

**Minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 5pm**

**GOVERNORS PRESENT:**  
 Kate Truscott (meeting Chair)  
 Neil McDonald  
 Mark Williams  
 Jayne Hawksford  
 Melanie Stirland  
 Tony Westwater  
 Sardip Sandhu  
 Sophie Welbourn  
 Rebecca Joyce  
 Spencer Moore  
 Charles Heaton  
 Paul Frammingham  
 Andrew Cropley, Principal & CEO

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**  
 Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation  
 Louise Knott, Vice Principal Communications Engagement & Student Experience  
 Jon Fearon, Finance Director  
 Matt Vaughan, Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality  
 Suzanna Smith, HR Director & Organisational Development  
 Mike Firth, ESFA Observer

Lewis Thacker, Derby Road Site President  
 Jordan Stanford, Oddicraft Lane Site President  
 Lewis Dawson, Station Park Site President  
 Callan Kemp, Champion of Events  
 Josh Levy, Champion of Creative Arts and Media

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

Apologies were received from Sean Lyons, Martin Rigley, Mary Mamik, Jessica Stowe, Lee Radford, Clive Pitt and Steve Sutton.

Members of the Students' Union were welcomed to the meeting and round table introductions were made.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

Signed: Kate Truscott Chair

Date:

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.

### **3 STUDENTS' UNION PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE UPDATE**

Representatives of the Students' Union were warmly welcomed to the meeting, and each was given an opportunity to explain their priorities and their purpose for standing for the roles now appointed to. They took the opportunity to set out their campaign principles and their hopes and aspirations for the different sites. They summarised the events that have taken place so far in the autumn term and the funds raised for charity.

There were a number of matters specifically brought to the Board's attention, including:

- The intention to create a physical 'presence' for the Students' Union at Derby Road, which would include a specific presence to support LGBT.
- There is a need for every student to have a good experience at college and therefore it is important that all students attend and participate. This is to be supported through the work of the SU.
- The aim is for the SU to be approachable
- The intention is for college life to be the best it possibly can for all students

Their slide presentation explained what the SU offers to students and also the intended impact by the end of the academic year.

They drew Governors' attention to the development plan created, and confirmed that they would work through the objectives and key actions throughout the year.

A question from one member of the Board was how the SU engages with students and receives suggestions. It was explained that this is through the 'your voice' meetings and also that the SU on the site has an open door policy that encourages all students to pop in and share their thoughts. Members of the SU also attend tutorial sessions where a short introduction, very similar to the one given to Governors today, is presented. They provided assurance to the Board that, through these mechanisms, they will seek as much feedback as possible.

The Board questioned whether it was possible for the SU to have a presence on open days and enrolments. It was confirmed that this is possible and it was agreed that the SU would have a stand so that potential students could speak to individuals and that a rolling programme for the future would be created.

They explained that the intended impact for the year is set out in the business plan and that lines of communication already exist with the Executive to quickly share any issues identified. They confirmed that a

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Date:

priority was work to fill in student timetable gaps effectively, to really engage with students. Key functions for the SU this year are:

- Enrichment
- Engagement
- Involvement in deep dives in the classrooms to give feedback on quality as perceived from a students' perspective. They would like the opportunity to share best practice seen to ensure consistency for all students. They confirmed that they would be provided with training on this. A challenge from the Board was that there needs to be an effective way of recording student views, including any of the deep dive activities undertaken.

The Board questioned whether members of the SU felt that they were getting sufficient support from the college: it was confirmed that they are.

The Board asked for details of any frustrations. The Board were advised that the lack of a distinct budget is a huge challenge. They explained that the SU lost the support of the student experience team in the restructure last year and very definitely feel the loss of this resource.

In general discussion, the Board acknowledged that what has been created is a very ambitious development plan. They thought it was an excellent document which stated some really positive intentions to improve the student/learning experience.

