



Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on Thursday 14th July 2022 at 5pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Kate Truscott, meeting chair
Neil McDonald
Andrew Cropley, Principal/CEO
Andrew Spencer
Rebecca Joyce
Sardip Sandhu
Jane Peacock
Charles Heaton
David Gillies
Tony Westwater
Steve Sutton
Keith Spiers

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance
Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement & Student Experience
John Fearon, Finance Director
Matt Vaughan, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Gavin Peake, Director: IT, Estates & Learning Resources
Shane Gunstone, external observer

| | | ACTION by whom | DATE by when |
|----------|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | <u>APPOINTMENT OF THE MEETING CHAIR</u> | | |
| | In the absence of Sean Lyons, it was agreed to appoint Kate Truscott, the vice chair, as the meeting chair. | | |
| 2 | <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> | | |
| | 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 | <u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> | | |
| | Apologies for absence were received from Sean Lyons, Angela Newton-Soanes, Ben Owen, John Winfield, Joshua Charles, Sian Geeson, William Burton and Spencer Moore. Shane Gunstone was welcomed to the | | |

Signed : Kate Truscott Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

effect.

He confirmed that the college has been working closely with Grimsby College, who he described as being three or four years ahead of WNC in terms of using enhanced technology.

Governors discussed the recruitment and retention challenges and asked if any specific actions had been agreed to give new appointees more support when they start. The CEO indicated that a number of actions have been agreed in terms of what will specifically be done, including during the period between offer and start. HR managers will work to develop the induction plan so that staff are not put before students too early and from 'day one'. He advised that the pay structure in place also gives opportunities for additional responsibility payments, and the college is looking to secure volunteers to become induction mentors.

Having considered the minutes of the most recent meetings of the Workforce Development Committee and VBSS, a question and challenge from the board was what more can be done to reduce turnover, as a high proportion of this appears to be in support staff roles. In relation to VBSS staff, the CEO advised that they have been offered an additional day's leave and the sickness absence terms and conditions have been improved. In addition to this, the pay award proposed will be skewed in the favour of those on the lowest pay bands.

One governor raised a process point in terms of RAG ratings on the risk register and, in particular, the fact that the score for recruitment and retention challenges was decreased recently. A challenge from the board was that there is a need for them to be able to discuss RAG rating changes at the earliest opportunity so that there is a way of checking that governors agree with executive proposals.

The board then discussed risks relating to 'people more generally', including training and the churn in the workforce, and they asked how the organisation triangulates to ensure that any proposals regarding 2022/23 measures and targets are the right ones (i.e. suitably stretching but attainable). The CEO made the observation that there are currently only two strategic objectives which relate to people and that the executive may need to reflect on this. He described recruitment and retention as the most dynamic risk and explained that there were peaks at various points in the year in a number of areas. He expressed the view that risk is now definitely lower than it has been; however, he provided assurance that the executive team is very alive to the fact that it can change quickly. The college has recently had some real recruitment successes, but he acknowledged that this would need to be monitored carefully when other pay awards in other colleges start to be communicated within the region.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

Signed : Kate Trcott Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

would be helpful to 'strip it down' and archive the 2020/21 comments in next year's version. All agreed that great progress had been made in one year and acknowledged that the ripples were still being felt from COVID, which cannot be underestimated. Governors commented that they found the use of the turquoise highlights really helpful.

The vice principal then drew governors' attention to the update provided in relation to the community engagement strategy, and key matters highlighted were:

- There was some really good debate and discussion at the Standards Committee.
- The college has made more progress against the first aim than some others, i.e. becoming an anchor institution. There is more that needs to be done in relation to the aim to raise aspirations.
- The internal EDI group will oversee progress against the strategy targets set in the next academic year.
- There was an excellent Rising Stars presentation yesterday in relation to the work being done with residents on the Bellamy estate. This highlighted what more can be done to support mobility and aspirations.

Governors' attention was then drawn to the EDI update provided in relation to students, and key matters highlighted were:

- This is a standing agenda item at the Standards Committee meeting, and reports have been given on various incidents throughout the year
- There are now some key KPIs in place, with the college being on track to close the gap in BAME achievement. The college is unsure whether it will succeed in closing the male/female achievement gap as data is not yet finalised.
- Learner voice and exit survey results link to the KPIs. The college has unfortunately seen a decline, particularly in relation to 'overall satisfaction'; however, there are improvements in relation to core business. There are improvements required in relation to tutorials, and this is now a focus.
- Intended destinations look positive; however, the caveat to this is that the college needs to wait to see what the actual position is.

The board asked for an update on aspects which may have influenced the decline in overall satisfaction. Staff advised that the decline was impacted by two specific curriculum areas, the most significant of which is A-Level provision, with only 66% of students saying that they would recommend to others. Staff confirmed that the reasons for this are known and have previously been reported, including a challenging start to the year; the buildings at Chesterfield Road; and some staffing challenges.

