



Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held on Thursday 19th October 2023 at 17:00

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Sean Lyons, Chair
Neil McDonald
Andrew Cropley, Principal/CEO
Charles Heaton
Edward Rawson
Alison Griffiths
David Ainsworth (until 19:10)
Theresa Hodgkinson (until 18:55)
Andrew Spencer
Scott Smith (from 17:30)
Amaya Waddingham (from 17:30)
Morgan Williams (from 17:30)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement & Student Experience
Diane Booth, Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality
Gavin Peake, Director: IT, Estates & Learning Resources
Sian Geeson, Head of HR
Eloise Hopkinson, Executive PA

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
1	<u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Apologies for absence were received from David Gillies, Spencer Moore, Angela Newton-Soanes, Ben Owen, Jane Peacock, Keith Spiers, Kate Truscott and Paul Wheeler. Edward Rawson and Theresa Hodgkinson were welcomed to their first meeting.		
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 MEETINGS HELD ON 13TH JULY 2023</u> The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.		

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AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 13th July 2023.

There were no matters arising.

4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The board were happy to note the content of the update provided.

The principal gave a more in-depth explanation of the fourth action in respect of Mansfield Education Hub, and staff agreed that the Hub team members are delighted to be part of the college. Governors were informed that this provision is English and maths with additional support and a wraparound of personal development skills. The young people don't tend to have EHCPs, but they are quite needy. It is roll-on, roll-off provision, so some students might come into mainstream provision mid-year and thus free up capacity. The question has been opened up as to whether there needs to be a wider offer of similar provision across the college's local area as there has proven to be quite high demand. It is hoped that this centre will help retention and will keep young people in education. Furthermore, a reduction in the operating costs of the site has been negotiated with the landlord. There are five staff members. The chair questioned whether there is anything WNC can learn from the staff at the hub, and it was fed back that nothing has been put forward as yet. However, the vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience does think that there could be something to learn about inclusion from the hub itself.

5 **SCENE SETTING AND APPROVAL OF NEW APPOINTMENTS (STAFF AND STUDENT GOVERNORS)**

The chair welcomed governors to the meeting and highlighted a number of matters, as follows:

- So many good things have happened and staff should be congratulated; however, there are still challenges and sticking points that need to be of focus, such as exam results.
- Something to celebrate and monitor is the movement into a new political era and the need for D2N2 colleges to play their part in influencing devolution and the mayoral candidates. Approached correctly, this could be beneficial and exciting for all. There is a need to balance between internal performance focus and external ambitions, and it is good to know that the college still plays a key part in the outside world. Governors and colleagues were asked to pay attention to what matters – i.e. the outcomes for customers.
- The appointments of one new staff governor (academic), Scott Smith, and the two new student governors for this academic year, Morgan Williams and Amaya Waddingham, were discussed. Approval of these appointments is a formality only as staff governors are appointed by staff vote and the board had previously delegated authority for two members of the board

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to interview and appoint two student governors. Nonetheless, governors were asked to confirm that they were content with these appointments.

AGREED:

- to approve the appointment of Scott Smith for four years (until 19th October 2027)
- to approve the appointment of Amaya Waddingham and Morgan Williams for one academic year (until 31st July 2024)
- to note the content of this update.

Scott Smith, Amanya Waddingham and Morgan Williams joined the meeting and roundtable introductions were made.

6

BALANCED SCORECARD AND ANNUAL KPIS 2022/23

The principal introduced this item and confirmed that, as reported throughout the year, the focus is on the exceptions. Key matters highlighted were:

