



**WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE
CORPORATION BOARD
Agenda item 4**

Minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 12th March 2020 at 5.05pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Sean Lyons, Chair
Andrew Cropley, Principal & CEO
Paul Frammingham
Mary Mamik
Kate Truscott
Neil McDonald
Mark Williams
Charles Heaton
Rebecca Joyce (joining by conference call)
Tony Westwater
Mel Stirland
Steve Sutton (joining by conference call)

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

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Clive Pitt, Lee Radford, Sardip Sandhu, Spencer Moore, Jane Hawksford, Jessica Stowe and Sophie Welbourn.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH FEBRUARY 2020

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 20/04/2020

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 13th February 2020.

There were no matters arising.

4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality took the opportunity to provide feedback on the curriculum/Ofsted exercise undertaken by the Board at the recent meeting. He confirmed that Governors had highlighted that more information needed to be provided to them in terms of curriculum development, curriculum knowledge, and also destinations. He indicated that this was important when considering intent and impact, and the intention was to provide an analysis of the feedback at the away day planned for later this month. He confirmed that comments received make it clear that Governors want to know more in terms of an overview, and he confirmed that he and his team would work to provide this.

VP C&Q

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The Board then considered the action progress table and a number of matters were specifically discussed:

- Line 3 – this is scheduled for discussion on the April agenda and will also form part of the May Governor development session.
- Line 7 – April will see the leaders give progress presentations to the CEO and then Governors will be given feedback.
- Line 11 – this is scheduled for presentation to the April meeting.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

5 **COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT FOLLOWING THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5TH FEBRUARY 2020**

The Committee Chair introduced this item and specifically drew Governors' attention to the areas requiring further Board consideration/review; these are:

- Compliance in relation to the college's Expenses Policy – there are some low-level issues that can be addressed through staff training to ensure compliance.
- Completion of the planned internal audit activity – this is critically important so that the Committee can then provide the Board with the necessary levels of assurance required in their annual report.
- The college's ability to evidence 20% off the job training for apprentices – this is something that needs to be considered in both financial and quality terms.

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- 16-18 numbers – it was reported that there are 800 learners currently showing as below 540 guided learning hours. Work is underway to review this and ensure that maximum funding is claimable for the appropriate learners.
- The development and introduction of an Anti-Fraud Strategy – this is due at the next Audit Committee meeting.
- Review of the college’s Risk Management Strategy, including content and risk appetite – this is again planned for discussion at the next Audit Committee meeting. The Board asked whether the review of risk appetite and recommendations will come directly to the Board. The Committee Chair confirmed that it would.

He advised that the college’s Expenses Policy would be reviewed again before the end of the year and, in particular, questions are to be considered in relation to vehicle insurance, MOT, etc. The view of the Committee is that the policy needs to make it clear that it is an individual’s responsibility but that also the college, as the employer, has a duty of care. The Finance Director confirmed that the college actually insures staff for business use and that this policy is intended more for occasional business use. He confirmed that he and his team are trying to find a way to simplify the process and the systems in place and take a practical approach. The college has a new expenses tool in place and can include prompts that require documentary evidence. He confirmed that the college intends to implement this as part of the payroll system.

The Board were then asked to consider Committee recommendations, which are:

- To note the content of the summary report
- Note the content of the full minutes of the meeting
- Note the content of the updated Risk Register
- Utilise the updated Governors expenses form that has been circulated.

The Board were advised that the Committee has pushed internal auditors to complete all of their planned work this academic year, with a strong steer that the plan has been set and now has to be met.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 COMMITTEE CHAIR’S REPORT FOLLOWING THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24TH FEBRUARY 2020

The Committee Chair introduced this item and confirmed that a significant amount of quantitative evidence had been provided to Governors. Key matters discussed were:

- The Quality Improvement Plan, which is a key document. The Committee made an observation on the high number of red

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RAG-rated items, but were given assurance that this is more to do with timing and evidence rather than a lack of progress.

