



**Minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 at 5pm**

**GOVERNORS PRESENT:** Sean Lyons, Chair  
 Andrew Cropley, Principal & CEO  
 Neil McDonald  
 Charles Heaton (via Teams)  
 Sardip Sandhu (via Teams)  
 Kate Truscott  
 Spencer Moore (via Teams)  
 Andrew Spencer  
 William Burton  
 Angela Newton-Soanes (via Teams)  
 Ben Owen (via Teams)  
 Mary Mamik (via Teams)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance  
 Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement & Student Experience  
 Matt Vaughan, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality  
 Gavin Peak, Director: IT Estates & Learning Resources  
 Jane Fishwick (for agenda item 6)

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

**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 WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Ben Owen was welcomed to his first meeting. Apologies were received from Nathan Clements, David Gillies, Rebecca Joyce, Keith Spiers, Steve Sutton, Tony Westwater, Bev Whitefoot, Suzanna Smith and Jon Fearon. The chair noted that this would be the last meeting for Mary Mamik, as she will be standing down as a governor after her report to the board today.

All confirmed that they were very grateful for the support that she has

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given the college during her time as a governor.

**3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 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 15<sup>th</sup> July 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 took the opportunity to thank governors for the time given in one-to-ones. He confirmed that the feedback was generally positive but that there is a consensus to try to move the direction of discussions to be even more strategic. He acknowledged that there would need to be a careful balance so that all operational aspects are also considered.

He advised that the CEO's report gives a summary of the opportunities that are available and that it is important to place ourselves, as governors, to be more outward facing than has been the case historically. The college is now more financially confident and, whilst retaining a continuing tight grip on this aspect, governors have more appetite and time to engage externally.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**6 TEL AND DIGITAL STRATEGY – TARGET DATES/TIMESCALES**

Jane Fishwick drew the board's attention to her detailed report. She explained that this provides a KPI presentation which underpins the strategy already shared. She confirmed that this has been developed and evolved following very helpful discussions with partners at Grimsby College. They have helped to make sure that the KPIs are 'less woolly' and more measurable. She expressed the view that what is now presented is more succinct and that, whilst there is more being done around the KPIs, what is now proposed really pins down the priorities. She described plans as being ambitious but realistic and advised that there will be a number of areas of clear focus.

One member of the board asked for an update in terms of the 'unknowns' in the document. It was explained that, at the moment, there are still some areas where staff data needs to be collected. In

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terms of the staff qualifications proposed, 10% is circa 70 members of staff who would seek accreditation up to a silver level. There are 25 members of staff already signed up, and the plan is that these 25 will each then recruit two additional members of staff. These are the levels of progression envisaged. The board were advised that those areas that are starred in the report are the aspects that are mandatory, as the college wants to gain Microsoft Showcase status. She advised that some of the qualifications are not easy to achieve and, therefore, it is important not to underestimate the commitment required from staff.

As an overview, she expressed a view that the college was making real headway with the transformation. There have been really positive external comments regarding the strategy, and the college now feels well poised for the future.

A question from one member of the board was whether or not teachers will be targeted. It was confirmed that they will be and that the first five are free exams. These five will include different categories of staff to ensure that there is a whole college approach.

One member of the board asked what the Microsoft Showcase status gives the college. The board were advised that the college is currently in an 'incubator' status and that, by reaching Showcase status, it will put the college and staff in touch with technology leaders and provide new opportunities.

A question and challenge from one member of the board was that the 'behaving safely and responsibly online' targets seem low, and they asked why this is the case. It was explained that the college does already have staff and student sessions, which are provided at induction, but does not yet have a product for the longer-serving members of staff.

One member of the board indicated that it was really great to see the work taking place with Grimsby College, as they have been on a really positive journey in terms of digital developments.

A challenge from one member of the board was that they would like to see a plan in place to ensure that support staff have access to training and development. The board were advised that the college does have a 'professionals' category as well as a 'teaching' category, although it was acknowledged that the college could do more, and examples given were in the marketing and ALS teams.