English and maths

- Most red items in the 'students, employers and community' category relate to performance in English and maths, and 2022/23 did not have the most positive end.
- Grade boundaries have become ever more challenging (a 30% increase in two years), and the scores compared to the previous year actually show broad improvement.
- The college has recruited well to the staff team, but students' attendance is not good – this has had a negative impact.
- Maths has a high-quality staff team but getting learners to engage – and to continue to engage – is a challenge.
- Better integration is needed between vocational learning and maths and English – there is still some work to do here.
- The college needs to keep making sure there is a stable teaching team and that students are well prepared for exams. This is a challenge for some, with anxiety and attendance issues.
- Changes to drive improvement for the new academic year include:
 - putting students who have not achieved above a grade 1 prior to college on Functional Skills rather than GCSEs
 - putting more GCSE students in for resits
 - extending homework clubs to Station Park and Oddicroft Lane
 - CPD being delivered to maths teachers
 - advertising for support in lessons
 - Exec will be adopting problem groups to support and visit lessons
 - attendance will be even more of a focus and colleagues will be drilling down on how to improve this

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- in maths, there will be a pilot with a different awarding organisation as AQA's grade boundaries are impacted by the heavy use of that awarding body in private schools
- a Pearson award has been introduced for learners who are not yet ready for Functional Skills.
- In 2023/24, there are 1,600 learners enrolled to GCSE Maths and 1,500 to GCSE English – in 2022/23, this was just over 1,000 and 850 respectively, which indicates how many learners have not achieved a grade 4 this year.
- English has changed to the Pearson LIFT qualification, which applies methods that make it easier for learners to read, dissect and analyse.
- Colleagues will now have individualised CPD, and each head of department has met with the assistant principal: quality and standards to agree a programme to meet the requirements of the QIP at both an individual and a department level.

A challenge from one governor was in terms of the measurement being around the added value rather than achievement of the grade 4. The vice principal: curriculum and quality clarified that the measure nationally is of the grade 4; however, it needs to be realised that, of the 1,600 learners studying maths, a large proportion will be at a grade 2 and the hope will be to get them at least to a grade 3. It is key to reflect any improvement made, and this is measured via the residual score.

A challenge from a governor was why the targets are still RAG-rated as red if improvement plans are being implemented and are coming to fruition. The vice principal advised that progression can clearly be seen from the start to the end of the year, but exams are about being able to apply the knowledge gained, not just about having that knowledge. Invigilators have fed back that many students experienced panic attacks and/or refused to attend on exam days. Anxiety has increased post-COVID, and learners are struggling more than ever with sitting formal exams. Colleagues are working on this: the action in the QIP is around exam techniques in order to drive improvement.

A student governor raised that staff need to think of ways to support students who suffer from anxiety and mental health issues – this could include individual/smaller rooms or extra time, for example. In response to this, the principal explained that 40% of students have special arrangements, and finding space and invigilators for this level of requirement is an ever-increasing challenge for the college. Furthermore, the awarding bodies no longer accept anxiety as a condition which justifies special arrangements – it has to be a diagnosed condition to be applicable. JCQ has implemented this change, and

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students now need to have a medical certificate to qualify for special arrangements. Therefore, students are now being asked to get a diagnosis if they have anxiety so that this can still be supported. The principal informed governors that 77 extra rooms were needed last year to support special arrangements. The college managed to cover those students who had indicated in advance that they needed special arrangements, but there were still last-minute issues and some students had to a waiver to say that they would not sit the exam – the college was not allowed to give these cases special arrangements. Governors agreed that this change to the approach is not positive – there are some bright and capable students suffering and not performing at their best who could, with special arrangements, do well.

A student governor fed back that they have noticed that attendance in maths and English is an issue – they asked whether any measures are being taken to help students to attend. They indicated that they would feel demotivated if they hadn't passed the exam the first time. This would impact attendance and, in turn, impact mental health issues/anxiety in respect of the exam in that the student would not be prepared. They indicated that the homework clubs might be less useful than, for example, a special programme put in place to build attendance. The principal indicated that attendance is improving, and systems and processes are more organised. Registers are more compliant, and teachers have been encouraged to identify blocks and challenges. Colleagues have been much better at following up, and voc teams are doing better at ensuring students attend maths and English. He explained that the college is in a better place now but is not allowing itself to be complacent. A number of incentives have been tried and implemented, such as the WNC reward coins manufactured by Engineering.