- Areas for improvement remain broadly the same as they have always been, and were previously reported to the Committee and Board.
- QIP to have more trend reporting.
- Deep dive has now been undertaken in relation to maths. There is still work to be done, but the college is starting to see green shoots.
- Collaboration with Leicester College was, on reflection, not able to deliver the desired level of improvement. The Committee felt that this was an interesting reflection and was something to carefully consider in terms of future collaborations, i.e. benefits versus time required to complete.
- There is now an appetite to grow internal expertise in relation to maths and English
- Retention is an issue, particularly in relation to apprenticeship provision. This needs to be a focus in terms of governor challenge. The college has to halt the decline.
- Positive messages from the learner voice meetings and surveys. Learners really like coming to college; they believe that the college prepares them for employment; and they feel safe.

The Board questioned why the initiative with Leicester College did not have the desired impact. They asked whether staff understand why this is the case. The Principal explained that this was something created quite quickly by a new team at the start of the 18/19 academic year. It was delivered in turbulent times and, with hindsight, it doesn't appear that there was real staff buy-in and ownership. The Board reiterated that the experiences here need to be carefully considered if the college does apply for CCF. All agreed that this was something to build on.

A question and challenge from the Board was whether or not the QIP should be a separate standing agenda item. This was agreed. It was described as a key document and needs to be provided within the Principal's report at every meeting.

An observation made by the Board was that any training and intervention needs to sit within existing strategies. The Board were advised that GCSE Maths and English mentoring by A-Level students has commenced this week.

The Board described learner voice meetings as very energetic and engaging. It was agreed that Governors would be advised if the next scheduled meeting on 1st April 2020 will be changed.

The Committee Chair then drew the Board's attention to the recommendations made; these are:

Principal /
VP

Each
meeting

Vice
Principal

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2020

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- 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 updated QIP for 19/20
- d) Approve the proposed amendments to the Committee Terms of Reference (to align with the EIF).

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided, and
- b) Approve the proposed amendments to the Committee Terms of Reference as presented.

7 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT FOLLOWING THE FINANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27TH FEBRUARY 2020

The Committee Chair introduced this item, and key points drawn out from the report were:

In terms of the updated 3-year financial plan:

- a) The college is in a better position than envisaged in the original recovery plan
- b) The college is cash generative
- c) BKS B to stay within the group forecasts until there is more certainty regarding the sale date
- d) The college continues to be a sustainable organisation.

In terms of the areas of assurance, these were reviewed. It was confirmed that the final version of the 3-year financial plan did not deviate from versions seen earlier, therefore it gives confidence in the planning process.

Governors' attention was then drawn to the areas requiring further review and/or Board consideration. These include:

- Continued proactive management of subcontractor performance
- Potential impact on the college of coronavirus
- The impact of any potential delay in selling BKS B – it was explained that the Committee looked at a number of scenarios
- Finalisation of fully costed curriculum plan for 20/21
- Final receipt of allocations for 20/21, with an explanation of any variances when compared with assumptions
- The management of increasing pension costs
- Detailed proposal regarding activity transfer from a local training provider (if to be progressed).

He advised that the college is expecting an ESFA demand for payment in April 2020, and that this is likely to be a deduction rather than an invoice. He confirmed that this would now need to be modelled through in the cash flow forecasts.

He drew the Board's attention to the recommendations; these are:

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- a) To note the content of the summary report
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meetings
- c) Note the content of the January 2020 monthly management accounts. He confirmed that these continue to follow a similar trend as previously reported. The college is +£400k. EBITDA remains as planned, cash flow healthy, and costs well controlled.
- d) Note the timely submission of the 3-year financial plan to the ESFA
- e) Approve the college fee policies for 2021 as presented. He confirmed that there were no significant changes to the fee policies, other than the HE position. It was explained that, for HE, the college is looking to put in place sponsor arrangements too. The college has an option to remit some or all of the fees in return for mentoring. Even with this, the college will still make savings in terms of the OfS registration fee and the QA costs.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided
- b) Approve the college fee policies for 2021 as presented.

8 CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update in a number of areas:

- The Remuneration Committee met earlier in the day and completed the mid-year reviews. Governors were pleased to see the progress made and all agreed that a good senior team was developing.
- The government has just issued the next budget. Capital monies are available to the education sector. No detail provided in terms of inflationary increases.
- Governors were invited to get involved in college life as much as they can.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

9 PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

The Principal's comprehensive written report was considered and a number of key items were noted and discussed:

- Retention for 16-18 year olds is positive. Staff have completed a piece of work to ensure that learners are accurately withdrawn, this has shown that the college cannot afford to lose any more learners.
- Apprenticeship provision is still a concern and there is a detailed paper planned to go to the Standards Committee. The college is now able to accurately separate out legacy data so as to assess whether the new era is better.
- Apprenticeship provision is a real focus for the Executive team. A

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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new apprenticeship manager has been appointed in Construction. He provided assurance that close attention was being given to this area of provision.