A question and challenge from the Board was in terms of broad student engagement, including ethnicity, gender, etc. It was confirmed that the SU wants to provide opportunities for all students and that part and parcel of this will be to raise awareness for all minorities. The Executive team confirmed that a budget is available to the Students' Union, and it was agreed that the Vice Principal: Engagement and Student Experience would speak to the SU representatives in relation to this.

VP

Jan 2020

In terms of the roles of the individuals contributing to the SU, it was explained that the 'champions' are selected by the SU presidents, rather than the broader student population. These are individuals who have shown a willingness and commitment to a particular area of focus or activity. A question and challenge from the Board was in terms of continuity, and they made the observation that they would not want to see the great momentum created lost or diminished. The Principal explained that the college is looking at bringing forward the president elections to the summer term so as to avoid any gaps.

It was confirmed that joint meetings have been arranged between the Executive management team and the Student Union, and it is envisaged that this will create constructive dialogue to identify any issues and bring forward initiatives and actions. They confirmed that one of the projects planned is to improve the social media presence.

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

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The Board took the opportunity to thank Richard Skelhorn and all the student volunteers for their hard work to date. They encouraged the Students' Union to use Governors as a resource, and Governors around the table all took the opportunity to describe their 'day job' and explain how it may potentially connect to SU activities. Students were thanked for their presentation today and it was agreed that they would attend the June 2020 meeting to give an update on how the year has progressed against the Development Plan.

SU  
Executive

June 2020

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

(Students' Union representatives left the meeting at 5.45pm)

#### **4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2019**

The minutes were reviewed and one suggested amendment was requested at page 11. The start of the final paragraph to read 'The Director of HR and Organisational Development...' rather than 'She...'. Subject to this minor change, it was agreed that the minutes of the meeting were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

There were no matters arising.

#### **5 ACTIONS PROGRESS TRACKER**

The Board were happy to note the content of the update provided. In relation to line 2 it was explained that the next employer engagement event is scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 which will be a DWP lunchtime event.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

#### **6 STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS – CURRICULUM PLANNING 20/21**

The Principal provided a presentation to the Board and it was agreed that copies of his slides would be uploaded to the portal so that Governors have them as a point of reference. He described this as a really exciting point in time in terms of the process for curriculum planning. In terms of the information to be provided to Governors to aid discussion, this will include:

- Introduction – a brief reflection on the strategic plan and, in particular, the ASPIRE curriculum.
- Process timeline and template – a summary of key dates at the start of the process and milestones later on, the structure provided to HoDs and APs to help them approach curriculum planning from a fresh perspective.
- Financial assumptions – how the college will set contribution

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Date:

targets, how the college will handle funding for English and maths, subject weightings, disadvantaged uplift etc. What we will do to ensure that the planned student numbers (course by course) are as accurate as they can be.

- Planning tools – brief paper-based demo of 4Cast, the curriculum planning software.
- Maths and English – urgent action is underway to improve the outcomes of maths and English in the current year, but we will explore some more radical options that are being considered for 20/21.
- Additional learning support – how curriculum planning can ensure that every student can fulfil their potential, regardless of disability, difficulty, distraction or disadvantage.
- Link in to NTU – how we make sure that the college offer supports and benefits from the NTU offer on campus.
- Adults – what will be in the curriculum plan to ensure that the college achieves its strategic objectives relating to adults and to deliver more locally and directly.
- Opportunities – what opportunities there are for doing things differently. We will explore possible uses for Chesterfield Road including, A-Levels, foundation and engagement and/or automation and robotics.

In terms of the presentation, a number of key matters were noted:

- The college has procured the 4Cast tool and training has been provided today to curriculum managers.
- Curriculum planning is well underway and:
  - Aligns with the college's mission;
  - Is intended to raise aspirations and be a real force in relation to this;
  - Requires the commitment to invest in staff and ensure they are empowered to be creative and then to push students forward.
- The ASPIRE curriculum is aligned to the EIF in terms of the intent criteria and is therefore really relevant.
- The senior team is working hard to drive down the 'rules' to allow curriculum managers to be creative, innovative and imaginative. The college has been able to narrow the rules down to only five.

The Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality drew Governors' attention to the curriculum planning timeline for 20/21. He indicated that a real focus is to ensure that staff feel liberated to develop and create. The planned meetings in February and March are the initial opportunities to consider proposals and, during these, ideas and assumptions will be tested and challenged. The curriculum development also includes provision for enrichment, tutorials and cross-college events.

Governors were referred to the steps developed to create the curriculum.

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

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- Step 1 – consideration of how LMI/LEP/EMSI factors have been taken in to account.
  - In terms of the EMSI data, it was explained that this is available widely with over half of the sector utilising it. All data available is a tool for the heads of department to use with their teams alongside the seven steps to consider. A visual demonstration was provided in relation to the four sections of data available, and it was confirmed that a more detailed presentation would be provided at the March strategy day. The Principal advised that the college does not yet have access to a detailed competitor analysis, however, rich data is obtained through ONS, LA, LEP, etc. A challenge from the Board was that, alongside data provided by LMI/LEP, it is important that decisions also have to be linked to local intelligence, with a need to triangulate. In considering the system examples given, all agreed that the business case report tool was very helpful as this helps to focus on core curriculum design and also gives consideration to the ‘softer skills’.
- Step 2 – what destinations did all leavers transition to last year? How does this information inform the curriculum?
  - It was explained that this links to whether or not the curriculum remains fit for purpose and is helping/enabling students to go into employment or progression.
- Step 3 – what needs to change and why? Do the proposed changes embrace the ASPIRE curriculum?
- Step 4 – how will learners improve their industry specific knowledge, skills and behaviours? How will the curriculum develop learners’ entrepreneurialism and work-related skills?
- Step 5 – overview of any new curriculum offer. What is no longer being provided and why?
- Step 6 – the proposed curriculum offer 20/21 per level: overview.
- Step 7 – progression pathways.

Principal

March  
2020

In considering the 4Cast system, it was agreed that Governors would have a live demo at a future meeting so that they are able to see the system in action. The Principal confirmed that the curriculum aims to be a blend of the efficient and the exciting.

A question and challenge from the Board was in terms of how the college supports staff to deliver what is going to be required and planned in the future. The Principal explained that the 4Cast tool purchased gives clarity and optimism and that sitting alongside this will be a full CPD plan, and a skills audit will be undertaken. The Board questioned how this fits with financial modelling. The Principal confirmed that the system allows staff to test plans and analyse trends. He expressed the view that there will always be some ‘winners and losers’ regarding contribution, but that

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what is important is to create a balance. He indicated that the system allows the college to plan for reality and, because of this, staff can make the hard decisions now rather than wait until September. He confirmed that staff will own the curriculum planning process through the use of 4Cast and that this helps them to better create budgets and set expectations. He described it as a real step change in terms of the way the college is undertaking planning.

The Principal advised that the aim is for curriculum areas to look at more efficient delivery so that the college can then create a programme of investment. A challenge from the Board was that the college needs to be forward thinking in terms of the skills needed and the equipment required that students will need to be trained on. The Board questioned what the timeline is for future curriculum development. The Principal explained that now is the time to plan for September 2020 and that, at the March strategy day, Governors and the senior team will look at 20/21 and beyond. It was acknowledged that each curriculum area requires a specific strategy and, to sit alongside this, the college can then develop a capital investment plan. A challenge from the board was to really have confidence that staff know what is needed for the future.

The Principal then went on to discuss ALS and the wraparound provision: he described them as 'the golden threads to employment and progression'. He is of the view that employability is fundamental and that full use of partners to support this is critically important. He discussed the concept of employer-based academies, assisted apprenticeships and supported internship placements. He confirmed that these were pilot areas to explore for the future.