One governor indicated that the change in criteria for support around exams gives two concerns:

- 1) It is not necessarily appropriate to flood GPs with lots of young people wanting to be diagnosed so that they can be given special exam arrangements.
- 2) It is not desirable for a young person to end up with a 'label' on their medical record in relation to what might turn out be a temporary anxiety and not a longstanding issue.

He asked whether there is anything the board can do to support the college in overruling or taking its own approach to this change. The vice principal: curriculum and quality indicated that she can ask the Terms of Reference group that she sits on for their thoughts on the matter. She will feed back to governors after the next meeting (date TBC). The governor indicated that he would be happy to give a letter of support to a very strong argument to reverse this decision by JCQ. It was discussed that the new policy does help in that issues need to be brought to the fore and discussed before exam days, meaning that the college is

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subject to fewer last-minute demands, but it might be useful to be able to create an exemption certificate or some other way of working around this where necessary, rather than students missing exams. However, the vice principal did make it absolutely clear that, if the college were to ignore this new policy without permission, there would be hugely negative repercussions.

Finance

- There are red items in this category, but the important picture is the overall financial perspective. Staff costs increased, but this was balanced elsewhere. The EBITDA was close to target, falling only very slightly below. It was agreed that, considering the increased costs, this is a good outcome.

Employer survey

- Although there was a good response rate, the results were poor – employers do not feel that they are getting a good experience. It was found that this was due to the quality of communication and information around how apprentices are progressing. This all fits into the panoply of plans to improve apprenticeship provision. Governors were reminded that the experience for apprentices has not been good enough – some of this was caused by chronic staffing challenges in areas with the most apprentices, but it is also the case that practices have been less forensic. The vice principal: curriculum and quality is now drilling into this to understand what is stopping apprentices from progressing as quickly as they might. The apprenticeships manager in construction has developed an employer dashboard that will enable employers to see how their apprentices are progressing, attending, succeeding, etc. It is hoped that the dashboard can be launched before Christmas, and it is felt that these approaches will really help to drive improvement.

One governor challenged in relation to how the college speaks to employers to get feedback. The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience explained the employer segmentation strategy: strategic employers meet with senior staff and give feedback; critical employers are assigned a contact from the apprenticeship team who does check-ups; third-level employers are managed by the specialists within the curriculum area. The survey shows that the issue around communication was centred on SMEs and micro businesses, and it is felt that the dashboard will help to improve the experience for these employers as they can access it for the required information, rather than waiting for a specialist to go out.

A challenge from governors was how the college measures what is important to the employer, how the college speaks to employers about those issues, and how the college delivers on this. It was explained that

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employers with apprentices in a curriculum area are contacted as part of that area's deep dive and asked questions around matters such as how valuable a contribution the apprentice is making to the business. This information is then put into a graph and fed back to curriculum areas. Governors were assured that the deep dive feedback is more positive than the employer survey.

In terms of strategic and critical employers, it is firstly about understanding their curriculum need. This has moved beyond selling apprenticeships and into what is needed to make the business successful and what can be leveraged, e.g. what funding streams can be used. This is then stored in the CRM so that colleagues are aware of what the employer wants and how the college has been able to deliver.

The majority of employers who respond to the survey are those that have an apprentice with the college, and this was described as being part of the journey the college is on in terms of making apprenticeships as successful as can be. Governors observed that apprenticeships have been a challenge for the college for a while, and this now seems to be becoming a problem for employers. The vice principal: curriculum and quality advised that there are no surprises as the areas that have declined are those where the college already knows there are issues. The OneFile group and the monitoring group constantly monitor the data, and it is acknowledged that one of the things at which departments need to get better is planning reviews that should have taken place. There also needs to be a push on making sure employers are present for their apprentices' reviews. Many small employers can't take time away from their business to join reviews; however, as this is a requirement, colleagues are now ensuring the employer receives an email or phone call before the review. The vice principal is going to meet with every specialist over the next few weeks to ask why learners are not progressing, why they are going beyond their end date, and why they are not staying in learning. She will also speak to the employer engagement team to find out what their views are in relation to this matter.