- The college is seeing some good apprenticeship achievements and is driving forward the transition from Framework to Standards.
- Starts are on hold in Construction and Engineering until the college has been able to build capacity and quality.
- In terms of enrolment, progression is still a concern. All assistant principals indicate that this is just a 'timing issue'. The next couple of weeks will be critically important and it may be necessary to instigate progression boards. It was noted that, in the prior year, progression talks took place in January and February and this was on the basis of a set deadline. Such a strict approach has not been taken this year and there are concerns regarding a negative impact as a consequence of the delay. The Board asked whether there were any particular trends. The staff Governor present indicated that, for her area, there are a lot of students wanting to move to apprenticeships. It was agreed that 'plan B' discussions need to take place with students.
- Three deep dives have now been completed and these give a real rich picture. It was agreed that a detailed deep dive report would be presented to the next Standards Committee meeting.
- Governors' attention was drawn to sections 8 to 13 of the written report, which detail the initiatives being considered and/or pursued. All agreed that this was a real period of rich opportunities. In relation to any proposed IoT, the college view expressed to the LEP is that the focus needs to be on the north of the area. In relation to CCF, the college has been approached by a number of colleges with a proposal that five collaborate. Firm proposals in writing are awaited. A challenge from the Board was that any activity needs to closely align with WNC's plans and strategies.

VP C&Q

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The Board's attention was then drawn to the data dashboard, and the CEO invited comment on the format and usefulness of the information. Key matters noted were:

- There are a lot of reds and ambers, which Governors are already discussing. There is assurance that key issues are covered in the CEO's report.
- Governors use this information as a scaffold to triangulate.
- It is a good visual guide in terms of what is happening.
- The reds are all picked up by the Committees and the QIP gives additional assurance regarding curriculum and quality matters.
- Governors find this helpful but were concerned that staff may be being asked to report the same information in different formats.
- An area still a concern is in terms of HR data and systems.
- This data dashboard should drive the balanced scorecard.

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- If the college continues to create and present the data dashboard, it should drive Board discussion topics.

A challenge from Governors is that, if this is not being used in management meetings, then it is potentially time spent unnecessarily. It was agreed to retain the dashboard in the short term and work towards developing a balanced scorecard.

The CEO then provided an update in relation to coronavirus. He confirmed that the college has received notification from 10 employers who are cancelling/postponing work placements. There are also some employers not sending apprentices into college buildings. He indicated that it may be necessary to suspend work placements. It was agreed that the college needs to link with the ESFA on this and on any other issues that materialise, as they will then pass on to the DfE which will influence policy. A question and challenge from the Board was in terms of the funding policy regarding 16-18 planned hours and what will happen if they cannot be delivered.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

10 ANNUAL GENDER PAY GAP REPORT

It was acknowledged that this was reviewed in detail by the Workforce Development Committee. Whilst happy to approve the content, a question and challenge from the Board was in terms of the language being used, i.e. “pleased” that our gap is below national’. A challenge was issued as to whether or not this was too complacent.

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

11 SAFEGUARDING, PREVENT & EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY – EXCEPTIONS REPORT

The Vice Principal provided a verbal update and key matters noted were:

- In relation to E&D, the college has now had one complaint regarding protected characteristics (bullying on the basis of sexuality). Unfortunately, the college is unable to identify the individual who is alleged to have committed the bullying.
- There is significant strain on the welfare teams. This is linked to the complexity and the ‘handing back’ of students by external agencies.
- The college is looking to develop a social care presence on site.
- A review is underway in terms of the welfare team structure and resource.
- Team received external coaching last week, which was positively received.
- Partner provider referral trend is increasing. It was explained

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that this is almost entirely from the Inspire and Achieve Foundation. This is not unexpected as they are delivering more and they deal with inherently more vulnerable students.

The Vice Chair, Kate Truscott, confirmed that she had met with the SU representatives today in relation to E&D and she will be feeding back to Vice Principals in terms of their suggestions.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

12 PUBLIC VALUES STATEMENT

The Vice Principal introduced this and explained that it was due for a refresh. She confirmed that it had been updated in line with the current Mission, Vision, Values and Aims. The Board were happy to approve the update provided and made the suggestion that, once placed on the college website, links should be included to the more full document that sets out the Mission, Vision, Values and Aims.

Vice
Principal

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AGREED: to approve the update to the Public Values Statement presented.

It was agreed that the next review would be in line with the strategic planning cycle, i.e. every three years.

13 CHESTERFIELD ROAD SITE OPTIONS

The Director of IT and Estates presented his comprehensive written report and was asked to give a summary in terms of what has changed since the last Estates Strategy. He confirmed that:

- The college is vacating space to make way for NTU; there is the potential that more will be needed, which will lead to staff movement and displacement.
- There is synergy with some areas remaining at Chesterfield Road, including Access.
- There is adult and community demand in the centre and Chesterfield Road gives room to grow.
- Most significant change is the proposal to move A-Levels to this site.
- Chesterfield Road was used for the Vision Studio School and is in a good condition.
- A-Level provision exists as a discreet entity and has been sited at Chesterfield Road before.
- Busses will stop at both sites.

In discussion, the Board agreed that a Mansfield and Ashfield sixth form college would be very positive for the area. Governors considered the financial information circulated and it was confirmed that expectations

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considered are realistic. It is believed that to put this space back in to the college in the future would cost circa £3.5 million. There is a limit in terms of the growth that is possible at Derby Road, as there is no extra space.

The Board all agreed that a freestanding centre would be more attractive to students. Assurance was given in terms of the student numbers available. It was explained that it currently costs between £30k and £40k per annum to have the building vacant and that the plans, if approved by the Board, would be in place for 20/21. It was described as a neutral decision in year 1, with the key infrastructure in place being sound. A challenge from the Board was whether or not the building/environment would be attractive to students. It was confirmed that it would and that the facility can house a population of circa 450, therefore there would be a real 'buzz'.

The Board made the suggestion to approach the local authority regarding a contribution, as this would have a real benefit for the town centre. All agreed that there was a real educational benefit for the town centre associated with the plans. A challenge from the Board was that the senior team would need to manage the impact on the Derby Road centre. As an overriding principle, the Board agreed that they would not wish to make any decisions that would cut off possibilities for growth and expansion.

It was agreed that Governors would be invited to a site visit before the next meeting.

AGREED: to approve the reopening of Chesterfield Road site as a centre for A-Levels and adult education, as proposed.

Dir of IT &
Estates

April 2020

14

DESTINATIONS REPORT

The Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality introduced this item and key matters noted were:

- The Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) places particular emphasis on the critical role that further education providers have on ensuring that learners secure meaningful and positive progression to full-time employment and/or further learning at a higher level.
- At inspection, inspectors will pay much attention to how effectively the college's curriculum enables learners to make good progress and secure positive transitions.
- A total of 84% of leavers' destinations are known. Of the remaining 16%, a total of 11% refused to disclose their destinations when contacted.
- Of the known leavers, the large majority (90%) progressed to a positive destination.
- Of the 1,060 students continuing their study at the college who

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did not progress to the second year of their same course, 909 (86%) progressed to a higher level of learning.

- The 275 leavers who progressed to higher education were 10% of the total. In the current year, there have been a total of 540 individual applications to UCAS, including 103 of the 140 second year A-Level student cohort (74%).
- Of the 343 learners who progressed to employment, a total of 44% (156) entered employment relating to their subject of study. He confirmed that the college wants to improve this position.

In general discussion, the Board were advised that progression to apprenticeships is increasing, including from A-Levels to apprenticeships rather than university. He described the overall position as amber but heading towards green.

The Board asked whether it was possible to compare the college with national benchmarks. The Vice Principal indicated that the college was not a million miles away from national at 90%. All agreed that it was really important to include positive statistics in marketing materials, as this is a significant influencing factor for parents.

The Board were happy to note the content of the update provided and also agreed the need to improve:

- The collection of leavers/actual destinations
- The proportion of students who progress to positive destinations
- The proportion of students who progress to employment related to their subject study
- The proportion of learners who remain in learning and who progress to a higher level of learning.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

15 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

16 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting was 20th April 2020 at 5pm. It was confirmed that there is the potential that this meeting will have to be convened remotely, and the college would plan for this. The draft agenda for the meeting was considered.

17 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

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

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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