It was agreed that an impact review would take place in the summer term, particularly of the impact on learners (e.g., technology in the classroom).

One member of the board asked how the strategy and implementation

AP  
ACCDPS

July 2022

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plan sits alongside safeguarding requirements and responsibilities. It was confirmed that online activity is included as part and parcel of the annual update to staff. There are usually a number of questions posed to staff to ensure that they fully understand the implications and expectations. It was acknowledged that online risks are moving all the time. A challenge from the board was to ensure that staff efforts are not duplicated and that there is a really cohesive approach taken.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

(Jane Fishwick left the meeting at 5.20pm)

## **7 BALANCED SCORE CARD**

The CEO introduced this item and explained that it was in three parts. These were considered individually.

### 1) Strategic Plan approval

The CEO presented proposals for strategic objectives for 2021/22 and the year after. He highlighted those that are new and confirmed that they would flex as required but that they set the direction of travel.

The board asked for more detail regarding the proposals in relation to strategic development, and an observation made was that, as the college is moving from survival into growth, it will be important to make sure that the leadership and management programmes support a change in mindset. The CEO advised that the college has spent a lot of time over the summer talking to leaders and getting a real feel for what they want and need. The college has taken on board their feedback and will not provide 'sheep-dip training'. Instead, development will be individualised and bespoke, and he acknowledged that staff are time pressured. Some development will be provided in groups, but this will not always be the case. The intention is to start with 360-degree appraisals, and then staff will be provided with a range of 15 opportunities. They will work with coaches to identify the best opportunities for them. They will each then create a leadership development plan. He expressed the view that the way in which this plan is developed will give a high level of confidence regarding its absolute applicability and relevance to the individual.

A question and challenge from one member of the board was whether or not governors and the executive need further development to support the changes anticipated and required. The chair confirmed that this would be something to be discussed in the development session which, unfortunately, had had to be postponed earlier in the day.

AGREED: to approve the Strategic Plan as presented.

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2) Revamped version of the balanced scorecard

The CEO advised that the model to be used has not changed but the metrics have. He confirmed that subcommittees have been able to review proposals relevant to them, and any feedback provided has been taken on board in terms of the proposals today.

The board were happy to approve the balanced scorecard proposals for 2021/22, as presented. The CEO advised that the next step was to pull together a strategic suite, which would be provided to the board at the December meeting.

CEO

Dec. 2021

AGREED: to approve the balanced scorecard proposals for 2021/22, as presented.

A question from one governor was how the college will improve the percentage of positive destinations. The CEO advised that this will be through a number of mechanisms, including tutorials, staff support and options. The expectation is to see these be clarified and solidify as the year progresses.

3) The metrics

The CEO advised that not all of the figures are yet finalised because of the time of year. Staff are currently working on finalising the 2020/21 data and these will then be used to help to finally populate all of the metrics.

The board's attention was drawn to two indicators which are red RAG-rated. These are:

- a) The percentage of deep dives graded as 1 or 2 – he confirmed that all deep dives are showing positive movements but that the college is not yet where it wants to be in terms of this target. He reminded that the focus initially of deep dives were the areas graded as 3 last year, which has impacted upon the data.
- b) Apprenticeship end point assessments, particularly the level of high grades (which are a merit or distinction). The CEO advised that there are very different thresholds within apprenticeship provision, with some being very much harder to obtain high grades. He indicated that staff didn't really take this into account when setting the targets and that, on reflection, the targets set were very ambitious.

He indicated that a failure to achieve both of these targets is not critical but that it is important to highlight so that governors are aware of this.

One member of the board made an observation on the level of resignations, at 13.6%, and asked whether there are concerns in this

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area. The CEO confirmed that there are some retention issues which, unfortunately, are focused in a number of areas. Examples given were construction provision, learning support assistants, catering, and cleaning.

In relation to the EPA targets, the board asked whether there should be greater differentiation and asked whether it is possible to be more sensitive in terms of targets to be set for 2021/22. The CEO advised that this is a potential and that it is something which the team will look at next year.