One governor was present in the apprenticeships monitoring meeting this afternoon, and governors are now routinely attending these meetings to add extra challenge and support.

The principal indicated that the impact of staff vacancies is huge as this expands caseloads and makes them hard to manage for the remaining staff members. However, the college is now in a better position in terms of staff, and there are better indicators in place with heads of department, who understand what needs to be done.

The academic staff governor fed back that the reviews done with tutors and employers gather indirect data about the relationship with the

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employer, and this needs to be captured in a centralised system. One governor agreed and referred to the CRM system – he asked whether information can be captured which would be more supportive and helpful and how this could be placed into one system. The response to this was that the different performance indicators are monitored in the three-weekly monitoring meeting. Within this week’s meeting, it was apparent that all areas had made a lot of progress. The college has a high proportion of SMEs, which it can be a challenge to engage. Nonetheless, the college is keen to move forward and knows that this must improve. Direct conversations are taking place and positive impact is starting to emerge. The Executive team acknowledged that they need to monitor this further, and they are sure governors will continue to challenge and support.

The chair questioned why apprenticeship achievement, with a 31% actual against a 63% target, is showing as amber – it was noted that this is an error in the RAG-rating and should be red.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

7 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, BALANCED SCORECARD AND ANNUAL KPIS PROPOSED FOR 2023/24

1) Strategic objectives

The CEO presented these for the current year. If governors are happy to approve the strategic objectives, these will go into the Strategic Plan for 2023-2026. The principal indicated that many are similar to before, but there are some with noticeable changes. For example, as it has been decided that the college will move away from non-statutory mandated CPD, the relevant objective will now be for each staff member to have an individualised CPD plan.

Governors were also informed that the college achieved last year’s objective in relation to becoming a Microsoft Showcase college; therefore, the objective now is to ensure the college is using technology to impact positively on teaching, learning and assessment.

The college needs to respond to the challenges around curriculum reform, T Levels, and the defunding of Level 3 qualifications in order to ensure it is delivering funded qualifications while still meeting local need. This is a challenge at the moment and one which every college is facing. A number of employer advisory boards have been set up to support the T Level offer – the college’s ambition is to develop these and, particularly, pick up the LSIF challenges around soft skills. Governors were reminded that the college has done a lot to grow its direct delivery adult provision – there is a strong foundation, and it now needs to raise the profile and support the opportunities that levelling up and devolution offer.

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Other strategic objectives will be more familiar: these are in relation to finances and and capital projects. The governors' strategy day in the spring term strategy day helped to inform the Community Pledge – within this document, the college has made hard commitments on which it needs to deliver.

The principal welcomed comments from the board and specifically asked one governor whether she agrees with the proposals made, as the CEO of a local authority within the college's catchment. The governor expressed the opinion that this is welcome and that she endorses the proposals, indicating that there are exciting times ahead and significant funding opportunities. It is essential to make commitments and have strategies in place to support the vision.

Another governor expressed the opinion that there is definitely movement through from the strategy day, and good, centred progress can be seen in the objectives presented.

2) Balanced scorecard

Introducing this item, the principal explained that the strategic objectives have been recorded in detail and colour coding added. The principal indicated that the red RAG-rating for English and maths will hopefully improve in-year. Some measures are blank at the moment as the year is not far enough along for the college to be able to provide solid data, and the red areas mainly reflect to last academic year. Beneath this is a list of targets and thresholds, and the principal extended an open invitation for governors to contact the director: IT, estates and learning resources to meet with him to find out how these thresholds have been decided. It is important that governors have confidence in this process, and governors are welcome to contact the executive PA should they wish to arrange a meeting with the director.

The chair of the Corporation Board stated that the balanced scorecard is structured in a really helpful way, and it would be good to use its content to shape the Corporation Board's meeting agenda in future. Historically, the narrative has focused on red RAG-rated elements but, now that there are trend arrows in place, it would be worth inviting governors to challenge where they are going in the wrong direction. For the next board meeting, more attention needs to be paid to what the balanced scorecard is communicating.

The external consultant handling the governance review raised an issue about the four areas identified by Ofsted as areas for improvement – he suggested that these should perhaps be of more focus within the Corporation Board's agenda. The principal countered that he feels they already are a focus in strategic terms but perhaps not explicitly as there are other things to also be mindful of. He expressed the opinion that the

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college has really made improvements to the areas suggested by Ofsted. However, delivering impact is really important, and it would be beneficial for the Standards Committee to see a report once or twice per year which focuses on the Ofsted areas for improvement. Discussions have been held before about mapping out the journey to outstanding, detailing how the college can develop elements from 'good' to 'outstanding' and how can it ensure that those already 'outstanding' elements remain so. Consideration will be given to future board agendas to ensure the key takeaways are really clear.

VP: C&Q

Ongoing

Principal/
Chair/Clerk

Ongoing

AGREED: to approve the strategic objectives, balanced scorecard and annual KPIs for 2023/24 as presented.

8

QUALITY AND STANDARDS

In the absence of members of the Standards Committee who had been present at the October meeting, the principal drew governors' attention to the detailed minutes of the meeting which took place on 9th October 2023 and the summary report provided.

It was specifically pointed out that there is a new requirement within Keeping Children Safe in Education for governors to have confidence that online safety is taken seriously, and a detailed paper was presented in full to the Standards Committee by the director: IT, estates and learning resources. The committee were assured that the mechanisms in place are robust, which governors were happy to note.

Governors were presented with a 'talking heads' video which centred on students' feedback in relation to the start of the year. A lot of positive feedback was particularly given in relation to trips and visits.

One student governor fed back that Year 1 A-Level students get some 'quiet' time in the building without the Year 2s, and they also get some sessions in which to learn each other's names and complete team-building exercises. For example, during their first year, this student governor took part in an environmental programme which they found enjoyable and benefited from. It is not standard to give a tour to every Year 1 student, but the Welfare team will do this for any students who indicate it as a requirement. The 'Big Welcome' presentations from the principal and Executive colleagues are a good and useful thing for students. Locally, the idea of 'going to West Notts' feels for young people like Derby Road is the main site, so it is great to find that other campuses also have Exec visits. The student governor also fed back that the summer break is long and can lead to students feeling a little disjointed, and teachers were easy on the students at the very start of the year before taking them back into working at the usual level. Teachers have a lot of empathy and pace things well, it is felt. The student governors acknowledged that early attendance to college is

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necessary and having these gentler 'welcome back' sessions is conducive to encouraging this.

Some small changes have been made to the quality improvement action plan:

- 'Teaching to the Top' will focus on improving study skills to drive performance in exams and train students in relation to how to sit exams.
- In terms of apprenticeships, the key area for improvement has been revised to drive learners to excel and resolve those learners studying past 90 days.
- There has been an update to specifically focus on A Levels, given the results from 2022/23. No new actions have been added, but the vice principal has really drilled down to focus on what it is believed will improve the exam results in future years.

Governors asked that Executive team members really focus on and probe in terms of these items. The principal confirmed that colleagues are taking a really forensic approach in terms of learners knowing how to achieve high marks in an exam.

One governor raised a question around trauma informed practitioners. The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience explained that the college has been on a journey to recognise that some young people have been subject to early childhood trauma, and colleagues need to know how to manage this. The vice principal has put together positive behaviour management processes to support colleagues to recognise that trauma can impact on students' ability to meet expectations, take exams, etc.

Governors were asked to volunteer to take part in the position statements validation process, if they are available for any of the meetings that do not already have a governor assigned. A schedule was presented for governors to view.

AGREED:

- a) to note the content of the summary report
- b) to note the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2023
- c) to acknowledge the measures being taken to ensure online safety
- d) to note the content of the QIAP
- e) to note the content of the EDI update
- f) to note the content of the safeguarding and Prevent report.

9

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION – 2023 UPDATE

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience delivered a PowerPoint presentation. Key points highlighted included:

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- For governors, the guidance is largely unchanged.
- The definition is unchanged and has been in place for a number of years. The final bullet point within this – ‘taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes’ – is very important when taking into account vulnerabilities and how to ensure these priority groups achieve in line with their peers, and this is a focus of the vice principal’s regular report to the Standards Committee. There are still some gaps here and work still to do.
- Establishing a safeguarding culture – the vice principal is delivering the annual updates at present. These are mandatory for all staff and governors. Every person in the organisation must take some level of responsibility in terms of safeguarding and must exercise professional curiosity. If seeing an increase in concerns, the role of governors is to challenge in relation to what is being done.
- The role of governors remains unchanged. Colleges must have a strategic lead for safeguarding on the board – for West Nottinghamshire College, this is Ben Owen. The vice principal invited governors to consider whether they feel the annual update equips them with enough knowledge or whether they feel they need some external training to fill any gaps.
- The duties and responsibilities for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) are unchanged and are reflected in the vice principal’s job description. She has to update her training every two years – she and members of the Safeguarding do this in the summer.
- One new addition is the requirement for governors to receive an annual report on how well the college is complying with the Department for Education’s standards in terms of staying safe online.
- Safer recruitment remains unchanged, and the college must comply with requirements to do these checks. HR staff now perform Google searches on shortlisted candidates as part of this process.
- Allegations against staff remain largely unchanged, but lower-level concerns were introduced a couple of years ago. The harm threshold is something that has, or is likely to, put a child at risk – this requires the vice principal to meet with the LADO and take advice in relation to next steps. Last academic year, eight staff concerns went to the LADO and two went to a formal managing allegations process.
- There is an addition this year in relation to concerns about staff, in that, if there is an allegation against an organisation or individual who is be using its premises, this must be dealt with in the same way as the college would deal with its own staff.
- Ofsted’s investigation into sexual harassment and violence in schools led to some changes previously. Since, this largely

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remains unchanged – however, last year, there were 50 concerns of sexual harassment and violence happening within college. This is 19 more than in the year before, and LK feels it is due to the awareness raising which the college has been doing with students. There are very specific duties for the college in terms of this.

- ‘Prevent’ is a specific safeguarding duty. There was a national Prevent review last year, and the vice principal took part in a roundtable with other colleges and the DfE in relation to recommendations emerging from the Manchester bombing. One recommendation was that colleges and schools should more readily share behavioural concerns that might be an indicator of someone being vulnerable to radicalisation. Those present discussed with some concern the challenges for colleges in terms of this, particularly in relation to sharing with universities. However, this might become part of the college’s Prevent duties moving forward.
- Behaviour and behaviour management issues can often point to wider underlying problems. However, there is a spectrum of behaviour, and this can involve those young people who have shut down and stay out of the way – these are the ones that can go unseen, whereas angry and volatile behaviour draws attention. The college has a positive behaviour management approach in place.
- The college is on a journey to trauma informed practice, and many colleagues have received training on this.

A question from one governor was in terms of the activity in the Middle East and whether there is any guidance or indication of concerns. The vice principal confirmed that the college has not seen a rise of any issues within college as a result of this, but city centre colleges might report differently. Sam Slack, the regional Prevent coordinator, has sent relevant detailed guidance which has been shared with staff. The emerging threats team at the local authority has also shared some advice and guidance, such as material which the college can deliver during tutorials in order to shut down any inappropriate conduct. The guidance is all around the antisemitism element, both sides of the argument, and how to manage this. However, it is necessary to be careful around using these resources as some students are more able than others to engage intellectually with these topics.

One of the student governors challenged that they often cannot access certain websites which they need to access as part of their course due to blocks placed on the subject matter. They were advised to ask a teacher to contact the IT helpdesk to request that these sites are opened for access if needed, but also to ask staff to flag up that their students will be looking at these sites legitimately so that action is not taken if there is a flag on Smoothwall.

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AGREED: to note the content of the presentation and update given.

10

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

The vice principal: communications, engagement and student experience delivered her detailed report. Key highlights included:

- In relation to progress against 2022/23 milestones, the paper states that 75% of supported interns achieved positive destinations; this is now 91%.
- The college is continuing to face challenges in terms of work placement and extended placement, but the good news for T Levels is that most courses have the placements they need. The only area where more work is needed on this is engineering.
- The final draft of the LSIF has been included in in the papers for governors to peruse.
- The vice principal’s recommendation for the board is around the duty to review the accountability statement and ensure that provision meets the need of the community. At the point of issuing the Community Pledge, there was not yet a published LSIP. Governors were well-sighted on this, but they are now asked to approve that they have carried out their duty to review and the Community Pledge is fit for purpose. Once agreed, the vice principal will publish this minuted confirmation.
- Five employer advisory boards were established last year – the target for 2023/24 is for this to become nine. Sport and childcare’s boards are working well; construction’s last panel meeting needed to be rearranged; some more work is needed for engineering as staffing challenges have impacted the ability to gather a panel and meet.
- The vice principal proposes to increase the target for the percentage of supported internships leading to employment to 95% (from 95%).

The academic staff governor stated that he is conscious of the number of placements which it will be necessary to obtain in the next few years, and he challenged whether there is any possibility of bringing this in earlier, particularly for the larger areas. This is especially something to consider in light of the overlap with the BTECs for some T Levels. It was agreed that finding placements for all students is particularly challenging. The staff governor also challenged how growth in A Levels will be supported following the latest reforms. The principal indicated that the college is already looking at launching a GCSE resit programme at Level 2, and these reforms are creating a dangerous landscape. Governors and the Exec team will look at this in more detail at the next strategy day. This will also come to the board as part of future strategic objectives and will be discussed in curriculum planning for those areas that are being defunded.

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AGREED:

- to approve and confirm that governors have carried out their duty to review and the Community Pledge is fit for purpose
- to approve the employer engagement milestones for 2023/24 as presented.

11 **AUDIT AND RISK**

Presenting the report and minutes of the previous meeting, the chair of the Audit Committee advised that the audit plan has been concluded in-year for the first time in four years. Other key matters highlighted were:

- All internal audits came back with good or substantial assurance.
- The tracking system was found to be very good, with substantial assurance, and was an improvement on previous years.
- The Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy is presented to the board for approval.
- In terms of the annual review, the content of the terms of reference is still suitable and the document can roll forward unchanged.
- The committee membership is unchanged except for the addition of Theresea Hodgkinson.
- The committee looked at the capital projects review that had been deferred from last year, as well as budgetary sign-off plans for AEB.

AGREED:

- to approve the Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy
- for the Audit Committee terms of reference to roll into 2023/24 unchanged
- to note the contents of the update provided.

12 **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

As there were no members of the committee present, the CEO and director of HR gave a verbal update on one urgent matter relating to the college's staff survey.

The college has always used QDP, but the head of HR was tasked with checking whether there were any better options. However, in summary, she found that QDP meets the college's need, is cost effective, enables cross-college benchmarking, and ensures confidentiality. She and the principal will closely review the questions this year as it might be possible to use the open questions more effectively to provide more of a drilldown into issues.

The survey is always released in February or March. The return percentage is monitored and the deadline pushed back if necessary.

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Although colleagues would prefer a higher response rate, it is high compared to most colleges.

In relation to the confidentiality of the survey, it was confirmed that Exec and assistant principals see a breakdown by specific department and the principal sees those areas that have given the lowest scores. He uses this to drive improvements – e.g. this is where the individualised CPD plan came from.

To encourage more staff to complete the survey, one governor recommended giving human prompts rather than follow-up emails.

AGREED: to approve that the college remain with QDP for the staff survey.

13

FINANCE AND ESTATES

The chair of the Finance and Estates Committee presented his report, and key points highlighted were:

- Risks are more focused and capital projects are being introduced. There are concerns because of the nature and size of projects, costs, and the risk of cost overruns. Colour-coding has been introduced to ensure that the risks are looked at timely.
- There are once again some large value bids available, which bring pressure if successful.
- Growth is excellent but brings additional pressures and increases the necessity to manage the accommodation resource. There is also a concern that flexibility is needed as there is likely to be a demographic downturn in 2028, so leasing property rather than buying is the wisest way forward.
- The additional funding allocation has helped and has allowed the college to address the pay situation. This means the college might avoid the retention issues it has experienced in the past.
- A draft position was given in relation to the yearend finances – the forecast and financial health score are much better in comparison to a few years ago.
- A first draft of the yearend accounts was seen and is with auditors to review.
- A positive update was given in relation to estates. However, there are challenges at Chesterfield Road with the significant pre-commencement conditions. The college is working closely with an archaeologist to ensure there is no impact on progress, and this needs to be monitored efficiently.
- The committee were happy with the updates provided within the meeting.

An update was suggested in relation to Chesterfield Road for the benefit of the A-Level students. They particularly asked whether there would be

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any noise issues – the director: IT, estates and learning resources confirmed that demolition will be quick and the smaller buildings will come down in a day. The rear will take longer, but this is further away behind Ashfield House. This latter structure is remaining so can act as a noise buffer. Chesterfield Road will also get a new roof and windows as part of the £6m bid awarded for refurbishment – this will happen over the next two summers. Student governors were assured that the college is constantly trying to improve accommodation.

Executive team members offered for governors to be given an opportunity to visit the site, perhaps in the summer term. This will be arranged by the clerk at the appropriate time.

Clerk

March
2024

AGREED: To note the content of the report.

14

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The principal presented his detailed report, and key matters highlighted were:

- The latest Rising Stars programme has commenced with 14 in the cohort. A former Rising Star has resigned due to a promotion opportunity elsewhere, which is positive for her.
- The chair and principal met with Ben Bradley yesterday. All three mayoral candidates are very well known to the college, which has put the college in a very positive position in terms of devolution. Conversations with two mayoral candidates have taken place so far and were very positive. The chair and principal will meet with Matt Relf next week, and there will be a wider meeting with college leads at a later date.
- Linking to capital projects, there is a very high amount of levelling up activity going on. The Chesterfield Road project and ADMC link to the Towns Fund. Since then, there has been the Levelling Up Fund, which is funding the Beales building; the Levelling Up Partnership money, for which it was necessary to submit a list of projects for a decision of what was allowed; and now there is Long-Term Town Plan, which is £20m of funding each for Mansfield and Kirkby-in-Ashfield. All of these bid opportunities have different criteria and timescales. Although this provides great opportunities and, overall, is very positive, it makes it hard for the college to come up with a coherent plan. It also means that there are some complex, large-scale developments and changes in place for some departments, particularly in engineering and motor vehicle. The principal indicated that the Exec team will try hard to keep governors in the loop, but he encouraged the board to also make the effort to stay on top of developments where possible as there is so much complexity.
- Supported internships have proven to be successful, and Project Search has been shortlisted for an award.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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- Governors' attention was drawn to the details of an overseas trip which will be taking place for a group of students.
- Governors were asked to note the diary dates. They were particularly invited to join the Armistice parade.

AGREED: to note the content of the report.

15 **GOVERNANCE**

The executive PA asked governors to note the amendments to the AoC's Code of Good Governance and to approve for the college to adopt this new version for reporting related to 2023/24 and onwards (until the next update). Governors were informed that Ian Ashman's feedback will be around the new Code, following the current external governance review.

Governors were also reminded of the governor links scheme, which was particularly unsuccessful in 2022/23. Governors were asked to consider what they feel the obstacles are to this scheme being more effective, and to feed back to the executive PA where they feel improvements could be made. A reminder email in relation to the existing links will be sent to link governors and staff, and this will provide a further opportunity to give feedback and suggestions.

AGREED:

- a) to approve adoption of Code of Good Governance
- b) to note the content of the update provided.

16 **AOB**

Members had no additional matters of business to raise.

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

17 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

This was confirmed as 14th December 2023 at 17:00.

Staff and student governors left the meeting at 19:40.

Meeting closed at 19:45.

Executive PA December
2023

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 14/12/2023