece of performance data that does not seem to be improving at pace'. The board indicated that they would like to see compliance as an element within the appraisal system so that it is very clearly linked to performance. The vice principal confirmed that this is planned and that the senior team will work this through with the Workforce Development Committee.

One member of the board asked whether there are any capacity challenges anticipated and/or a bottleneck in terms of apprenticeship delivery. The vice principal confirmed that the college is expecting a 'flood' in a number of areas, e.g. health and social care, construction,

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

etc. Staff have been working to plan a rota for both practical and taught elements. The intention is to repeat a July and August offer, but the college is aiming to make good headway in the summer term in any event.

In relation to OneFile, it was explained that it requires input from not just the assessor, i.e. it needs information directly from the apprentice and the employer; therefore, it is important to take the compliance statistics in context. The college is looking to streamline the OneFile process/systems as it is felt that they could be slicker and more user-friendly. He confirmed that assistant principals do know which assessors are doing better than others and all have met with their specialists. The board made an observation on the 16% with 'no activity recorded'. The vice principal reminded that one year ago this figure was as high as 48% and that, in some instances, it is a matter of employers not doing their part.

The board discussed the position in relation to maths and English attendance. The vice principal indicated that the college was seeing some dramatic improvements in relation to English and that this is a team that is really pulling together. The college is not seeing the pace of improvement in maths at the same level but both are heading in the right direction. The board were advised that the attendance decline this lockdown has not been as high as the first. Teachers are getting better at online learning and students are therefore better engaged. In English, the team are really sharing best practice and working well together.

The board discussed the number of applications to level 4, and it was explained that students this year have taken a cautious approach given the COVID impact. Some universities have extended the UCAS deadline. The situation has not been improved by poor media reporting in relation to this year's university experience. It was confirmed that the college is working with NTU to really push forward with the local offer.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

7 ANNUAL KPI REPORTING

The CEO drew governors' attention to the detailed reports in relation to

- a) High needs funding
- b) 16-18 allocations for 2021/22.

He confirmed that, in both cases, the college is in a pretty good position and he was therefore happy just to take questions on the reports provided.

AGREED: to note the content of the updates provided.

8 QUALITY AND STANDARDS

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

A number of aspects were particularly considered

1) Standards Committee chair's report

The committee chair presented her summary report; key aspects noted were :

- Discussions in relation to OneFile, apprenticeship provision generally, and Ofsted readiness. It is very pleasing to see the triangulation at both committee and board.
- The committee trialled a new style agenda with really positive feedback.
- The committee homed in on two specific areas requiring improvement in the QIAP: these were apprenticeship provision and tutorials.
- In relation to apprenticeships, the committee has a good forensic understanding of where the college is and why. The committee definitely gets assurance that the college is acutely aware of areas that need to improve.
- In relation to tutorials, online delivery has hindered this aspect and plans are in place to expand when students are back on site.
- Pastoral needs for students were discussed.
- The curriculum strategy is well developed.
- Upskilling of teachers – the committee were assured in terms of the CPD offer and how this is now starting to translate.
- There are still a number of areas to consider and focus on, including:
 - a) Apprenticeships
 - b) Technology Enhanced Learning
 - c) A Level provision, including the model and staffing

The committee is starting to be more confident in terms of its ability to focus and not spread the discussions too thin.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

2) Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2021

The board were happy to note the content of the detailed minutes provided.

