



Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on Thursday 10th March 2022 at 5pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Sean Lyons, Chair
 Kate Truscott, Meeting Chair
 Andrew Copley, Principal/CEO
 Andrew Spencer
 Neil McDonald
 Rebecca Joyce
 Ben Owen
 Sardip Sandhu
 Tony Westwater
 Joshua Charles
 William Burton
 Charles Heaton
 Angela Newton-Soanes
 Spencer Moore
 Steve Sutton
 Keith Spiers
 Jane Peacock
 John Winfield

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
 Gavin Peak, Director: IT, Estates & Learning Resources
 Sian Geeson, Head of HR

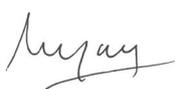
ACTION by whom	DATE by when

- 1 **APPOINTMENT OF THE MEETING CHAIR**

 It was agreed that Kate Truscott would chair this meeting on behalf of Sean Lyons.

- 2 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

 Apologies for absence were received from David Gillies. John Winfield, the new academic staff governor, was welcomed to his first meeting.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 19/05/2022

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The meeting 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.

4 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH FEBRUARY 2022**

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 10th February 2022.

There were no matters arising.

5 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The board were happy to note the content of the update provided. Further information was provided on a number of areas, including:

- Line 2 – the CEO confirmed that the Nottingham College QIP has been obtained and reviewed and, by comparison, WNC is very confident that its own QIP is of high quality and that it has not fallen into the same trap as having too much on the document which prevents focus.
- Line 5 – it was agreed that the implementation date for this would be amended to September 2022, and the VP: CESE confirmed that the college would look to appoint maths and English ambassadors for 22/23. The board were reminded that students have just undertaken mock exams and there has been a deep dive in relation to this, which will help to inform the role of ambassadors. In relation to the action for governors to be invited to student sessions so that they can help to contextualise, it was agreed that governors would contact Eloise Hopkinson directly in relation to this if they felt able to participate.
- Line 6 – Kate Truscott confirmed that she has now met with the health and social care team and has a full morning scheduled to be with them this term, and this will help to give some NHS context.
- Line 7 – mechanisms are now in place to support student governors in terms of giving feedback to the board
- Line 9 – it was confirmed that the note of thanks and appreciation has been sent.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 **SCENE SETTING**

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 19/05/2022

The chair indicated that, from papers circulated in advance of this meeting, there are two particular aspects emerging. These are:

- An increase in financial pressures
- Submission of T Level capital bids

7 **BALANCED SCORECARD REPORTING**

The CEO introduced this item and indicated that there is very little change to the previous report as it has only been one month since the last meeting. Key matters highlighted were:

- The college continues to need to drive up student performance. This has been a challenging year for students in relation to coming out of COVID. There is confidence that student performance will improve, but it is important not to underestimate student anxiety regarding sitting exams. Student ability is a challenge, given the TAGs and missed learning.
- Students are really finding the learning environment challenging, although assurance was given that lots of support has been put in place.
- There was really positive exam attendance for the maths and English mocks, which is a real positive. There are signs of improvement, with English and maths attendance slowly increasing. The position in maths attendance is now 78.5%, which is up from 77%. English attendance is now 77.9%.
- A deep dive of the English department showed that they are safely a grade 2, and the board were reminded that it has previously been a grade 4.
- Governors were able to meet with attendance coaches this afternoon. They were really clear in terms of focus, and their hard work was evident.
- Mocks were a significant investment in terms of time, energy, and costs.
- In relation to apprenticeships, the college is constantly carrying circa 100 vacancies, which is a real challenge. The college is not having difficulty attracting employers; it is the apprentices who are a challenge, given that they can earn more elsewhere in the current market.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

8 **QUALITY AND STANDARDS**

The committee chair introduced the summary report and also drew governors' attention to the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2022.

Key matters highlighted were:

- Good assurance was received regarding TELD developments.
- An excellent community engagement strategy has been

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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developed.

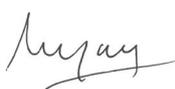
- The CEO is to pull together and give an overview of the key strategies in place.
- Areas still to monitor are:
 - Progress
 - Attendance
 - Areas in construction where there is low attendance but high retention.

