

Minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 10th October 2019 at 5.05pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT:
 Rebecca Joyce
 Neil McDonald
 Andrew Cropley, Principal & CEO
 Martin Rigley
 Steve Sutton
 Sean Lyons, Chair
 Paul Frammingham
 Sardip Sandhu
 Spencer Moore
 Tony Westwater
 Charles Heaton
 Melanie Stirland (from 6.10pm)
 Mary Mamik
 Kate Truscott
 Sophie Welbourn (from 6.10pm)
 Jessica Stowe (from 6.10pm)


ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:
 Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
 Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement & Student Experience
 Gavin Peake, Director of IT & Estates
 Jon Fearon, Finance Director
 Suzanna Smith, HR Director
 Sue Martin, interim Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
 Julia Brooks, ESFA observer

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

- WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

New Student Governors, Jessica Stowe and Sophie Welbourn, were welcomed to their first meeting, as was Julia Brooks from the ESFA, who was standing in for Jane Peacock.

Apologies were received from Jane Hawksford, Lee Radford, Clive Pitt and Mark Williams.
- DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Signed :  Chair

Date:

The Chairman reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific interests were declared and standing declarations were noted. The Clerk specifically drew Governors' attention to the summary of interests declared in the annual update exercise recently undertaken.

3 NTU PARTNERSHIP – HEADS OF TERMS

It was agreed that discussions on this item would be recorded on a confidential basis.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH SEPTEMBER 2019

The minutes were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2019.

There were no matters arising.

5 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The Board were happy to note the content of the update provided. In relation to line 5, the Principal confirmed that the Mission, Vision and Values booklet had now been prepared and had gone to print. In relation to line 12, the Finance Director confirmed that due diligence in relation to Chameleon Construction has not yet been concluded, therefore the requested management accounts have not been provided.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE CHAIR FOLLOWING THE MEETING ON 17TH SEPTEMBER 2019

The Committee Chair drew Governors' attention to his summary report and also the full minutes of the meeting held. He confirmed that a copy of the risk register had been included for information and that Governors will see that some suggested changes were agreed at the meeting.

He confirmed that the Committee had taken the opportunity to review the Whistleblowing Policy and minor in year amends are suggested, and then a rewrite will be undertaken in line with the usual schedule in June 2020. He drew Governors' attention to the proposed changes highlighted in red.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the summary report provided,
- b) To note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting,

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

- c) To note the content of the updated Risk Register for 19/20, and
- d) Approve the amendments proposed to the Whistleblowing Policy as presented.

7 STANDARDS COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT FOLLOWING THE MEETING HELD ON 24TH SEPTEMBER 2019

The Committee Chair's short report was presented and it was explained that the purpose of the meeting had been to focus on SAR training. It was noted that Neil McDonald had also attended the workshop but that his name was missing from the 'Governors present' list; the Clerk confirmed that she would update. It was confirmed that the committee Chair has now had a meeting with the interim Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality to discuss the visual representation of data, and she has been given assurance that plans are in place to ensure that this requested development is accelerated.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

8 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT FOLLOWING THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2ND OCTOBER 2019

The Board were advised that a significant amount of time was spent reviewing the People Strategy, with the clear steer that the college needs to support staff to do the best that they can for students. The Board were asked, in line with discussion points at the meeting, to approve the People Strategy.

In relation to college policies, it has been agreed that there needs to be a more manageable plan in place to review and prioritise. The HR Director has been tasked with reviewing the planned dates to ensure that this process does not become too burdensome for all involved.

The HR Director confirmed that the People Strategy is intended to be very orientated around staff. Unison and UCU feedback has now been received, with Unison focussing on health and wellbeing and challenges in terms of behaviour management. UCU seem to be focussing on 'performance'. She advised that she will explain that the intent of the strategy is support and to enable all teams to become high performing.

Communication has been picked up as an issue and the intention is therefore to review on a team by team basis and consult. A challenge for staff seems to be finding the time to communicate effectively.

The Committee also discussed the staff survey and agreed that it was a good starting point for the future. Staff have communicated a clear desire for development opportunities.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

- b) Approve the People Strategy presented.

9 **COMMITTEE CHAIRS REPORT FOLLOWING THE FINANCE & ESTATES
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2ND OCTOBER 2019**

The Committee Chair confirmed that there was significant discussion regarding the IT Strategy and that governors were assured that the college is in a good place. In terms of financials, the underlying performance is slightly better than the mid-year and financial recovery plan. Cash and headroom look healthy. A key date for the college is October 2020 regarding the bank covenants. Contribution analysis was discussed and it was agreed that this needs to be linked more closely with other metrics.

The Board were advised that the Committee also took the opportunity to review the Terms of Reference and minor amendments are proposed.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided
- b) Approve the IT Strategy as presented
- c) Approve the amended Terms of Reference as presented.

10 **VBSS DIRECTORS' MEETING HELD ON 2ND OCTOBER 2019**

The Chair of the Board of Directors confirmed that this was a special meeting convened to particularly look at two specific issues, i.e. a pension contribution shortfall and Christmas closure dates. She confirmed that the Board of Directors had agreed the forward direction as can be seen in the minutes. A question from one member of the Board was whether it is normal to give extra annual leave for Christmas. It was explained that, contractually, the company can direct some days but not enough, and that, in real terms, staff don't have the option of coming into college as the building is closed.

In relation to the pension position, it was explained that, when the scheme was established, it was only determined that basic salary was pensionable; however, this now needs to be addressed as it is giving rise to an anomaly.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

11 **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair provided a verbal update and confirmed:

- The college will be visited by Lord Agnew and the FE Commissioner next week. There are a number of principals also invited to this meeting, which is being hosted here.
- The next FE Commissioner stocktake visit has now been scheduled for 12th November 2019. This is a visit to follow up on the college's progress regarding the June visit recommendations.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

- The college has received a letter from the ESFA requiring us to give assurance regarding subcontracting systems. 1st November 2019 is the deadline date for this.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

12 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principal drew Governors' attention to his written update and also advised that the government has just announced the timescales for the next batch of T-Level delivery. He confirmed that the criteria for participating in T-Level delivery includes:

- A 'good' Ofsted grade,
- Financial health score of 'satisfactory' by 2022, and
- 10 students in each of the T-Level courses.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

13 **GOVERNANCE**

The Clerk introduced her detailed written report and an update was provided on a number of aspects.

1) Governance Self-Assessment Summary Report

She confirmed that this was provided for information and confirmed a number of proposed changes to address some of the points made. These include:

- Three meetings in the year to focus on the progress being made regarding the strategic objectives agreed (November, February and May).
- The agenda to be more clearly split so that items for information only are more clearly identified. The intention is to take these reports as read with questions only, rather than the reports being presented and talked through at the meeting.
- Strategic review day is in the diary for 25th March 2020.
- Every agenda item to have a short summary report that clearly identifies for Governors the issues, the risks and the recommendations.

2) Governance KPI proposals for 2019/20

The Board had substantial discussion regarding whether KPIs ought to be set, and it was felt that key matters to be monitored, e.g. attendance etc., are picked up elsewhere, therefore it is not helpful to have a separate set of governance KPIs.

3) Register of Interests summary

This was provided for information only and noted.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

4) Student Governor Vacancies/Recruitment

The Clerk confirmed that, at the last meeting, an update was provided on the recruitment process. There were four expressions of interest for the two vacancies, however, two of these subsequently withdrew (one for health reasons and the other because Board meeting times clashed with regular study time at college). This then means that the two remaining students go forward for appointment unopposed; these are Sophie Welbourn, who is a second year student on a Travel and Tourism course, and Jessica Stowe, who is a second year student on an Access to Teaching course. The Clerk put forward the proposal that they be appointed as Student Governors from 10th October 2019 to 31st July 2020.

AGREED:

- a) Note the outcomes of the governance self-assessment process,
- b) Note the register of interests declared, and
- c) Approve the appointment of Sophie Welbourn and Jessica Stowe as Student Governors from 10th October 2019 to 31st July 2020.

14 **SAFEGUARDING, E&D AND PREVENT**

The Vice Principal provided a verbal update and confirmed that 200 referrals were received in September, which is a similar position to the prior year. There are 1,656 students flagged on the risk register, of which 219 are red and 177 amber. This is a higher number than last year and is contributed to by the fact that the college has earlier knowledge regarding its students. One student is subject to a multiagency meeting regarding county lines. The college cannot take the risk of having this individual on college premises and is therefore seeking alternative provision. The college has also received one appeal from social services regarding a student who was refused a place.

The Vice Principal confirmed that the college is seeing some behaviour issues that need to be addressed, particularly in Foundation Studies. The college is putting in some additional resource regarding mentors/support. Behaviour challenges are particularly focused around learners on Level 1 Health and Social Care and Childcare. She explained that student behaviour is not more challenging than before, but that the college simply does not have the same capacity to be able to deal with it. It was confirmed that training for all staff is being arranged in relation to behaviour management.

At the highest level, there are 20 students who are considered to be the most at risk; five of these are of significant concern to the college. She advised that one student made an attempt on their life and has been hospitalised. There are 48 LAC/care leavers, which is double the number seen last year.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

She advised that the college is picking up some issues in relation to drugs, more so than has previously been the case. The intention is to do a live training event with police dogs; in addition, the college is running some drug awareness training sessions for students.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

15 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

16 **EXCEPTIONS**

The Chair and Principal confirmed that there were no exceptions to report.

17 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting is 14th November 2019 at 5pm.

Meeting closed at 7pm.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