3) Student journey/talking heads – apprenticeship focus

Feedback from students was received and comments noted were:

- College is very supportive
- Tutors are good
- Progressing well in learning
- A slight delay, but it is hoped that the course is nearing completion

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

- Mixed experience with one student having four different tutors over a two-year period
- COVID dramatically slowed students down in terms of the practical activity possible
- Finally making some good progress
- Supported through COVID
- Learned some new skills in relation to IT
- Being an apprentice during the pandemic has been hard but there has always been someone there at college when a question needs answering
- Apprenticeship provision provided me with the right experience
- It's been a challenging year
- College has adapted
- Feels like there are plans in place to fill any gaps that exist
- Apprenticeship provision gives equal opportunities for ages and nationalities
- Gained new skills and knowledge
- Experienced different training methods, e.g. shadowing, which has enabled me to be a team member
- Well supported by my mentor
- Learning new things every day
- Working during the pandemic was challenging but I have had support
- I was provided with a college laptop
- Been very busy working but online support was available
- Developed my English communication skills and also my IT skills
- Enjoyed my course and I was able to contact my specialist at any time
- Did have changes in teachers but this eventually settled
- I am learning a lot about the business I am in.

It was explained that the talking heads piece was provided by apprentices in six different programme areas and was described as 'warts and all' feedback. The board were given assurance that, where there were problems identified, these are being addressed.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

4) Deep dive – apprenticeships (a focus area from the QIAP)

The board's attention was drawn to the detailed written report and it was confirmed that the deep dive provides excellent evidence for when the college is next inspected. It is clear that there is meaningful, ongoing student engagement; this gives confidence that college is approaching this honestly and that the position is rooted in reality.

The board were reminded that there are four different ways in which the college monitors the situation in relation to apprenticeships; these

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

include:

- The Standards Committee – this was described as a very experienced committee.
- The CEO chairs the apprenticeship monitoring group and has the ability to really drill down and look at the experience of apprentices, although assurance was given that this is not a 'search and destroy' exercise.
- OneFile group – this works with a large number of specialists.
- Performance monitoring review boards.

The board were reminded that there are eight actions in the QIAP that relate to apprenticeship delivery, and the college is on a good trajectory in relation to all.

The board's attention was drawn to section 1.2 of the report; particularly noted were:

- 111 occurrences of specialists attending finetuning OneFile training
- 52 occurrences of one-to-one coaching
- 12 bespoke team training sessions.

The vice principal described February 2019 as a key watershed moment, including:

- The overall achievement of apprentices improved from 48% in 18/19 to 53% in 19/20.
- The current overall retention rate of 74.2% will, if all apprentices remain in learning and achieve, mean a significant increase in performance for 2020/21. This rate is well above the national rate of 66.7%.
- The timely achievement of apprentices declined from 43% to 34% between 18/19 and 19/20. In striving to rectify significant legacy issues stretching back as long ago as 16/17, concerted effort and specific actions have reduced the volume of apprentices who are past their planned end date to achieve their programmes. However, a total of 219 apprentices are more than 90 days beyond their expected end date. This is an increase of 29 individuals since 28th January 2021.
- In relation to end point assessments, 60.2% get a high grade.
- 27% record promotion and enhanced roles, despite COVID; the unofficial national benchmark is 9%.

The vice principal raised the issue of OneFile again and, in relation to the '16% not recording', he explained that staff are doing the work but are simply not pressing the right buttons as the systems and processes are too clunky. The board asked what the total volume of apprentices is, and the vice principal indicated that it was just under 900. A challenge from the Board was to excel in this area as it really impacts upon individuals' life chances.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

The board were advised that there have been some non-completers. This is for a number of reasons, including fluctuations in the market place and also the fact that 16-18-year-olds can be a pretty fickle age group. The board asked whether analysis data is available in relation to this. The vice principal confirmed that the college does have this data and that it has been impacted by:

- Changing employers
- Students changing their mind
- Employers ending arrangements
- Swapping and changing.

The board asked whether there are any IAG implications. The vice principal acknowledged that there are and that the college really needs to be clear in terms of the guidance given. An example given was domiciliary care in health and social care: some employers have a significant churn; therefore, it is important for students to have a backup plan. He indicated that the notion of apprenticeship activity for a 16-year-old is quite a challenge and that the transition from school can be hard. He described this as not an easy way forward and explained that there are challenges across the country and the FE network. He advised the board that the QAR figure is 70+ to get to a good in the new framework. This will be a challenge for both the college and for other providers across the landscape. He reminded that, under the EIF, inspectors will look at the quality of the experience.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

5) QIAP

The board were happy to note the content of the updated document provided.