The vice principal then drew the board's attention to the deep dive report in relation to teaching and learning. Key matters highlighted were:

- The deep dive has been undertaken recently.
- The college is deliberately focusing on the areas of known risk.
- There is confidence that the quality of education is a grade 2; however, there are some weaker areas, including construction, engineering, health and social care, and some apprenticeship provision.
- The college has also been undertaking deep dives in relation to some of the subcontracted activity and is really focusing in on areas requiring improvement. An example given was Trackwork.
- The college is reviewing health and social care again.
- There is a planned deep dive in relation to maths provision.

Student governors were then invited to provide an update, and they focused on the Your Voice meeting held on 23rd February 2022. Governors' attention was drawn to the minutes of the meeting, and key matters highlighted were:

- There are 64 learner reps across the college, and 40 attended this meeting.
- It was an opportunity to introduce the Students' Union and progress for the year.
- The SU is looking at charity support, and there are plans in place to develop.
- The group discussed summer mocks, where the attendance level was 84%.
- The group also had an opportunity for Q&A. A number of themes emerged, including:
 - Transport
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Car parking spaces at Chesterfield Road; however, there is a view that students are getting used to taking buses more, and staff confirmed that they were looking to introduce additional bus routes.
- Students reported challenges in terms of obtaining work experience, particularly because of COVID: e.g. health and social care students and the NHS limitations.
- The potential to create sports teams which represent the college, and it was felt that there could be more opportunities in

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relation to this.

- Tutorial attendance and the 'value' of these as perceived by students.

In relation to transport, the finance director confirmed that the college is looking at options for 2023, which would involve local bus companies. In relation to tutorials, the vice principal explained that there are mandatory aspects that have to be taught but acknowledged that the imperative now is how to make these sessions engaging. A challenge from the board was to look again at the tutorial programme.

VP: C&Q

Sept. 2022

Governors' attention was drawn to the detailed QIP, and key matters highlighted were:

- The document now highlights where there have been changes, and it relates to 38 actions across five identified weaknesses.
- Page 3 gives a summary of the updates.
- In relation to teaching and learning, comprehensive CPD continues.
- The college continues to strengthen apprenticeship provision. There has been a focus on any aspects of noncompliance, i.e. OneFile data and the frequency of reviews.
- Whilst there is still lots of amber on the document, the college is much further forward in terms of securing 'greens' than ever before.
- A recent hair and beauty deep dive showed provision at a strong 2 and almost at a 1.
- In relation to attendance, the college is making small improvements.
- In relation to tutorials, there is still work to do.
- This is a living, breathing document which is continually reviewed and updated.

In general discussion, the board made an observation regarding page 5 and the number of vacancies in the construction department. They were pleased to see that the vacancy rate is now 7%, which is an improvement on the previously reported 30%. All passed on their appreciation to the HR team, who were described as having really shaken up recruitment efforts in this area. The board were advised that the department has recently undertaken a deep dive and is awaiting a decision as to whether or not provision will be a 3 or a 2.

The board acknowledged that it was now really possible to see the traction in the QIP and that improvements can be seen in all areas. Staff described 'pent-up' improvements which are now coming to fruition and accelerating. All agreed that this was really positive when reflecting on the distance travelled. Governors all agreed that this document really helps them in terms of knowledge and ability to challenge.

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One member of the board asked for further information in relation to the subcontract with Inspire and Achieve. The vice principal expressed the view that the issue is teaching and learning rather than personal development and support for learners. This charity engages with NEETs; however, the college is not seeing the expected level of progression. It was confirmed that the college has been very clear in terms of expectations, and it is now a matter of them delivering the improvements required.

The board's attention was then drawn to the Community Engagement Strategy, and all acknowledged that it now really starts to stitch together other strategies – examples given were Employer Engagement and Curriculum. The vice principal confirmed that the strategy includes ambitions for all staff to 'give something back'. The intention is to use students as positive role models. As an employer, the college can set examples for other employers – an example given was inclusivity, particularly regarding the most vulnerable. The board were advised that the college has been able to build some really good relationships with large partners – examples given were the NHS, the police, and the local authority – and the aim now is to go deeper into the community. In considering the strategy, all agreed that it was well thought out and clear. The CEO reminded that the strategies in place are designed to respond to the external context.

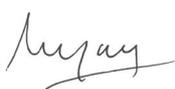
The board's attention was then drawn to the safeguarding and Prevent report. A verbal update was given at the meeting, including:

- The college has now received another allegation of serious peer-on-peer sexual assault.
- A harmful sexual behaviours panel took place, and there are a range of actions agreed; however, the college is not seeing any issues or concerns in relation to this.
- There has been another Prevent referral related to the InCel movement, and this is likely to become a channel referral. The Prevent register has been embedded and updated.
- The college's response to the KCSiE consultation has been submitted.