The board asked for an update in relation to the target set to improve progress ready for Ofsted and asked whether the college was where it expected to be. The CEO indicated that two years of disruption has had an impact and that, whilst there has been improvement in all areas, there is still a need to be challenging, particularly in relation to leadership and management. There are a few areas of provision which remain a focus, and examples given were media and engineering. There is confidence that the college is heading in the right direction, but there are some staffing challenges that will need to be overcome.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## 8 **ANNUAL KPIS 2021/22**

The CEO provided a detailed report and, particularly, drew governors' attention to the position in relation to maths and English. He confirmed that the college was really pleased with the results and that this was underpinned by a robust TAG process. There is confidence regarding genuine improvements regarding teaching and learning in English, and maths is starting to improve. The CEO expressed the view that new staff are really starting to make an impact.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided and to support the proposal that the RAG rating in relation to maths and English now move to green.

## 9 **QUALITY AND STANDARDS**

There were a number of aspects considered, including:

- 1) Report from the committee chair – key matters highlighted were:
  - Detailed minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021 are provided for the board's information.
  - The committee looked at a number of areas and there is one recommendation for approval, which is in relation to the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

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- The committee continues to have real assurance regarding safeguarding arrangements, but there was an acknowledgement that there is more the college can do with employers.
- The QIP action plan was reviewed and there are a number of aspects considered at each meeting. This document sets a really clear roadmap to achieve inspection ambitions and is provided in the pack so that all governors have access to this.
- There are still some areas that require improvement, and these still include the level of progress reviews for apprentices and use of OneFile. The committee chair was clear that the college has come a long way in terms of apprenticeship provision over the last two years but that there are still some stubborn pockets that need to be moved on.
- The committee felt assured regarding progress being made and that the college is now starting to think about the 'what next'.

The committee chair confirmed that she was very proud of the work that this committee has done over the last few years.

**AGREED:**

- To note the content of the update provided.
- To note the content of the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
- To approve the updates to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, as presented.

A challenge to the board was for all governors to read and confirm that they have read the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education document.

**2) Talking Heads**

The CEO introduced the talking heads piece, which has a focus on leadership and management, and he explained that staff had been asked to contribute. Key matters highlighted were:

- From the head of maths
  - A returning member of staff to the college.
  - Leadership and management have embraced the new and the challenges to ensure that improvements are made.
  - Staff clearly know where to go for support.
- In relation to the Health and Social Care department
  - A new activity room has now been established, which is really positive.
  - In the absence of placements, these facilities help to build on prior knowledge and experience and allow students to come up with scenarios on their own.
  - The college is very forward-thinking.
  - The department is supported by managers and the wider

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executive team.

- One challenge identified is adapting teaching and learning for learners who are not already in the workplace, to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities.
- c) HR business partner
- There has been a lot of leadership and management developments and investment made.
  - Really positive that staff were invited to be involved in the BIPs.
  - Positive investment in the Rising Stars programme.
  - New benefits system introduced, My Rewards; this has been well received by staff.
  - Leadership and management culture has now changed.
  - Staff at the college are now really well known in the community.
  - Developments all support students to reach their full potential.
- d) Motor vehicle learning company – the director of governance was able to read out a detailed written note provided by Duncan James, who works with students in the WNC autocentre, which is a motor vehicle learning company. He confirmed really positive support from both leaders and managers and governors.

Other comments made included:

- BIPs have been really positive and allowed people who wouldn't usually contribute to do so.
- The culture has changed and leaders and managers are now very open to new ideas.
- There is very much an open-door policy in place.
- Real investment made – an example given was the automated dummies, which will really help to support achievements.
- Staff join the college because they are attracted by the ethos as it is very learner centric. It is very clear that this is important to leaders and managers.
- A lot of support provided in a lot of areas; examples given were line managers, HR and the induction programme. There is always someone available who can answer a question.
- It is important to have a strong cohesive team with high expectations.
- Staff do feel that they have the support of the senior teams.

Student governors present were invited to give their views on their experiences this year so far. One student governor indicated that there have been some physical challenges at Chesterfield Road, and an example given was power cuts. Also noted were some challenges regarding continuity of sociology tutors, and the CEO acknowledged that there have been some staff challenges in this area this year.

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In relation to the point made regarding Chesterfield Road, the chair confirmed that he had undertaken a recent visit and was aware of the physical challenges. He was able to report very positive feedback from the serving staff there in terms of student behaviour, and all were described as very polite.

The CEO expressed the view that governors had really helped to shape change, and an example given was governor involvement in interviews and appointments of social care staff. A challenge from the chair was that governors should get out and about in the college and spread the message of empowerment, as there are still some staff who need more confidence and a belief in the changes. All agreed that it was critically important for staff to know that leaders and managers do listen to what they are told.

The board agreed that they felt assured that positive action is being taken and that leadership and management is moving in a positive direction, whilst not 'all rosy'. The board felt that there was evidence of great momentum in this area. Governors' attention was drawn to the detailed report provided by way of a deep dive in relation to leadership and management, which is a focus area of the QIAP.

e) SAR 2020/21

The vice principal: curriculum and quality explained that the college was currently conducting validation meetings and that these include governors. An overview of the process was provided, and matters highlighted included:

- August saw SAR meetings, with a huge number of staff involved. All were a great opportunity for debate and discussion.
- In early November, SAR validation will be completed by individual areas. The college will then move to the cross-college view. The aim is to provide succinct summaries. These will be presented to the Standards Committee and then board for scrutiny and challenge. The SAR document, when approved by the board, will be uploaded to the Ofsted portal in January.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the chair's summary report
- b) To note the content of the detailed minutes of the Standards Committee meeting
- c) To note the content of the QIAP
- d) To note the content of the 2020/21 safeguarding/Prevent annual report
- e) To approve the updated Safeguarding Policy/Procedures.

10

**KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION – 2021 UPDATE**

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The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience provided a presentation to the board, explaining that it was an overview and gives clarity regarding board responsibilities for ensuring that the college has a robust safeguarding culture. She provided a summary of the various sections, which are in five parts, and she explained that these synthesise all other guidelines. She explained that part 2 needs to be a focus for governors, as this relates to the management of safeguarding.

Key matters highlighted were:

- The definition of safeguarding – what is clear is that the college has to be proactive rather than reactive.
- There is specific statutory guidance in place regarding Prevent.
- Part 1 covers what all staff need to know – this is included as part of the mandatory annual update programme.
- Part 2 sets out the expectations for the management of safeguarding, particularly the role of governors, which includes:
  - A strategic leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements that must ensure duties under legislation are complied with. The board must have regard to KCSiE, ensuring that policy and training and procedures are effective and comply with the law.
  - Senior board level (or equivalent) to take leadership responsibility.
  - Facilitation of a whole college approach.
  - Governors must ensure that there is an effective policy framework, and she summarised and listed all of the policies in place to discharge this duty.
- Designated safeguarding lead
- Accountability of the DSL
- Part 3 explains responsibilities regarding the recruitment of staff
- Summary of regulated activity
- Part 4 deals with allegations made against staff, and governors' attention was particularly drawn to the changes made in relation to lower-level concerns, which are often called the 'nagging doubts'.

In general discussion, the board all agreed that it would be useful for the Workforce Development Committee to receive reports in relation to

- a) Safer recruitment
- b) The reporting of lower-level concerns.

The committee chair confirmed that she would build this into the work plan for the year. The board reflected upon the safeguarding reports to the Standards Committee, and all agreed that they were really assured regarding the systems and processes in place.

A question and challenge from one member of the board was the need to consider how legislative compliance is tested and, particularly, how

WD  
Committee

2021/22

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the board can be assured in relation to this. It was suggested that time needs to be planned for the board to consider this. A suggestion made was that the college could undertake some deep dives in relation to this, and of particular interest was an opportunity to test staff understanding in relation to what they need to do if they receive a safeguarding disclosure. The VP: CESE advised that staff training includes a quiz to test knowledge and that it would be useful to share the results of the quiz at the December board meeting.

VP CESE

Dec 2021

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## 11 AUDIT AND RISK

The chair of the Audit Committee introduced this item and drew the board's attention to the summary report, minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September, and the updated risk register for 2021/22. Key matters highlighted were:

- The committee looked at risk appetite and executive proposals in relation to these. The committee were satisfied that they are appropriate.
- The risk register was updated for 21/22, with some items being removed (e.g., sale of bksb, level of debt). There are some new items. As it is the beginning of the year, a number of elements are RAG-rated as red, although the expectation is to see these mitigated during the year.
- In relation to EDI, both the Standards Committee and Workforce Development Committee have been asked to review whether there is a need to place any EDI risks on the register.
- The committee received a large number of internal audit reports which, in the main, had some incredibly positive outcomes. However, there was one area of disappointment in relation to student records. The committee were advised that this is something that the executive team very much have on their radar now and will look at additional resources needed to make improvements. The CEO advised that the college has been able to move quickly on this and has invested in this area with some slight structure changes made so that the learner records and exams teams are separated out. On reflection, it is believed that the teams were simply too stretched as they were.

AGREED to:

- a) 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 2021/22 risk register.

## 12 FINANCE AND ESTATES

The chair of the Finance & Estates Committee introduced this item and

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drew governors' attention to the summary note and also the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Key matters highlighted were:

- The sale of bksb and how this will be reported within the yearend accounts. The decision taken is minimal/statutory disclosure requirements.
- In terms of financials, this is a great result for the 2020/21 yearend.
- There was a discussion regarding cash and potential investment options
- The committee considered going concern statements, and there are no issues or concerns. This is something that the board has to formally approve.
- There are a lot of opportunities presenting themselves in terms of capital projects. It was agreed that the executive would continue to pursue these but that there may be a need to put a pause on some projects to reflect capacity.
- The phase 2 capital build bid process has allowed the college to delve a little bit deeper in terms of space utilisation. The college believes that this is a useful tool in terms of resource planning.
- The college has developed an updated property strategy.
- The estates team should be commended for the fabulous achievement in terms of the summer works completed.
- The board is asked to approve the ESPO contract renewal.
- There are no bad debt issues.

The board took the opportunity to commend the director of IT, estates and learning resources for the great work done by him and his team. An observation made by one governor was that property use and development would be an interesting topic to discuss so that governors could improve their knowledge in relation to this.

Director IT  
& Estates

2021/22

AGREED to:

- a) Note the content of the summary report
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting
- c) Note the content of the July 2021 management accounts
- d) Approve the statement of going concern
- e) Approve the updated property/estates strategy as presented
- f) Approve the ESPO extension contract proposals as presented.

13

### **PRINICIPAL'S REPORT**

The CEO introduced this item and indicated that he would take the report 'as read'. He expressed the view that 2020/21 was, in many ways, a positive year; however, there are some tough challenges anticipated for 21/22, which will include:

- Student social anxiety.
- Apprenticeship achievements, specifically end point assessments

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and the student experience.

- Finances – the college is £500k down on income and there are some significant increasing costs, particularly in relation to agency staff. The college is seeing staff retention and recruitment challenges. He confirmed that there would be very detailed discussions at the next meeting of the Finance & Estates Committee in relation to the 21/22 budget. The £2.5 million EBITDA target needs to be discussed and whether or not this is the right target, as it is restricting some activities and decisions that the college wants to make.
- Rising stars – there are seven applicants this year.
- NTU impact assessments were shared.
- The college has signed up to the Green College Commitment via the AoC.
- Political update – there are two consultations underway that are really important for WNC, particularly in relation to level 3 proposals. The second is in relation to funding and accountability, which would lead colleges to be more competitive.
- Demographic growth bid – unfortunately, the college was not successful.
- Skills Accelerator – the college has reached out to other colleges in the D2N2 area so that collaboration conversations can start.
- Diary dates – governors' attention was drawn to the information provided. The CEO indicated that governors are very welcome to attend events and that it is certainly the case that their presence is noted. The HE graduation date is 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**14**      **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

**15**      **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

This was confirmed as Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

**16**      **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

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

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

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