In terms of the NTU offer, it was confirmed that the college is engineering its curriculum to support progression and is in discussion with NTU regarding guaranteed places.

The Vice Principal set out proposals for the development of the curriculum in relation to robotics, automation and mechatronics. Site options and available kit were discussed in detail and the Board all agreed that they were supportive of the proposal to progress with curriculum development for 20/21. It was explained that part and parcel of this is the development of an employer-led forum.

The Principal advised that a key part of college improvement includes system and process developments and that, to support this, a number of projects and charters have been created. A diagnostic review of systems and processes was undertaken in December with three key priority areas emerging, which are:

- Apprenticeships
- Curriculum planning
- Enrolment.

From these priority areas a project list has been created: this includes:

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- Enrolment – application to enrolment
- Enrolment event
- Enrolment first 42 days
- Data – quality data
- Data – other data
- Paper-based processes
- Roles and responsibilities
- Apprenticeships
- Curriculum planning.

Each of these projects includes:

- Problems/opportunity statement
- Goals (deliverables)
- Estimated timing
- Team and stakeholders
- Expected benefits
- In scope
- Key risks/dependencies (mitigation)
- Out of scope

Each project has a sponsor, with next steps identified as:

- Problem statements – clarity, focus, consistency
- Goals – priority and urgency
- Benefits – potential target metrics
- Risks – common/between projects
- Scope – linkages/overlap/gaps
- Estimated timelines – impact, alignment
- Teams – names for each project, and across all projects
- Support needed – internal/external resource, training.

The Board all agreed that it was really pleasing to see such a coordinated and consistent approach.

The Principal next asked the Board to consider a number of possible opportunities regarding the use the Chesterfield Road site. The site has a net value as the asset but as an alternative to this could be used either to

- Provide A-Levels, or
- House the most vulnerable learners.

In terms of developing a Mansfield A-Level sixth form centre, it was explained that the current offer is disparate in the area and therefore there is an opportunity: potentially, the college could access regeneration funding. The alternative is a completely different proposal for foundation learners and would serve an entirely different cohort.

A question and challenge from the Board was in terms of the motivation for considering the options presented. It was explained that these include:

- Increasing the adult offer in the town centre.

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- Net position of selling is circa £750k, however, to replace the same level of classroom space in the future would cost circa £3.5 million.

In terms of the options, a challenge from the Board was that they would need to see a very clear business case developed should a recommendation come forward that either option be proposed more formally. One Governor raised the question as to whether or not the options presented would be a management distraction.

Principal

2020

Following discussion, the Board agreed that they were happy to support initial explorations but agreed that they would need to see much more information provided before being asked to make any formal decisions. It was agreed that, if either option progresses, a tour of the facilities would be provided for Governors.

The Principal was thanked for his informative presentation.

AGREED to note the content of the update provided.

## 7 FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Finance Director presented this item and confirmed that it was principally intended to put forward an indicative 20/21 financial forecast. He explained that it is a real challenging point in time to undertake forecasts, given that a significant number of assumptions have to be made. He explained that the Finance Committee would review in detail, with two further opportunities for consideration in January and February. It is still the case that the college will need to agree a budget in July when there is more certainty. He explained that the college does not yet know with certainty the 20/21 allocations, therefore, at this stage, the forecasts are indicative.

He drew Governors' attention to his detailed written report and asked Governors to consider:

- The new ESFA financial monitoring and forecasting process;
- Issues faced by all colleges in creating the 20/21 forecast; and
- Key assumptions within the plan and the risks.

The key assumptions within the plan and the risks were considered and it was noted that these will be tested in more detail by the Finance & Estates Committee. It was specifically noted that the impact of the partnership with NTU will be neutral at the start but then will increase over time. A question from the Board was whether or not the forecast dovetails with the curriculum plan. It was explained that it is too early in the process to confirm this, however, the assumptions detailed are what drives the curriculum planning process. The Finance Director explained that the forecast does two things;

- Confirms the first four-month actuals, and
- Details what is expected in the remaining eight months.

