

Minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 19th May 2022 at 5.30pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Sean Lyons, Chair
Kate Truscott
Andrew Cropley, Principal/CEO
Andrew Spencer
Rebecca Joyce
Sardip Sandhu
Jane Peacock
John Winfield
Steve Sutton
Tony Westwater
Spencer Moore
Angela Newton-Soanes
Charles Heaton
David Gillies
Joshua Charles

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 Peake, Director: IT, Estates & Learning Resources
Sian Geeson, Head of HR
Jane Fishwick, Assistant Principal: Academic, Creative, Community, Digital and Professional Studies

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
1	<u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>		
	Apologies for absence were received from Neil McDonald, Ben Owen, William Burton and Keith Spiers.		
2	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u>		
	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.		
3	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH MARCH 2022</u>		

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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 March 2022.

There were no matters arising.

4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The board were happy to note the content of the update provided and progress being made.

5 **SCENE-SETTING FROM THE CHAIR**

The chair took the opportunity to express his thanks on behalf of the board to the executive team for all of the hard work in a very challenging year. He indicated that it was clear to him from the reports provided that the college was very much 'holding its own'. There are lots of external initiatives and changes that the college is having to respond to. This is providing an opportunity for the college and the executive team to become more of an influencer in the locality and region.

He noted a really good session earlier with the FE/HE climate change commissioner and, as a consequence, there is lots to do for the board both personally and collectively. It was acknowledged that climate change is a real focus for students, both those enrolled now and for the future; therefore, it is important for the board and the executive to look outwards as well as keeping a grip on the internal requirements.

6 **BALANCED SCORECARD**

The CEO introduced the detailed report and drew attention to the dynamic measures. Key matters highlighted were:

- There are three measures that are RAG-rated as red, all of which are familiar to the board.
- There has been an improving position in relation to maths attendance, which is why it has been changed and is no longer RAG-rated as red.
- Exam attendance for English yesterday was 90%, and it is expected that the position will increase given a number of considerations. The expectation is that the final position will be around 93%.

Governors' attention was then drawn to the update provided in relation to the TEL strategy. Key matters discussed were:

- In relation to paragraphs 2.1 and 2.8, there appears still to be a way to go to hit the target. The board asked for further explanation in relation to this.
- In relation to 2.8, the board were advised that the college simply doesn't have the product available. This aspect is covered by all

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new staff at induction; however there is more to do to provide further training for longer serving members of staff. The college has conducted a phishing exercise but acknowledges that there is more to do in terms of cybersecurity.

- In relation to 2.1, the college will not now progress with this action as an excellent new Jisc tool has been sourced, and this is really driving the accessibility agenda.
- In relation to 2.5, the expectation is to reach target.
- The TELD group has really driven forward in terms of achieving the targets set. John Wilson will drive the curriculum agenda for all learners.
- In relation to section 2.11, it was noted that students are still posting detrimental comments, and the board asked what the college is doing to address this. Staff advised that one action alone will not address the issue, and the intention is to build in training and expectations at induction and also through curriculum delivery. The intention is to get students to Google themselves to see what information is available publicly and, sitting alongside this, employers will also provide presentations to press the message home. The board were advised that there is an opportunity for a six-week personal 'branding' programme to be provided in October. This is all about the personal impact and what people see.
- In relation to the financial measures, it was explained that all are now RAG-rated as green, save for apprenticeships income
- There has been a real improvement in the AEB position. The college has done really well to get to the current position and is starting to see real momentum gathering.

The board specifically discussed the position in relation to apprenticeship income and asked for further explanation regarding the likely failure to hit target on this. The finance director advised that the carryover position between 2020/21 and 2021/22 significantly decreased between the budget setting period and yearend. He explained that there were delays in data processing and that it wasn't until the October return that there was real clarity regarding the actual position. To ensure that this doesn't happen again, the finance team are profiling monthly carry-in values, and the expectation going into 2022/23 is circa £2.8 million carry-in. He advised that this figure is steadily increasing. The board were given assurance that there is greater confidence regarding the ILR this year.

(Jane Fishwick left the meeting at 5.50pm.)