The board were advised that a supportive intern has done an excellent

Signed : Kate Trcott Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

piece of research and survey focusing on accessibility, and the board asked that their thanks be passed on to him for this.

The board were provided with a summary of the SEND green paper and the vice principal commented that there were some interesting recommendations, particularly regarding the inclusion of alternative provision. She expressed a view that there were some really positive opportunities for the college as it has an excellent reputation locally, with the potential to become a centre of excellence. She confirmed that the college would be formally responding to the consultation, and it was agreed that a copy of this would be circulated to governors.

The vice principal confirmed that there is a group now established who have a focus on transition, and they are looking to pilot some specific approaches (i.e. a year-long transition programme in construction).

Governors' attention was drawn to the safeguarding and Prevent report and the vice principal was able to update on a number of areas, including:

- Recommendations made in the independent review and, specifically, the suggestion that organisations take on the role of 'corporate parent'.
- New procedures have been finalised in line with KCSiE 2022, with a new online safety policy being developed. It was agreed that the vice principal would circulate these for governor feedback before 1st September, which is when they have to be published.

The board noted that the Standards Committee had, at its last meeting, undertaken a self-assessment exercise with recommendations made for amendments to the terms of reference. The director of governance highlighted these on the document, particularly the red text. The board were happy to approve the amendments as proposed.

AGREED to:

- a) Note the content of the committee chair's summary report
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 29th June 2022
- c) Note the content of the QIAP
- d) Note the content of the community engagement strategy update
- e) Note the content of the safeguarding/Prevent report
- f) Note the equality and diversity (students) action plan progress update
- g) Approve the amendments to Standards Committee terms of reference as presented.

8 **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

The committee chair introduced her summary report and the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 2022. She confirmed that discussions reiterate the challenges previously discussed regarding

VP CESE

August
2022

VP CESE

August
2022

Signed : Kate Tricot Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

recruitment and retention, with it still being a volatile market.

Governors' attention was drawn to the EDI update provided in relation to staff, and the key highlights were noted. Governors' attention was drawn to the key KPIs, two of which are linked to staff survey results. The vice principal confirmed that, whilst the survey outcomes were good, they were not as good as the year before. As a consequence, targets have not been hit. Governors were asked to specifically note the outstanding piece of work done by Sara Arnold in the organisational development department, which has led to a significant improvement in the level of compliance with mandatory training.

The board were advised that the HR team has also undertaken a piece of work to look at reasons for absence, given that absence rates for females are higher than for males. A menopause policy has now been created, and the college has signed up as a carer-friendly organisation. When considering equality, diversity and inclusion, governors all commended the really balanced approach that is now in place with a focus on both staff and students.

A question from one member of the board was whether or not, when recruiting new employees, the college does enough to promote the 'package', i.e. what is provided over and above salary (e.g. the quality of the estate, etc.). The CEO confirmed that this is very much promoted at the point of recruitment; however, he acknowledged that there may be more that can be done to remind existing staff. He confirmed that the organisation does really try to celebrate what it does at every opportunity. An observation made by the CEO was that the two-tier pay system does sometimes make it difficult to promote and broadcast the package; an example given was in relation to pension, with VBSS employees not accessing LGPS. He confirmed the view that VBSS salaries are competitive in the local area and that the package they get is good. Governors all acknowledged the reason for establishing VBSS, and they agreed that it was not in the organisation's best interest to stop using the company as a vehicle to employ staff and that it is important not to internally compare VBSS and WNC terms and conditions.

The committee chair confirmed that the annual self-assessment had also been undertaken at the last meeting and the recommendation is that committee membership and terms of reference roll forward into next academic year unchanged.

AGREED to:

- a) Note the content of the summary report
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 2022
- c) Note the content of the EDI (staff) action plan update
- d) Approve the recommendation that committee membership and terms of reference roll forward into 2022/23 unchanged.

Signed : Kate Trcott Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

9

SENIOR POSTHOLDER AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The meeting chair provided a summary note and drew the board's attention to the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2022. He summarised matters discussed, which included:

- 360-degree appraisal
- Developing the concept of 'friends of the college', which will increase the pipeline and engagement with the organisation
- Governor recruitment
- Code of Good Governance compliance check – this was a very positive exercise with just one action agreed.

The meeting chair confirmed that the recommendation from the SPaG Committee was that committee membership and terms of reference roll forward into 2022/23 unchanged.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the summary report
- b) To note the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2022
- c) To approve the recommendation that committee membership and terms of reference roll forward in to 2022/23 unchanged.