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He confirmed the intention to use the reforecasting process as a refinement to the college's own processes.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided
- b) To note the key assumptions and target EBITDA
- c) To receive a further update to the forecast at the 13<sup>th</sup> February board meeting for in principle approval; thereafter, delegated authority to be provided to the Finance & Estates Committee (who meet on 27<sup>th</sup> February) to approve the final version before submission to the ESFA.

#### NOVEMBER 2019 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Key matters that the Finance Director brought to Governors' attention were:

- The college remains on track.
- The college is behind in terms of income but is not concerned as this stage.
- The college's turnover for the year is forecast to be £30,869,000; this has been amended from the initial budget as this excludes £985k of bursary funds and employer incentives that the college pays directly to recipients acting as agents only. The equivalent amount is also excluded from non-pay costs, and this treatment is in line with reporting in the college's statutory accounts.
- The college is on track overall, with turnover to date of £10.2 million. The EBITDA of £1,127k is £92k higher than budget, whilst EBITDA after exceptional items is £211k better than budget at £1,246k.
- The group overall is on track, with turnover to date of £11.3 million. EBITDA of £1,719k is £76k higher than budget, whilst EBITDA after exceptional items is £195k better than budget at £1,838k.
- The anticipation is that the yearend pay costs will be circa £300k less than budget even with the recent additional investment made.
- Line 43 is a balance sheet transaction.

The Board considered the format of information provided and all agreed that they found section 1 really helpful in terms of quickly summarising the financial performance.

The Finance Director advised that there are a number of additional refinements to make to the accounts going forward – these are in relation to:

- Page 9 cash flow.
- Cash returns to the ESFA and the modelling/timing of these. The intention is to agree a plan with the ESFA and Lloyds Bank.
- Management accounts will include reporting on covenants going forward. He advised that November is not a 'covenant quarter',

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but provided assurance that there are no issues or concerns.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

The Finance Director advised that the ILR funding audit has now concluded, with verbal feedback having been provided. A written report is anticipated shortly. He explained that auditors were very complimentary in terms of the college's processes and procedures and that, whilst the college was unable to provide 'perfect data', it was able to provide the required evidence to support the claims made.

He advised that auditors also looked at apprenticeship provision in greater detail, and in particular the requirement to meet conditions of funding. There is a risk regarding recovery of between £105 and £120k, as a maximum. This should be set against the context that the college had provided the sum of £300k against this risk and potential liability.

The Board all agreed that this was a really good outcome and expressed their thanks and appreciation to the team. They made the observation that it was pleasing to see that there had been definite and clear improvements in relation to the quality of data available.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## 8 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principal's detailed report was considered and he particularly drew out a number of sections for discussion.

- Section 2 – Strategic Objectives

The college has a strategic objective to increase the percentage of students achieving their target grades by 10%. Governors have questioned whether this is sufficiently ambitious. The baseline is:

- a) Proportion of students (excluding A-Levels) achieving their target grade in 18/19: 58.5%.
- b) Proportion of A-Level students achieving their target grade in 18/19: 42.7%

The 10% increase would see these numbers rise to 64.35% and 46.97% respectively. These seem quite low, especially the latter; therefore, he put forward the proposal that the targets be adjusted to 67% and 55% respectively.

AGREED: to approve the amendments to the targets as presented.

- Section 4 – Enrolment Update

The Principal advised that, as at Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020, applications for 16-18 year olds are 246 down against the same point last year, 139 of which are from the college's own current student body. This may be a

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timing issue in terms of progression work, however, the college is 107 applicants down from school leavers with motor vehicle, engineering, health & social care, sport and public services and beauty being of particular concern. However, acceptances are 107 up, and A-Levels are level on applicants and 123 acceptances up against the same point last year. He provided the Board with assurance that staff are looking at what can be done to maximise and address the current trend.