6) Safeguarding/Prevent report

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience drew governors' attention to her written report and advised that there has been a slight decline in the number of referrals; however, this was not as significant as the drop-off in March 2020.

The board discussed the preparedness for return to site and the vice principal explained that there is some great excitement on the part of students but that it is likely that the college will start to see issues come out of the woodwork in approximately one month's time. To support, the college is aiming for CAMHS presence after Easter and there is a body of work to do to help students recognise and manage low-level anxiety.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

Governors' attention was drawn to the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education document, and it was explained that there has been a consultation on significant changes proposed from September 2021. She explained that governors will need to carefully consider outcomes data and drill down in relation to the most vulnerable groups and assess how they compare and address the gaps.

The board were advised that the college is about to commence an audit of its safeguarding processes; an open invitation was extended to all governors to participate.

The board were advised that, over the last few weeks, there have been a number of issues that have arisen out of hours and, as a consequence, the college is looking at formalising processes for staff, it being the case that they cannot be on call 24 hours, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. A challenge from the board was that a 24-hour service is not something that a college should offer and that there are other agencies who should be dealing with issues as they arise. It was confirmed that the college is looking at a long-term partnership with CAMHS to try to help. One member of the board asked whether students have personal email details for staff: it was confirmed that they do not but that utilising Microsoft Teams does make staff very accessible. A challenge from the board was that staff should not be checking Teams out of hours, and it was acknowledged that this is part of the process to be formalised. The board felt that, whilst students should have good relationships with teachers, this needs to be on the basis of clear boundaries. The board all agreed that there needed to be clarity in terms of expectations for staff. The board were given assurance that there is a protocol in place for staff and students in terms of utilising Teams, and all agreed that this now really needs to be embedded.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

9 **AUDIT**

A number of aspects were considered

1) Audit Committee chair's report

The committee chair drew governors' attention to his summary report; key matters noted were:

- Focus for the meeting was on the risk strategy and the risk register.
- Strategy was updated specifically to incorporate changes recommended by internal auditors as part of their review.
- The committee has asked for really clear links between the college's strategic objectives and the risk strategy.
- There was some robust discussion regarding the register and the

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

committee's focus, particularly the RAG ratings.

- Changes agreed have been implemented, but it was acknowledged that the document shared for this meeting is not the updated version and it was confirmed that this would be provided at the next meeting.
- Risk of cyber-attack was flagged as a concern.
- The committee received an internal audit report on curriculum planning which was debated, and it was agreed that some follow-up work was needed as there were differences in opinion in terms of how representative the findings now are.
- Substantial assurance was given regarding budgetary controls and the ESFA funding assurance outcomes.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

2) Minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2021

As a point of accuracy, it was noted that at section 12 the Remuneration Committee date should be November 2020 and not 2021.

AGREED: to note the detailed minutes of the meeting.

3) Risk Management Strategy

The board were happy to approve.

4) Risk Register 2020/21

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

10 **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – JANUARY 2021**

The finance director introduced this item and explained that the accounts had not gone through the Finance & Estates Committee meeting this time, given the meeting scheduling; however, it is important to share what is now an improved position. As noted earlier in the meeting, growth funding has now been confirmed, which improves the college's position.

The board were advised that the AEB position is still not resolved, but it is hoped that the ESFA will confirm the position this week. The college has revised its AEB forecast in light of major subcontracting underperformance and direct delivery that requires face-to-face activity. There are three mitigating strategies that have been built around increased online delivery. It has been necessary to significantly increase costs in the forecast as the college is looking to protect its future AEB allocation. The aim is to look to avoid a £2-£3 million reduction into the future. There has been an increase to the marketing budget to improve

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

the level of direct delivery.

The board were advised that the ESFA will impose a cap on subcontracting next year; therefore, the college needs to urgently address and make a rapid change to increase direct delivery.

In relation to AEB, the board were reminded that 68% was the reconciliation threshold last year; however, the sector is anticipating a different approach this year. Once the college knows the final method of reconciliation, it will be possible to update the yearend forecast. The finance director indicated that the college is taking a pessimistic approach regarding the increased costs required to protect the allocation. High margins have not been forecast as it is something that the college has not done before. It is possible that the college could perform better than forecast, and it was agreed that this is something to be analysed by the Finance and Estates Committee. The finance director confirmed that the update is to respond to government policy.

The board asked for further information in relation to the increased marketing costs. The finance director indicated that it covers a number of aspects, including:

- Broker for accessing online communities
- Use of social media
- One more member of staff.

AGREED: to note the content of the Management Accounts as presented.

11 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The principal introduced his detailed written report and an update was given on a number of aspects, including:

- A-Level recruitment is really strong; however, there have been some changes in terms of trends, which makes it harder to really assess.
- Mansfield's Towns Fund – really disappointing outcome but no feedback has been provided yet on why the bid was unsuccessful.
- Levelling Up funding is the next round; however, there are some college project risks in relation to this.
- Ashfield's Towns Fund is still outstanding and the college is going to try to put itself on the front foot in relation to this .
- Curriculum strategy is well developed with 60 individuals having attended the Skills Conference recently. The team are now deciphering the contributions made and will build these into the governor strategic event on 25th March. Good progress is being made.
- The Rising Stars programme is going from strength to strength

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

and the principal asked for governors to be involved as mentors. He explained that the time commitment is circa one hour per month and that the college is looking for three or four governors who would be happy to give their time. Governors were asked to contact Sara Arnold in relation to this.

- Skills Conference – this was helpful both internally and for external stakeholders.
- COVID – all is going well and it is envisaged that governors can start to come back on to site.

Governors

March
2021

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

12 **BANKING AGREEMENT WITH LLOYDS**

Governors' attention was drawn to the updated banking agreement and also the formal extract of meeting minutes required to satisfy solicitors. He explained that the updated banking arrangements are intended to last for a period but that it is highly likely that Lloyds will seek to revise again once the company sale has taken place.

AGREED:

- a) To approve the amendments to the banking arrangements as proposed
- b) Approve the draft minutes (extract) and request that the chair sign on behalf of the Corporation Board.

13 **21/22 COLLEGE TUITION FEE POLICY**

The finance director introduced this item and explained that it was a repeat of last year's policy but with a few minor tweaks. He explained that the aim is to get this agreed early so that the college can start to maximise the position in relation to marketing.

AGREED: to approve the 21/22 College Tuition Fee Policy as presented.

14 **GENDER PAY GAP REPORT**

The director of HR and organisational development introduced this item and described it as a work in progress. She reminded that it is a statutory requirement to publish and explained that the report has been created using a standard template and has a focus on progress. The sector has an extension to the end of October to publish but she indicated that, as the work has already been done, it would be good to hit the original deadline of 31st March 2021.

One member of the board asked whether the part-time hourly rate is less than the full-time hourly rate. It was confirmed that it is not different but that it is based on a pro rata calculation. It was explained that part-time workers tend to be in lower paid roles, which does skew

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021

the position where a role is open to part-time and therefore does skew the data. Assurance was given that, where a role is open to either part-time or full-time, the rates are equal. The board felt that this could be clearer in the document and challenged in terms of an 'own goal' from the perception of the external reader. Subject to this one change, the board were happy to approve for publishing.

AGREED: to approve the gender pay gap report as presented.

15 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

16 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

This was confirmed as Thursday 20th May 2021 at 5pm.

Staff and student governors and members of the executive left the meeting at 6.55pm.

17 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

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

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/05/2021