10

FINANCE AND ESTATES

The committee chair introduced this item and drew the board's attention to the summary report and the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2022. Key highlights flagged were:

- Plans regarding the Chesterfield Road development are progressing well, with the college having early engagement with planners.
- Risks are static.
- The position in relation to apprenticeship provision is improving, and this shows in the management accounts.
- Pay and reward is a focus.
- Staff recruitment challenges.
- A detailed health and safety report was provided, with a particular update given in relation to non-epileptic seizures.
- In relation to the management accounts, underlying performance is important. There are two exceptional items in the month which have impacted upon the position.
- Financially, the college is in a good position.
- The contribution analysis is a really useful tool for both the executive and governors.
- A detailed report was provided in relation to subcontracting, including proposals for the 2022/23 academic year and the policy to support and underpin this. Of particular note is the ESFA restriction that subcontracting cannot go above 25%.
- Mileage allowance increase to 45 pence.

Signed : Kate Tricot Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

The board considered the health and safety annual report for 2021/22 in detail, and one governor expressed a concern regarding the high number of incidents/accidents, i.e.:

- 130 incidents of contact with moving machinery
- 111 digital incidents
- Accidents involving individuals moving into objects
- 385 non-college incidents.

In relation to the latter point, it was explained that this includes any incidents that involve a first aider and, therefore, does include very, very minor issues. It was explained that the digital incidents specifically involve IT when students are starting to build machines, as all of the parts are very sharp. Staff advised that health and safety reports are collated three times a year and there are usually more incidents in the first term.

In terms of the 'other' category, these generally tend to be the least significant issues. Examples given were blisters, bandages, plasters, etc. A challenge from one governor was whether or not induction for staff and students is good enough. Staff confirmed that this is regularly reflected upon. It was agreed to invite Neil McDonald to the next meeting of the Health and Safety Committee.

Director IT
& Estates

August
2022

The health and safety link governor provided feedback and confirmed that the college was now almost back to normal life after changes required as a result of COVID, with staff having caught up on all of the health and safety actions required. She confirmed that health and safety had been reviewed by the college's internal auditors and that the organisation was very pleased with the outcome. The way that the college has addressed non-epileptic seizures was particularly noted, and all agreed that the really quick response by staff had made a difference.

The committee chair indicated that there were a number of matters requiring board approval today. These were flagged in detail, including:

- Subcontract allocations proposed for 2022/23
- Subcontracting Fees and Charges Policy 2022/23
- Increased mileage allowance
- Amendments to the committee terms of reference
- The 2022/23 student fees and privacy notice

AGREED to:

- a) Note the content of the summary report
- b) Note the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2022
- c) Note the content of the May 2022 management accounts
- d) Approve the subcontract allocations proposed for 2022/23 as presented
- e) Approve the Subcontracting Fees and Charges Policy 2022/23 as presented
- f) Note the content of the 2021/22 Health and Safety Annual

Signed : Kate Trcott Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

- Report
- g) Note and endorse the increased mileage allowance
 - h) Approve the updated committee terms of reference as presented
 - i) Approve the 2022/23 student fees and privacy notice as presented.

11 **CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE (STANDING ITEM)**

The director: IT, estates and learning resources provided a verbal update, and a number of matters were highlighted.

- 1) Chesterfield Road
 - The team are now well progressed into RIBA stage 3.
 - The team are working to review plans on a room-by-room and corridor-by-corridor basis. This exercise is due to end by 26th August and then there will be two weeks where cost calculations are completed.
 - There are minor final changes to the design.
 - The team have met with Severn Trent Water to look at drainage solutions, and the hope is that they may provide financial support to run a pilot.
 - The team are now at the point of completing final on-site destructive testing.
 - The pre-planning application has been submitted, and there is a meeting on site scheduled for Monday.
 - The team have met with the ESFA to discuss space utilisation.
 - The contract has now been issued, which means that the college has both parts of funding confirmed.
 - The local authority has confirmed that the college can now draw down funding, and the first tranche expected is £225k.
 - Funds are now starting to be received by the college, which helps to mitigate risk and support cash flow.
- 2) ADMC site – potential engineering centre
 - This would potentially be a new facility which would sit alongside one of the college sites.
 - The challenge now is securing a price for the site and, as a consequence, the team are looking at other options and/or contingencies.
 - The locality cannot afford to lose the planned £26 million investment in the area.
- 3) Green technology centre
 - The team are in discussion with Bolsover regarding the location and, at all costs, there is a need to protect the project. It may be possible to utilise a building at a peppercorn rent, which will give the college access to space which would then give more assessment space.

Signed : Kate Trcott _____ Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

basis.

- In 2023/24, the college is anticipating growth but really has to wait to see what the 2022/23 position is.
- The college lost a number of applicants this year for a number of reasons, including:
 - inability to meet with students face-to-face and give them a tour of the sites because of COVID
 - a buoyant employment market
 - the college is not quite sure that there are as many employment vacancies this year as last, particularly in the hospitality sector.
- Profit expectation is £1.8 million with the priority being pay.
- The college has to have the right staff in place to maintain the quality of provision
- Proposals will strengthen cash marginally and will mean 'good' financial health. The budget proposed will allow the organisation to make the planned pay award and invest.

In considering the information provided, there were a number of questions from governors, including:

- 16-18 revenue and the requirements for more hours' delivery. Staff confirmed that all activity, including the wider aspects, will need to be fully recorded on the ILR to ensure compliance.
- Pay increase – within the context of needing to make the budget balance, governors asked what a 10% increase to the minimum wage in April would mean. The finance director confirmed that it would be an additional cost to the organisation of between £30k and £40k.
- 16-18 learner number increases. This is identified as one of the three key risks and the need to increase numbers by 250. This is not included within the sensitivities. Staff reminded that the impact would be in 2023/24 because of lagged funding.
- In relation to staffing expenditure, the budget proposes a £571k drop in administration and central services, and governors asked how this is to be achieved. The finance director explained that it was to do with the classification of income and expenditure and where it sits within the budget. This has been taken out of 'teaching support' and reflects the fact that the organisation considers teaching support as classroom rather than administration.
- NTU agreement – it was explained that the rent received is pure revenue/profit, whereas services are an operational cost. These have been separated out so that the position is clear.
- Proposal to amend the personal authority limits to pay invoices – it was explained that this is entirely for practical reasons and not because of any concerns.

Having reviewed the documents in detail, the board were happy to

Signed : Kate Trocote Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

approve the 2022/23 budget and two-year financial forecast as presented.

AGREED to approve the 22/23 budget and two-year financial forecast as presented.

13 **AUDIT AND RISK**

The committee chair introduced this item and drew the board's attention to the summary report and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2022. He summarised matters discussed, including:

- Six internal audit reports with three providing substantial assurance and two adequate. This completes the plan for this academic year and a positive outcome overall.
- The September meeting will look at the internal audit plan for 2022/23.
- The college has been able to bring forward the start date of two pieces of fieldwork.
- The external audit plan was approved.
- Changes to the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice were discussed, including a greater focus on fraud.
- The counter-fraud strategy is to be reviewed and updated then presented to the September meeting.
- No changes are proposed to the committee's terms of reference.
- Membership risks were highlighted.
- The committee received the first risk register for one of the capital projects and was able to review it in detail.
- Cybersecurity was discussed.

AGREED to:

- a) Note the content of the summary report
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2022
- c) Note the content of the 2021/22 risk register
- d) Note the content of the external audit planning memorandum for 2021/22
- e) Approve the continuation of committee terms of reference unchanged into 2022/23.

14 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The principal presented his detailed written report and then provided an update on a number of aspects, including:

- The college has appointed Bev Lightfoot as the head of the sixth form centre. The college will now have to look to recruit a teaching and learning coach.
- The college has been unsuccessful in relation to its T-Level bid (£470k).
- The former HR director has now secured a new role, which is

Signed : Kate Tricot _____ Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

really positive.

- There has been the devastating death of two students in a road traffic accident. The response from the college was fully supportive.
- In relation to devolution, staff have met with government officials, which was described as quite frustrating. The area will have to just wait and see what happens next.
- The principal drew governors' attention to the contribution matrix and invited any suggested amendments to be provided by email.
- Proposals were made regarding the topics for talking heads videos in the next academic year, and these were approved.
- Governors were invited to put forward any suggested additions to the list drafted for the first round of 'friends of the college'. A challenge from the board was that the list is currently quite short, and they asked whether there are more local employers to add. The principal confirmed that this is the case and that this is very much an early start to the development of this initiative. Tomorrow is the first meeting of the engineering advisory board, which does include a number of employers. A challenge from the board was to look at the diversity of the list. All agreed that this was an excellent initiative that could be expanded, with it providing an opportunity for the college to get out and meet the community more. They acknowledged that it was important to get the principles in place first.

Governors

August
2022

AGREED: to note the update provided.

15 GOVERNANCE

The director of governance introduced her detailed report. A number of matters were particularly considered, including:

- 1) Student governors for 2022/23 – the board were advised that, following an incredibly successful recruitment campaign and interviews, the proposal is that there be three student governors next year rather than two. Governors' attention was drawn to the bios provided for Kia Shaw, Sheik Rayhan and Elizabeth Whitehead. She advised that it would require a very minor amendment to the instrument and articles and standing orders to facilitate this, but that would be entirely a practical matter for board decision. The board were supportive of the proposal and agreed to run it as a pilot.

AGREED to:

- a) Amend the instrument and articles and standing orders to allow for up to three student governors
- b) Approve the appointment of Kia Shaw, Sheik Rayhan and Elizabeth Whitehead as student governors for 2022/23.

Signed : Kate Trcott _____ Chair

Date: 20/10/2022