When considering the statistics, one member of the board noted that there appeared to be an escalation of instances of sexual abuse and assault, and they asked why this was the case. The vice principal indicated that this has been influenced by mental health issues and an increased number of suicidal thoughts. In terms of statistics, 2020/21 saw 27 instances of peer-on-peer sexual harassment/assault for the full year. For 2021/22, the college is not seeing a significantly higher number; however, the instances reported are more serious, and an example given was that there have been five allegations of rape. The police are not taking any further action in relation to four of these, which does make it a difficult situation to manage in college. It was agreed that, in the next

VP CESE

May 2022

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report to Standards Committee, the vice principal would start to include prior year comparison statistics so that governors could better understand the trends.

The vice principal indicated that mental health issues amongst students have significantly increased and are very serious. This was described as a 'long tail' as a result of COVID, particularly in terms of anxiety and lower resilience. The college is also seeing increasing student withdrawals as a result of mental health and, as a consequence, is seeing whether a therapeutic offer can be provided as an alternative. Governors were advised that mental health support is significantly underfunded in other service areas, e.g. NHS, counselling, etc., particularly in relation to youth and adolescent services.

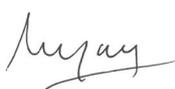
A question from the board was where the link/correlation is, e.g. lack of interaction, increased use of social media, etc. The vice principal expressed the view that it is a combination of many factors, including not returning to school and individuals having retreated into their bedrooms. The college is also seeing an increased level of parental avoidance, which is not helping the situation. A challenge from the board was in terms of how the college can build back the two years of missed social interaction. Staff advised that one initiative, which was positively received, was access to the local outward bounds centre, and this was provided on a weekly basis for level 1 students.

The board questioned how staff are coping with the increased complexity and the recent suicide tragedy. The vice principal indicated that teaching staff were hit much harder than the support teams in relation to the student suicide, and this is because support teams have built up professional barriers over time. Governors indicated that, in a 'meet the welfare team' session earlier in the day, they had been able to explore this, and staff had been very clear in terms of how they can and do access the support mechanisms in place.

Governors' attention was then drawn to the equality and diversity student report, and the vice principal confirmed that the Standards Committee had looked at attendance and progress in detail, particularly any gaps. The college looks to be largely on track in terms of BAME, but there is still a male/female gap which is being investigated. She confirmed that staff are focusing their attention on the progress of the most vulnerable to try to reduce the number of students who repeat/are static or drop down a level year to year.

AGREED:

- a) to note the content of the committee summary report
- b) to note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2022
- c) to approve the Community Engagement Strategy as presented

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- d) to note the content of the QIP
- e) to note the content of the safeguarding/Prevent update
- f) to note the content of the E&D (students) action plan progress update.

9 **WORKFORCE**

The chair of the Workforce Development Committee drew governors' attention to the summary note and the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2022, which the board were happy to note. One member of the board raised a question in relation to the comments summarised from Employee Council meetings, and they asked whether comments were coming from staff or the senior team as reported in the minutes. There was a concern raised regarding the described staff reticence as it is believed that there is now a generally open and listening executive team in place. The CEO expressed the view that there is just a need to keep repeating the open approach and reiterating and restating that the exec team welcome diverse views.

The CEO drew the board's attention to the fact that there have been 26 internal promotions this year, which is a real example of how the college wants to support and invest in staff. All acknowledged that there were lots of positives to be celebrated.

The committee chair advised that the committee is now undertaking deep dives at meetings, and two were considered on 2nd March. These were:

- 1) Safeguarding – key matters highlighted were:
 - There is still one LADO allegation outstanding.
 - The Keeping Children Safe in Education consultation was reviewed, with the most contentious issue relating to safer recruitment, specifically the suggestion that colleges undertake online investigations regarding potential employee candidates.
 - The internal audit report has been received and, whilst not yet formally presented to governors, is being carefully considered. 'Adequate assurance' was the audit opinion, with some key areas identified for action, including:
 - list of contractors on site
 - safer recruitment statement document
 - minor change to the single central register
 - annual DBS self-declaration.
- 2) Equality and diversity action plan – key matters highlighted were:
 - The staff survey is now underway, and some future KPIs will flow from this.
 - The Public Sector Duty Report has led to some actions.

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- The position in relation to staff compliance with mandatory training has increased from 89.3% to 96.21%.

AGREED:

- a) to note the content of the summary report
- b) to note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2022
- c) to note the content of the EDI (staff) action plan update
- d) to note the content of the safeguarding report.

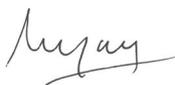
10 **2021/22 MIDYEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST**

The finance director introduced this detailed report and advised that, because of the timings of meetings, presentation to board was slightly out of sync, which has meant it has not yet been reviewed by the Finance and Estates Committee in detail. This will take place at the next meeting. Some key issues identified were:

- Apprenticeship provision
 - The level of withdrawals.
 - The number of pauses in learning.
 - Slower take-up regarding new starts; the college has caught up in terms of numbers but not in terms of finances.
 - Some staff challenges in construction provision.
 - Health and social care activity has been suspended, which may lead to withdrawals. The senior team have debated whether apprenticeships in the care sector are the right thing and that it may actually be better to use AEB to deliver learning, as the sector has no time to release staff to meet apprenticeship requirements.
 - Apprenticeship provision is £1.4 million down in terms of forecast for the year.
 - The college was seeing significant growth but this abruptly stopped.
 - There are approximately 90 to 95 unfilled apprentice vacancies.
 - Growth areas for apprenticeship provision are in construction and engineering, particularly Level 4. The college is trying not to be too optimistic in terms of numbers going forward.
 - The overall position for 2021/22 is down by £1.8 million. Cash will not be problematic, but it does impact on plans to increase cash over the years.

In terms of the 22/23 allocation, key matters highlighted were:

- 8.3% rate increase, but 16-18 recruitment this year has been lower than expected.
- £250k loss in relation to maths and English.
- There are lower student numbers in the 16-18 allocation next

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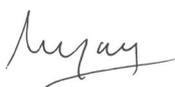
- year.
- Growth, as a consequence of the rate increase, is wiped out by the reduction in student numbers and the maths and English funding reduction.
 - There are lots of other challenges for next year, including:
 - Energy costs – there is a known £60k extra in relation to electricity, and increases to gas are also expected
 - National Insurance increases
 - Increases to the minimum wage.
 - The college does expect student growth in 2022/23 but has to take a cautious approach given what happened in September 2021.
 - It is envisaged that the next two academic years will be very challenging.
 - Demographics are increasing, and data suggests a 10% increase in 16-18-year-olds by 2026.
 - Some targeted areas of savings have been identified, and it is believed that the college can absorb the challenges.
 - The aim is always to protect quality.
 - The assumption is a 2.5% pay inflationary increase; however, it is likely that staff and unions will expect more than this. This will have to be carefully considered in December 2022.

FD

Dec. 2022

A question from the board was in terms of more information regarding the apprenticeship vacancies. It was explained that the highest rate of vacancies is in the area of business and administration and that this has been influenced by what they can earn elsewhere. The college will need to respond differently and offer other study options, e.g. when periods of study start. One member of the board asked whether employers would pay more to an apprentice, and the view expressed was that they may have to consider this as there is significant demand from employers. The board were advised that there are a number of areas where supply and demand are both buoyant; these are in engineering, construction, and accountancy. The college is also reviewing the time taken to achieve an apprenticeship, particularly for those who already have some experience.

A question and challenge from the board was whether or not the yearend position will be a negative bottom line because of likely depreciation, it being acknowledged that depreciation is not helpful in the FE sector. The FD expressed the view that any significant consequence is not envisaged and that the college would be in a similar position because of the pension deficit too. He confirmed that the aim and aspiration is to generate 10% EBITDA, which would be £3.3 million each year. The expectation for yearend is that the college will be cash positive at £1.8 million and that this is a positive situation compared with many other colleges. The board asked what the impact will be on the financial health calculation, and he advised that current forecasting puts

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the college on boundary between good and RI. Reducing the level of debt is a positive, and the college will be debt-free by 2026/27.

In terms of adjustments, one member of the board asked whether any more are expected. The FD expressed the view that more were unlikely as the college has had a number of audits where the data has been reviewed, and there is confidence that it is clean. The board were advised that student numbers for 2020/21 were 3,200, whereas the actual position for 2021/22 is 3,050, and this will impact upon the allocation.

Finance
Committee

May 2022

The board were, in principle, supportive of the reforecast proposals and asked that the Finance and Estates Committee review in more detail at their next meeting.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

(Matt Vaughan left the meeting at 6.50pm)

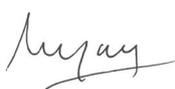
11 T LEVEL CAPITAL BID

The finance director provided a verbal update and confirmed that the team had been working hard to finalise the bid proposed. Key matters highlighted were:

- The team were able to finalise the content of the bid last night.
- This is part of wave 4 funding.
- The ESFA has introduced a number of areas of eligible provision.
- The intention is for the college to apply for engineering in wave 5.
- The T Levels planned are in relation to early years, construction, and digital.
- The proposal includes capital alteration in a number of areas, including:
 - 1) Chesterfield Road at a cost of £300k
 - 2) Derby Road – the plan is to remove the spa and make an office area to free up teaching space. Some music areas are also to be converted to make larger teaching spaces. Anticipated costs are between £260k and £270k.
- The ESFA indicator of success is 50/50 contribution. The college believes it can contribute £125k in 2022/23.

The finance director indicated that the bid requires a particular format for approval, which needs to be incorporated into the meeting minutes. The board were happy to agree these, which were:

- The governing body approved a bid to the ESFA wave 4 T Level Capital Fund for digital, construction and early years T Levels. The total proposed spend is £567k, with £462k requested from the ESFA and £125k funded by the college.

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- The governing body noted that, with a planned EBITDA of £1.8 million in 2021/22 and £2 million in 2022/23, the college's capacity to fund above 20% was limited. With this investment, cash days are planned to be just over 30 days in March 2023.
- The college has annual debt costs of £340k in 2022/23 and significant demand for investment in curriculum resources and IT after a period of three years wherein spending was held to a minimum due to financial intervention. Consequently, the college cannot meet a 50% contribution rate for this project.

The board were happy to support the proposals as presented.

The finance director expressed confidence regarding the costs and that a robust case was to be submitted.

12 **AUDIT AND RISK**

The board were happy to simply note the content of the meeting minutes held on 8th February 2022, it being the case that a verbal update on meeting discussions was provided to the board on 10th February 2022.

13 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The content of the comprehensive written report was noted, and matters highlighted were:

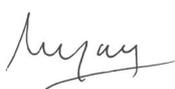
- The college is now starting to see a growth in student numbers.
- The college is seeing some interesting information regarding progression, with some being positive and others not quite so.
- In relation to the funding and accountability framework, all Nottinghamshire colleges have agreed to participate; however, none of the Derbyshire colleges have.
- Futures – really positive progress, and the college is in a position to ask for funding in relation to a pilot.
- Maths Multiplier – hoping for full buy-in and participation.
- The supported internship growth bid was successful.
- There is a lot of good work happening within the college to support Ukraine.

The board acknowledged that there was an enormous amount of work underway, and they expressed their thanks to each and every member of staff.

AGREED to note the content of the report provided.

14 **GOVERNANCE – FEEDBACK FROM THE SENIOR POSTHOLDER AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD EARLIER IN THE DAY**

The director of governance summarised matters considered and

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confirmed that the full minutes of the meeting would be presented in May 2022. Key matters highlighted were:

- Midyear performance review for all senior postholders.
- Board review for 2022, including membership. There is currently one vacancy for an independent governor, and six governors are due to complete their current term of office in October 2022. Of these six, there are likely to be reappointment proposals for two or three: one short-term extension recommendation to December 2022 and two governors definitely concluding. Both student governors also conclude their term of office on 31st July 2022. If direct recruitment attempts are not successful, the committee will be considering a tender exercise to appoint recruitment consultants for between four and five vacancies.
- Attendance (governors) – 2020/21 data was compared with sector benchmarks with no issues identified. Also considered was 2021/22 data, where there appear to be some attendance challenges for a small number of governors to be explored further.
- Training and development – a comprehensive list was shared.
- Engagement activities – again, a comprehensive list was shared.
- Planning for 2022/23 – the group reviewed committees and frequency of all meetings.
- FE workforce governor data collection – this was a reminder that it would shortly be circulated to governors.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

15 **AOB**

There were no matters of additional business to discuss.

16 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

This was confirmed as Thursday 19th May 2022 at 5pm.

(Staff and students left the meeting at 7.05pm)

17 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

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

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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