The board asked for an update in relation to attendance for English and were advised that the current figure is 77% against a target of 88%. The board asked whether there is an increasing trajectory. The CEO advised that, at this point in the year, it is not expected that the percentage will increase. However, the board were asked to note that the college did reverse a declining trend which existed prior to January. It was explained that, in the autumn term, the impact of the omicron variant of COVID was not foreseen which, unfortunately, did have an impact. The board

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were reminded that stretch targets were set in this area, and assurance was given that mitigating actions were taken. However, it is usual that the attendance trajectory over the year does decline. The aim for the college is for attendance in maths and English to be the same as in vocational areas. The board were reminded that there is now a much stronger team in place delivering English, and it is expected that this will have an impact. The intention is to continue to set ambitious targets for next year.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

7 ANNUAL KPI REPORT – STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

The detailed report provided was noted, and key matters highlighted were:

- The survey was completed during February and March 2022.
- Overall staff satisfaction has declined slightly. It is now 89%, which is a decline from 93% in the prior year.
- The decline has been significantly impacted by staff not believing that the survey is confidential, despite the executive and HR teams' best efforts. There were 79 members of staff who didn't believe that the survey was confidential. This particular question saw a decline from 87% to 81%, which is unusual.
- The survey results show a slight loss of confidence in the senior leadership team, with it being clear that staff don't feel they see as much of the executive team as has previously been the case.
- There are some decisions with which staff have been dissatisfied and certain circumstances that will have influenced the outcome. Examples given were the Chesterfield Road site challenges at the start of the year and the issues with the electronic register system at the start of the year.

The CEO provided assurance that the executive team will 'up their game' and ensure that they get out and about more. He acknowledged that, for various reasons, this wasn't a focus but that it is now a priority. The board acknowledged that the external environment and work being done in this area has been a distraction.

One member of the board asked whether the timing of the survey could have had an impact and whether or not there was anything significant happening at that point in time which could have influenced responses. The head of HR didn't believe that there was anything specific to pinpoint as an influence; however, it was noted that the response rate and the satisfaction levels in 2021 were exceptionally high and that this may have been influenced by the college's excellent response to COVID. A challenge from one member of the board was that, potentially, the survey was too long and this may have contributed to the decline. It was confirmed that there would be fuller debate and detailed analysis at the next meeting of the Workforce Development Committee.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

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QUALITY AND STANDARDS

The committee chair presented her summary report and also the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2022. Key matters highlighted were:

- It was a really productive meeting.
- It provided a good opportunity for the committee to receive feedback on areas where they had issued challenges earlier in the year.
- It was really clear to see distance travelled.
- There was evidence of demand and a drive for constant improvement, with no one sitting on their laurels.
- The equality and diversity work being carried out is good.
- The committee discussed maths and English attendance and did challenge on behalf of the board that it needs to improve.
- The committee spoke a lot about safeguarding, with a focus on lanyard wearing.
- It was a good opportunity to reflect back on the starting points for a number of the reports with improvements evident.
- It was a very positive meeting, whilst staff and the committee continue not to be complacent.
- Governors clearly feel more confident now in terms of challenging and questioning.
- There is a real appreciation for the efforts of staff.
- The strength of leadership and management was acknowledged, with the committee being impressed in terms of drive and momentum.

In relation to the committee's discussion regarding out-of-funding learners, the board were advised that the government has now released apprenticeship accountability measures and, therefore, a report in relation to this will be presented to the next Standards Committee meeting. This will allow the college to compare itself against the national picture. The CEO expressed the view that there is still some work to do to ensure that heads of department better understand the likely time required at the end of a programme so as to be able to get to the endpoint assessments more quickly. There was a COVID impact which is leaving a slight legacy; however, it was acknowledged that the college could do better and is challenging itself to do better. The board were advised that there is also a slight legacy issue regarding some plumbing and electrical apprentices who are on a three-year length of stay rather than four, which is unusual. It wasn't possible to get them to complete in three years, and this is impacting on the data. In relation to deep dives undertaken, there are still 'the big five' to improve, which are health and social care, engineering, maths, construction, and adult and community learning.

The board then received the 'talking heads' video, and the vice principal explained that this was compiled following discussion with hundreds of

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apprentices and, therefore, gives a real flavour for how they view the college and their courses. Key comments made included:

- 'Really enjoying the practicals.'
- 'Tutors are sound and give me help.'
- 'The course has supported me to look at full-time positions. I want to do geography and film editing with local companies.'
- 'I enjoyed getting broader experience, e.g. marketing.'
- 'Tutors are very helpful and knowledgeable.'
- 'Helped me to better understand what I want to do, i.e. career plans.'
- 'I am really enjoying college. I am 33 years old and, therefore, it has been a big change for me. The course has helped me to do different roles and I am aiming to progress to Level 4. Ultimately, I would like to start my own business.'
- 'I have learned about Microsoft, marketing, IT, etc.'
- 'I am now a more confident person.'
- 'I am learning about HGVs and am aiming to improve my career.'
- 'I have learnt new skills, including independence, resilience, professionalism, working on reception, and dealing with challenging circumstances.'
- The course has helped me to know more about the workplace and what I should do.'
- 'The assessor is very helpful.'
- 'I feel very supported by the college.'
- 'The progress I have made is clear, and I am learning new skills.'
- 'My tutor was an inspirational rock.'
- 'I have gained some superb knowledge.'
- 'I am now way more confident in terms of speaking to customers.'
- 'I learnt a lot about EDI.'
- 'I am confident using machines.'
- 'My course has improved my teamwork skills.'

The board all acknowledged that what was provided was a really inspirational video.

The board's attention was then drawn to the student governor update, and there was an opportunity to review the 'Your Voice' report. A challenge from one member of the board was in terms of what the college is doing to address the negative comments, and they asked what 'we take it very seriously' actually means. The board were advised that there are a number of actions being taken, some of which will be over the summer to prepare for an improved position next academic year. The board were asked to note that 55% of study programme learners were new to the college and have had two years of disrupted learning, which has had an impact. The board were given assurance that any issues raised are addressed and that some comments made in terms of the estate will be actioned over the summer. A summary was provided of mitigating circumstances and the work being done. A challenge from one member of the board was that the notes presented felt slightly one-

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dimensional with stock responses provided. It was acknowledged that the minutes of the meeting perhaps don't do the discussion justice, and there is potentially more to do in terms of the message being given to learners and how feedback is provided.

The board then considered the updated QIAP and acknowledged that it was a really good document which provides a comprehensive overview for staff and governors. The vice principal indicated that, in relation to deep dives, 35 have now been completed, with 60% judged to be good or better. He reminded that the deep dives are weighted towards the areas of concern and where there are known improvements required, which does impact on this figure. He restated that it is now the 'big five' which need to be addressed. A question from one governor was in relation to the deep dives undertaken with two contractors, i.e. Trackwork, which was determined to be inadequate, and White Rose, which is reported as ungraded. The vice principal indicated that, in relation to Trackwork, this was based upon a new trainer in post and that they look after seven young people. Improvement recommendations have been made, and the intention is to revisit and retest as early as possible. In relation to White Rose, it was explained that the position was ungraded as, at the time of the assessment, staff had simply not seen enough teaching and learning; however, this is now increasing with no concerns identified.

Governors' attention was drawn to the report on safeguarding, Prevent, and E&D, and key matters highlighted were:

- The college, with the help of governors, has completed an internal safeguarding audit. Most of the actions identified and agreed are already well progressed. There is clearly a need to address wearing of lanyards, and there is a need to set out expectations in relation to this really clearly.
- The Prevent concern reported is now closed with no police action to be taken. This is a concern to the team and, therefore, they are closely monitoring this.
- In relation to E&D, staff are really focused on the planned progression statistics, i.e. the 134 who are currently intending to progress at a static level. Learners are being reviewed on a line-by-line basis, and staff will intervene where needed. A challenge from the board was to ensure that any static progression is as a result of learner choice rather than a failure by the college to stretch and challenge. The vice principal indicated that what the college now has in terms of the ability to analyse this data is as a result of a brilliant system developed by the staff governor Andrew Spencer.

One member of the board questioned whether the access issues identified at Chesterfield Road were the same as in the prior year. The board were given assurance that it is not the same issue and that, this year, it relates to students who put their lanyards in their bags whilst they are on site. A challenge from the board was to keep a watching brief on the Chesterfield Road site. The board were then provided with an

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update in relation to the Inspire and Achieve Foundation, and it was agreed that discussions on this would be recorded on a confidential basis.

AGREED to:

- a) Note the content of the summary report
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2022
- c) Note the content of the QIAP
- d) Note the content of the safeguarding and Prevent report
- e) Note the content of the E&D (students) action plan progress update.

9 **AUDIT AND RISK**

The board's attention was drawn to the summary report and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 26th April. Key matters highlighted were:

- This was a relatively short meeting given the positive position reported.
- The college is making good progress in relation to any actions identified.
- An issue highlighted was in relation to obtaining signatures on learner agreements, and the process is to be changed in relation to this for the new academic year.
- Internal auditors expect to complete the programme of testing and reporting for the year.
- There are some unused internal audit days, and the plan is to direct these to review and test capital project plans.
- The committee received the OfS letter giving final sign-off of the audit.
- The committee were given assurances regarding the procurement processes.
- A good internal audit review was completed in relation to HR safeguarding.
- There are no issues in relation to the risk register. There was some discussion regarding the process for changing risk scores, and it was acknowledged that, as it is a dynamic document and is reviewed every week by the executive, there are clear processes in place for this.
- It is anticipated that the scoring in relation to the risk regarding staff recruitment and retention will be considered by the Workforce Development Committee too.

AGREED to:

- a) Note the content of the summary report
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2022
- c) Note the content of the updated 2021/22 risk register.

10 **FINANCE AND ESTATES**

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The committee chair introduced this item and drew the board's attention to the summary report and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2022. Key matters highlighted were:

- The committee had a really packed agenda for this meeting.
- There are six items recommended for board approval today.
- Estate planning is progressing well.
- Financial controls continue to be effective and cautious.
- The college has a much-reduced debt position.
- The midyear forecast is slightly improved when compared to the board meeting in March 2022.
- Environmental aspects link into the buildings.
- Early site works at Chesterfield Road are focused on mitigating risks.
- There was interesting discussion regarding environmental sustainability in terms of electricity, gas, etc. There are gas service challenges which are linked to the estate structure.
- The committee challenged that environmental sustainability targets to be set should be split down into those which are controlled by internal versus external factors.
- There was a lot of conversation regarding health and safety. The college is seeing a whole new problem emerge in terms of non-epileptic seizures, and this is putting a strain on the teams.
- Cash is looking strong.
- The committee considered the 2021/22 midyear reforecast reconciliation in detail, and this was able to fully explain the variances. There were no real concerns.
- In terms of capital projects, there are two contracts presented for approval today; these are with AA projects and EWA. Both companies have really supported the college in terms of the successful bids, and the aim is to continue working with them so that they can take the projects forward and continue to support in terms of staff capacity.
- It is really clear that risks are being managed.
- In relation to subcontracts, Chameleon and White Rose continue to perform well and, therefore, there are proposals to increase contracts. The ESFA have confirmed that the college can exceed the 25% subcontract limit this year.
- The committee is proposing an extension to the Zurich insurance cover and is confident in terms of value for money.
- There are a number of contract awards proposed.
- The management accounts considered were in a new style and are being developed. They continually evolve so as to be more informative.

A question from one member of the board was in terms of the level of insurance cover, particularly in relation to building projects. A challenge was the need to ensure that this is fully covered and that there needs to be an increase to the insured value alongside ensuring any disclosures required to Zurich.

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AGREED to:

- a) note the content of the summary report
- b) note the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 28th April 2022
- c) approve the Environmental Sustainability Strategy and action plan as presented
- d) note the content of the March 2022 management accounts
- e) approve the updated 2021/22 midyear forecast, as presented to the committee
- f) approve the appointment and costs associated with professional advisors for the tech centre project – AA Projects and EWA Architects.
- g) approve the subcontract variations as proposed
- h) approve the 12-month extension to the insurance contract with Zurich
- i) approve the contract proposals as presented.

11 **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The director: IT, estates and learning resources presented his written reports, and key matters highlighted were:

- Teams are currently completing a lot of work to reduce project risks, including a lot of site testing (e.g. bedrock, asbestos, sound surveys, knotweed, etc.).
- These works allow the college to be more secure in terms of the cost estimates.
- The current position is £43k over budget in terms of estimates; however, this is not a concern.
- The team has had to bring the cost of the projects in line to address inflationary increases by circa £500k.
- To do this, the size of the building has been reduced by 100m² and some 'design features' have been removed. The board were given assurance that no classrooms have been lost as a result of cost management and, in fact, some of the classrooms are actually larger.

A question from one member of the board was whether or not students are happy with the outside space and general student space. The board were advised that there is more social space planned for outside the building but that there is no inside recreational space beyond the learning resource centre.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

(Angela Newton-Soanes left the meeting at 7.15pm.)

12 **PROPOSAL TO DEREGISTER FROM THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS**

The vice principal presented her written report, which provided background context for the proposal. She summarised the current position and explained why it was felt that the college no longer needed to access the benefits of registration. The proposal is to inform the OfS of

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the intention to deregister from the start of the 2022/23 academic year.

One member of the board asked whether the college can continue to deliver Levels 4 and 5 apprenticeships if it deregisters. It was confirmed that the college can but within the boundaries of the partnership with NTU. The board were advised that the college cannot deliver degree-level apprenticeships directly but that this is not something which would change as a result of deregistration.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided
- b) Approve the proposal to deregister with the OfS from the start of the 2022/23 academic year.

13 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The board were happy to note the content of the comprehensive written report provided, and all acknowledged that sector reforms are significant. The CEO particularly asked governors to note the diary dates and indicated that it would be really great for students and staff if governors were able to come along to some of the events. Particularly highlighted were the Rising Stars session dates.

When considering the content of the report, a challenge from the board to the exec was to really make sure that they take care of themselves given the significant work that is clearly ongoing and apparent.

The board considered the LSIP pilot reports received and noted that the format and content were all very different. They asked whether there was an expectation that the reports would be standardised. The CEO indicated that he was not getting a sense that this would be the case.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

14 **GOVERNANCE**

The director of governance indicated that, at the most recent meeting of the SPaG Committee, they had discussed tenures and identified some succession planning needs following discussions with those governors due to complete their first terms of office in October 2022. There are a number who will complete and will move on to pursue other professional and personal activities. These are Tony Westwater, Steve Sutton and Sardip Sandhu. Rebecca Joyce will also move on but has agreed, subject to board approval, to stay until 31st December 2022 so that she can participate in the review of the yearend and finalisation of the 2021/22 financial statements.

Kate Truscott, vice chair of the Corporation Board and chair of the WDC Committee, and Neil McDonald, chair of the Audit Committee, have indicated that, subject to board approval, they would welcome the opportunity to stay on the board for a second term of office.

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She advised that, given the known vacancies that will arise in October 2022, the committee is looking at early identification of potential new appointees. Contact has been made with a number of key employers in the area, the Chamber of Commerce, the local authority, and financial institutions. The board will be kept updated on recruitment progress.

The board's attention was then drawn to the proposed calendar of meetings for 2022/23 and it was explained that it is very similar to the schedule in place for the current academic year.

The board's attention was then drawn to first draft of the Code of Good Governance compliance checklists in relation to leadership and management, collectively accountable, responsiveness, and partnerships. She explained that these are an early first review so that it gives an opportunity to identify any gaps and/or actions required to ensure yearend compliance. Governors were invited to review and provide feedback outside the meeting.

The chair took the opportunity to express significant appreciation for the contributions made by those governors who will conclude their terms of office in October.

AGREED to:

- a) Note the content of the update provided
- b) Approve the reappointment of Kate Truscott and Neil McDonald for a second term of office from 25th October 2022 to 25th October 2026
- c) Approve the extension of current term of office for Rebecca Joyce to 31st December 2022.

15 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

16 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

This was noted as Thursday 14th July 2022 at Chesterfield Road.


The chair took the opportunity to congratulate Matt Vaughan on his appointment as the principal at Calderdale College and acknowledged that this was a great opportunity for him to realise his ambitions. He specifically asked that it be noted that the board recognises the impact and contribution he has made during his time at the college.

17 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded separately.

(Staff left the meeting at 7.30pm.)

Meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Signed :  Chair

Date: