

Minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 18th May 2023 at 5pm

GOVERNORS

PRESENT:

Sean Lyons, Chair
David Ainsworth
Alison Barker
Andrew Cropley, Principal/CEO
Charles Heaton
Neil McDonald
Jane Peacock
Andrew Spencer
Paul Wheeler
John Winfield (from 6.20pm)

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

		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, Sheik Rayhan, Keith Spiers and Kate Truscott. Absent without apologies were Kia Shaw and Elizabeth Whitehead.		
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 9TH FEBRUARY 2023</u>		
	The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.		

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 13/07/2023

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2023.

There were no matters arising.

4 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The board were happy to note the content of the update provided. The head of HR confirmed that the People Strategy should be available imminently and that it will then be circulated to governors.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

5 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The chair took the opportunity to thank everyone who is working so hard at the college. He noted two key significant matters which have occurred since the last meeting, i.e. the positive Ofsted inspection and successful recruitment of the new vice principal: curriculum and quality, following a very rigorous recruitment process.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 BALANCED SCORECARD AND ANNUAL KPIS 2022/23

The CEO presented this item and advised that the picture is identical to the position reported at the last meeting, hence the short overview. Key matters highlighted were:

- There is very little that the college can now do to change the position regarding English and maths attendance, and the focus is now on examinations.
- In relation to finances, costs for the year are higher than anticipated, but so is income. Staff have worked really hard to mitigate risks, and it is envisaged that the yearend position will be as expected.
- There are still staff recruitment challenges in some areas; however, the college is changing some internal specialist roles so that they can focus where they are most needed.

One member of the board asked whether the attendance incentives were successful. The CEO advised that attendance has improved in English and has stabilised in maths. There is a correlation between attendance and achievement, and the college will not know whether there has been a positive impact until examination outcomes are known. The college does not yet have the progress check 5 detail and, therefore, is not yet in a position to measure fully.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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The vice principal indicated that there are some low attenders who don't seem to have engaged despite the incentives; therefore, changes are to be made to the Level 1 programmes next year. This will include:

- Students studying Functional Skills rather than GCSEs at the lower levels.
- Less time in the classroom and more time doing practical activities.
- More contextual learning/teaching so that it is more accessible.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

7

ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

The CEO introduced this item, and matters highlighted were:

- All colleges are now required to provide this.
- It is part of the college's contract with the ESFA.
- It is in a semi-rigid format that the college has to follow.
- The college has had to include its response to national as well as local skills priorities.
- It is anticipated that this will become more important over time, with colleges held to account for achievement.
- The intention is to brand it as our 'community pledge'.
- The deadline for submission is 31st May 2023.
- The board is required to confirm that it has met its statutory duty to review the curriculum every three years.

Governors considered and discussed the document, and a number of observations/suggestions were made, including:

- The use of the word 'subservient' within the document doesn't give the right message. The curriculum is what drives the organisation, and a better word could be 'delivers'.
- In the section headed 'context and place', Bassetlaw is not referred to.
- In relation to the suggestion that the college will be 'more ambitious' in 2024, is the organisation setting itself a realistic task and expectations? The CEO expressed the view that the college does need to be forward-looking and ambitious; this is for 2024 and future years.

Governors discussed page 10 and the operational aspects referred to, and all agreed that there was a need to ensure that there is an internal way of monitoring progress. Governors suggested that, potentially, this could be included as part of the balanced scorecard reporting process for next year. However, a challenge from one governor was whether or not it needs more prominence than this. The CEO confirmed that he will review reporting options and make a recommendation to the board at the next meeting. Governors referred to the capital works detailed, and it was acknowledged that there is now a separate risk register in relation

CEO

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to this and that detailed reports will go to the Finance and Estates Committee. General observation from the board was that the content is informative and, therefore, it is believed that it will be well received externally.

Subject to the minor amendments agreed at the meeting, the board were happy to approve the content for submission.

AGREED: to approve the Accountability Agreement as presented.

8

QUALITY AND STANDARDS

Governors noted the content of the committee chair's summary report and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2023. A challenge from one governor was to ensure that the action agreed at an earlier meeting, i.e. reporting on apprenticeship accountability measures, is included within the chair's report. The CEO was able to confirm that the college is RAG-rated as green across all aspects of the apprenticeship accountability measures.

One governor asked for more information in relation to A-Level retention, which is highlighted as an issue. The vice principal indicated that this is for the current Year 13 group, with the retention figure being 70%, which is short of the 90% target. He explained that there were a number of factors which have contributed to this, e.g. some students transferring to apprenticeships. It was acknowledged that there were challenges at the Chesterfield Road site for this group when they were in Year 12, which will have also had a negative impact. All agreed that it is really important that the remaining cohort do well in their exams. Staff advised that there is also an impact following the decision not to provide AS Levels, a programme that only takes one year rather than two. Staff indicated that the current Year 12s are thriving and the expectation is that almost all will come back for their second year in September. One governor asked whether the college knows where the 30% are who were not retained. Staff indicated that this has been tracked and that there are some positives, e.g. securing apprenticeship places; however, there are 6% unknowns.

Governors' attention was then drawn to the deep dive reports in relation to maths and English, and the board were happy to note the content.

The board then received the talking heads video on the topic of CIAG, work placements and next steps. Points made by students included:

- Work placements have been arranged with a number of employers, including:
 - Right Track
 - Mansfield Brewery

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- Portland College
- Middlebrook Garage
- Hatsfield Care Home
- Erasmus company as part of the Estonia project
- King's Mill Hospital
- Kingfisher Court
- TNT Service Garage
- Windale Primary School
- Amy School of Dance
- Potters
- Saint Joseph's Primary

Placements varied in length: examples given were five days and many months. Work placements were also arranged in college, with students being fully supported.

- What did you learn?
 - Communication
 - Observations and writing of assessments
 - Working on engines
 - Dealing with different situations
 - Teaching children to dance
 - Communication – so many different people with different needs
 - The trade environment
 - How dementia effects residents
 - The real-life experience as a practitioner
 - More confidence
 - Stop motion animation
 - How to manage the behaviours of children
 - Communication with residents
 - How to adapt
 - Stepping out of my comfort zone
 - Writing
 - The practical application
 - Real life circumstances
- What went well?
 - Connecting with others
 - Making a bond with others
 - Getting out of my comfort zone
 - Great relationships
 - Ability to be open and explore new things
 - People very welcoming
 - I felt included
 - Confidence and independence
 - I was able to get involved with activities
 - Everyone was kind
 - Good planning

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- How to respond to individual needs
 - I have been offered a job as a result
 - It has built up my confidence
 - Getting to know people more
- What could have gone better?
 - More time to connect with the children
 - Nothing, it was a perfect project
 - The original group did not need me enough, so I was able to swap to where they were short staffed
 - Two-day placements with children is not enough
 - More time
 - I'd have liked to have been there longer
 - Extra activities in the timetable
 - Induction
 - More hands-on experience

Following the video, staff advised that health and social care and early years provision will be moving to T Levels and, therefore, the work experience hours are significantly more. This will mean increased demand on both employers and students. Staff were able to advise that the college has had some very positive feedback regarding the students undertaking work experience, and some have been offered either jobs or repeat placements.

A challenge from the board was that it is really important that employers maximise the time and make the most of the opportunity, both for them and for the students. All agreed that it is important to be able to offer the students an alternative if a work placement isn't right at the start. A challenge from the board was that, potentially, there may be more that the organisation can do to articulate options (i.e. work placements don't have to be limited to the 'block' arranged). All felt that there should be a way to continue work placements/relationships when they are working well. Staff advised that, with T Levels, the work placement has to be project-based, hence the need to complete over a longer period.

A question and challenge from one governor was whether or not the college is ready for the T-Level work experience requirements, it being acknowledged that it will be a significant challenge. They asked whether the college has enough people in place and capacity and whether or not there is a plan in relation to this. Staff confirmed that, for 2023/24, there is a plan and that there is confidence regarding capacity, with the college already well down the track in terms of identifying all placements required in construction and early years. The senior team are currently looking at whether the resource should be central or, alternatively, sit within the curriculum. Current thinking is that it will be most effective within the curriculum. It is likely that more

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resource/staffing will be required in 2024/25 and beyond as the number of students taking T Levels increases.

One governor asked whether there is any flexibility regarding the length of a work experience placement. It was confirmed that there is for study programme learners. Governors asked where the conversation would be in terms of the length and any extension. Staff indicated that it should be between the college's work experience team and the employer. Staff indicated that, for health and social care and early years, there is a need to carefully balance the placement length alongside the need to teach prescribed hours.

A challenge from one member of the board was not to just think of health and social care learners when considering placements at the hospital as there are many other departments, and an example given was media. A suggestion from governors was to look at a rolling placement opportunity across a number of organisations, and an example given was finance in both the hospital and the building society. Governors felt that it would be useful to explore the notion of shared placements.

The board were reminded that T Levels are not funded on a lagged basis, which is helpful; therefore, the budget and resource available should increase in line with student numbers. Staff advised that this is being planned for and that there is circa £1.5k extra per learner to support work experience.

The board then went on to discuss the Quality Improvement Action Plan, and key matters highlighted were:

- Page 5 details the deep dives undertaken. There have been another nine deep dives, of which six were graded and three developmental. All six were graded as 'good'. The college is now touching 87% of deep dives graded as 'good'.
- The biggest concern is the weak areas often linked to staffing challenges/issues.
- Technical qualifications need to remain a focus, particularly high grades.
- Pages 11 and 12 show that Level 3 provision is not improving as planned, but governors were given assurance that staff resources have been committed to work with students between now and the end of the year. This links to 'teaching to the top' and 'stretch and challenge'.
- Recruiting electrical staff/trainers is still a challenge.

Governors' attention was then drawn to the detailed safeguarding and Prevent report, and they were happy to note the content.

AGREED: to note the content of the updates provided.

Signed :  _____ Chair

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AUDIT

The committee chair drew governors' attention to the summary report and also the minutes of the meeting. He advised that the report links to the February meeting, which occurred only a couple of days in advance of the last board meeting. Key matters for board consideration are the contract extensions proposed for the internal and external audit service. The recommendation is that both contracts be extended by a further three years. One member of the board asked whether the contract prices are fixed, as appears to be the case. The finance director confirmed that they are, save for an RPI increase. The committee chair confirmed that both governors and staff are happy with the quality of service provided by both.

AGREED: to extend the external audit contract with Mazars and internal audit contract with Haines Watts up to and including 2025/26.

It was noted that the college would then go out to test the market in early 2026.

The committee chair advised that the committee had also met yesterday, and key matters highlighted were:

- An internal audit report on payroll was provided. There was 'adequate' assurance; however, there were no concerns.
- An internal audit report on risk management was received with 'substantial' assurance provided.
- Improvements have been made to the risk register as part of ongoing developments. It now gives a very clear picture and links between the risks, strategic objectives and appetite.
- The internal audit plan for the year is on target, save for the review of capital projects. The committee has agreed to defer this audit until next academic year as capital projects are not yet at the stage where it is possible to test end-to-end processes.
- Balanced scorecard items are also now incorporated within the risk register. The committee all agreed that the improvements made were effective and really do help to focus discussions, both internally and at governor level.
- The CEO advised that the new risk register has highlighted the need to have a KPI on next year's balanced scorecard in relation to staff recruitment and retention.

One governor noted that, in the February meeting minutes, there was reference to an issue with estates paperwork. The committee chair was able to confirm that there was a deep dive on this at the meeting yesterday and that the college is migrating to an electronic system, which will really help to make things more efficient.

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AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

10 SENIOR POSTHOLDER AND GOVERNANCE

The meeting chair referred to the summary report and the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2023. He confirmed that there were a number of aspects considered, including:

- Mid-year reviews for senior postholders
- Rolling governor records in relation to attendance, training and development and engagement activities
- Governors and committee co-optees due to complete their terms of office, including:
 - Spencer Moore – the recommendation is that he be reappointed for a further two-year period from 1st August 2023 to 1st August 2025.
 - Charles Heaton – the recommendation is a term of office extension to 31st December 2023 and then that he move to become a Finance & Estates Committee co-optee rather than a governor. It was explained that he is moving out of the area and, therefore, will not be in a position to attend in person. The recommendation is that he be appointed as a committee co-optee for two years from 1st January 2024 to 1st January 2026.
 - Workforce Development co-optees, Helen Wilcockson and Ella Brookes – the recommendation is that they be reappointed for a further four-year term of office. The recommendation is also that an additional staff co-optee be recruited to the Workforce Development Committee from the business support side of the organisation. It is believed that this will add to the quality of discussions.

The board all agreed that they were happy to approve the proposals as presented.

AGREED:

- a) to extend the term of office for Charles Heaton to 31st December 2023
- b) to appoint Charles Heaton as a committee co-optee from 1st January 2024 to 1st January 2026
- c) Re-appoint Spencer Moore as a governor from 1st August 2023 to 1st August 2025
- d) Reappoint Helen Wilcockson and Ella Brookes as Workforce Development Committee co-optees from 26th June 2023 to 26th June 2027
- e) That a further support staff co-optee be recruited to join the Workforce Development Committee.

Signed :  _____ Chair

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The committee chair introduced this item and drew governors' attention to the summary note and the minutes of the meeting held on 27th April 2023. Key matters highlighted were:

- The committee received a good update on the capital projects.
- The carbon footprint remains high on the agenda, and it is reassuring to see the level of activity.
- The college is forecasting to be above budget.
- Staffing is a challenge in some areas.
- The cash position is very strong.
- There has been additional income in the year.
- The committee briefly discussed insurance, and the decision was made to extend the current contract with Zurich for one year.
- Minor changes are proposed for the Fees Policy for 2023/24.
- Changes are proposed to the Financial Regulations to respond to new requirements following ONS reclassification.
- In-year subcontracting changes. The board were given assurance that all subcontracting arrangements are well managed and progressing well.

One member of the board asked whether there are any cash investment options to be considered. The finance director explained that the college is restricted by arrangements with Lloyds.

AGREED:

- a) to note the content of the summary report
- b) to note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting
- c) to note the content of the March 2023 management accounts
- d) to approve the subcontracting variations as proposed
- e) to approve the updated Financial Regulations as presented
- f) to approve the Fees Policy for 2023/24 as presented.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

The director: IT, estates and learning resources provided an update on a number of projects, with key matters highlighted including:

- 1) Chesterfield Road
 - Planning permission has been submitted. There is only one potential issue still to resolve, which is in relation to drainage.
 - Planners have now confirmed that they have all they need to make a decision.
 - Tender has been issued and there have been sixteen expressions of interest, three of which are very strong bids. The college is quietly confident in relation to the options.

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- Because the college lost time on this project, asbestos removal and demolition have been taken out of the main contract.
- There will be a requirement to decant the community provision to the Four Seasons premises, and the college is just applying for change of use in relation to this.

2) Station Park

- No planning permission is required for the mezzanine to be created,
- Sequencing is complex, and there will be a need to partially decant.
- An update on costings is due tomorrow.
- College funds will allow the creation of one part of the mezzanine, which will help with sequencing.

3) Oddicraft Lane

- The college was not successful in relation to the growth fund bid and, therefore, cannot move motor vehicle out.
- The college does have the benefit of the Haas funds and, therefore, more space can be created.
- In effect, the college has had to move to plan B.

The board were advised that the college has been very successful in securing capital funds, with £9.5 million due over five years. The capital transformation fund is very focused and must be spent on infrastructure. T-Level capital funding has been confirmed at £1.8 million, with the largest part of this being in relation to engineering.

One member of the board asked whether solar panels can be installed on the Chesterfield Road roof. The finance director indicated that the college is not allowed to place them on the existing front and middle sections because of their conservation status.

A challenge from the board was whether or not the college is properly resourced to be able to deal with this level of capital projects. The board were advised that the college is not yet fully resourced but that additional capacity is being built into plans. A lot of this will be administrative and project management so as to simply be able to get the bids and tenders in, as required in the Financial Regulations. It was confirmed that capital projects have been added as a separate section to the risk register. The finance director advised that the project management costs will be built into the capital funds received.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

13

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Signed :  _____ Chair

Date: 13/07/2023

The principal's detailed report was considered and a number of matters were specifically highlighted, including:

- Governors are encouraged to attend the staff and student celebration events. The start time of the next Standards and Finance and Estates Committee meetings have been brought forward so they do not clash, in order to allow governors to attend.
- Transfer of a small amount of provision from Barnsley College. It was explained that a business case in relation to this would be presented to the next meeting.
- The Gene Haas launch date has now been agreed as 5th July 2023.
- The principal was able to meet with Michael Gove today, where levelling up funds were discussed.
- In relation to the automated manufacturing centre, the local authority has now made an offer in relation to the preferred site.
- In relation to Ofsted, the college was expecting the final report today but it has not yet been received.

Principal

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AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

14

GOVERNANCE

The director of governance introduced this item and referred to the feedback following link governor meetings and meet the student and staff sessions. Governors' attention was also drawn to the information agreed to be circulated at the April 2023 governor development session. Also noted was the calendar of meetings planned for next academic year.

The board then discussed student governor recruitment, and the CEO proposed that the executive team work with business studies students and build 'being a governor' into the curriculum. It is believed that this may help to ensure that the experience is relevant and will then give student governors the confidence to contribute. The board were supportive of the proposal.

The director of governance took the opportunity to confirm that Robert Docherty is stepping down as a governor, given that he is leaving the area, and that plans are in place to recruit and interview a potential replacement.

AGREED:

- a) to note the content of the update provided
- b) to approve the proposal that two student governors be recruited from the business studies courses for next year.

Signed :  _____ Chair

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15 AOB

As a matter of additional business, the chair took the opportunity to say farewell to Matt Vaughan, given that he will have moved on to his new job prior to the next board meeting. On behalf of the board, he expressed thanks and appreciation for the positive impact he has had during his time with the college. All acknowledged his drive and dedication and wished him well in his new role.

16 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

This was confirmed as 13th July 2023.

17 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

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

(Staff left the meeting at 6.45pm)

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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