- Business Improvement Project

He described this as 'trying to get ahead of the game' and explained that sitting behind each area of focus is a project plan. It was agreed that regular updates on progress would be provided to the Board. It was agreed that copies of all nine of the project plans would be made available to Governors on the portal. It was confirmed that the Executive team will operate the governance of these projects, with each acting as a project sponsor.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

- Risk Register

PMO audit will be removed from the risk register now that the outcome of the ILR audit is known.

9 **SAFEGUARDING, PREVENT & EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY – EXCEPTIONS REPORT**

The Vice Principal provided a verbal update and advised that unfortunately there have been three young people last week who were considered to be either a suicide risk or actually attempted to take their own life. Details regarding one of the individuals were emailed out to Governors and it was confirmed that CAMHS are involved and a support package is being led by them. One of the three students took 65 pills. For the third student, the college called an ambulance as the individual had brought a knife into college intending to take his life. Emergency mental health assessment in hospital was undertaken, however, he was released back home. The Vice Principal confirmed that college staff remain concerned about him.

She advised that there were three students with concerns regarding county lines. One has now gone to an alternative provider and one has withdrawn.

The Vice Principal advised that previously she had reported concerns regarding partner provider returns on safeguarding issues, particularly in relation to the Inspire and Achieve Foundation. She indicated that, following review, the returns are now being received and that it was in fact a failure in terms of the college's systems not the partner's. She confirmed that all partners have been reminded of their obligations on

Principal

Principal

March  
May & July  
2020  
Jan. 2020

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attendance reporting requirements, particularly for 16-18 year olds.

She expressed the view that staff welfare needs to be monitored and that the college has asked for formal arrangements with the hospital regarding supervised sessions.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**10**      **EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Vice Principal introduced her detailed written report and confirmed that what was presented is an overarching strategy and is not just about apprenticeships. She explained that staff have tried to pull all of the strands together and taken a 3-year approach to the objectives set.

She drew Governors' attention to the proposed year 1 targets for 19/20 and explained that the college is looking at a number of particular developments, including:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Insurance industries
- Vanderlande

The Board questioned whether there were any risks to the plan. The Vice Principal indicated that there were risks associated with the college's capacity to develop and respond quickly. There is a need to train people within the college, including in marketing and customer service. All agreed that it is important for staff to have an opportunity to go out to employers to unlock the potential.

The Board were advised that NTU have two employer engagement staff who will be co-located on the Derby Road site. This is a real opportunity to be exploited.

The Board all agreed that the strategy proposed was an ambitious one and they asked that progress reports be presented periodically.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

The Vice Principal raised one additional item and indicated that the HE business team would wish to invite Governors to provide a short briefing/presentation to students based upon their own experiences. These cover a range of topics including HR, marketing, strategic leadership etc. It was agreed that the Clerk would follow up on this outside the meeting to secure expressions of interest. It was also noted that the HE business students have a day of 'business presentations' where Governors would be invited to sit on a panel and judge and provide feedback: the date for this is 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

Vice  
Principal      March &  
June 2020

Clerk      Jan 2020

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

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**11**      **GOVERNANCE – TERM 1 REVIEW**

The Clerk presented the information that is collected on a rolling basis in relation to membership, training and development, engagement activities and attendance. It was agreed that the Clerk would speak to Governors on a one to one basis if there were any concerns regarding attendance and engagement, to ascertain if there are any barriers that need to be overcome.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**12**      **AOB**

As a matter of additional business, Governors were reminded that the next learner voice meeting takes place on 12<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm. It was agreed that the Clerk would recirculate dates of activities taking place this term which Governors may wish to get involved in.

Clerk

Feb. 2020

**13**      **EXCEPTIONS**

There were no exceptions to report.

**14**      **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting is Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 5pm. A draft of the agenda for the next meeting was provided and Governors were invited to indicate if there was anything additional required.

(Staff and students left the meeting at 7.45pm)

**15**      **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

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

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

Date: