

Minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 10th February 2022 at 5.30pm

GOVERNORS

PRESENT:

Sean Lyons, Chair
Andrew Cropley, Principal/CEO (Teams)
Andrew Spencer
Kate Truscott
Neil McDonald
Rebecca Joyce (Teams)
Ben Owen (Teams)
Sardip Sandhu (Teams)
Tony Westwater
Joshua Charles (Teams)
William Burton (Teams)
Charles Heaton (Teams)
Bev Whitefoot

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE:

Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance (Teams)
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 (Teams)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.

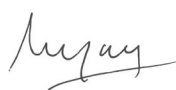
2 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Keith Spiers, David Gillies, Steve Sutton, Spencer Moore and Angela Newton-Soanes.

Sian Geeson, the head of HR, was welcomed to her first meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER 2021

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 10/03/2022

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2021.

There were no matters arising.

4 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The board were happy to note the content of the update provided. The director of governance advised that the actions on lines 1 and 3 are now well embedded and, therefore, will be removed. The CEO advised that the action in relation to line 7 was still outstanding, and he will seek to progress.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

5 SCENE SETTING

The chair made reference to the earlier development session and acknowledged that governors had heard some really exciting detail regarding asset development. He expressed the view that the college was really well placed and has some exciting opportunities on the horizon. Reputation is still growing and there are opportunities to build on what has been a positive year so far. The college is demonstrating stronger relationships with partners, and there is a clear focus now on 'eyes above the horizon'. He took the opportunity to inform governors of a number of matters, including:

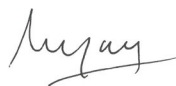
- This is Bev Whitefoot's last meeting as she is stepping down as a staff governor. All acknowledged that they were really grateful for her valuable contribution.
- Keith Spiers has been awarded an OBE.
- Rebecca Joyce has been awarded Freedom of the City of London.
- Sardip Sandhu has a new role at De Montfort University.

All agreed that it was really positive for the board to have these wider connections.

6 BALANCED SCORECARD

The detailed report was considered and an update given on a number of aspects, including:

- 1) Apprenticeship earnings – there are a number of items bringing down the EBITDA position, including:
 - Lower than expected rollovers. The college has lost a number of apprentices.

Signed :  _____ Chair

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- There have been a number of breaks in learning, and some apprentices have withdrawn because of frustrations.
- There is £1 million less activity than envisaged.
- There has been a lag in terms of data awareness because of COVID.
- The gap is closing month by month, but it is not going to be possible to eradicate it entirely.
- In addition, the college is seeing starts later in the year than envisaged, e.g. October/November rather than August.
- The college believes that the volumes will come through later in the year, but this will have an impact on future years rather than in-year and will help to build future strength.
- Yearend impact is envisaged; more detail will be provided at the next meeting as part of the reforecast.

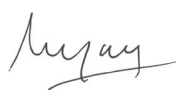
2) Attendance for maths and English

- This is currently below target.
- The college held the first JCQ mocks this year, and attendance was 85% in English and 82% in maths, which is actually more positive than attendance for taught sessions.
- Exam attendance was positive and bodes well for the summer.
- Some departments were negatively impacted by the Omicron variant.
- Teaching and learning is improving, and key matters highlighted were:
 - English is now considered to be 'good'
 - The college has recruited some good new staff in the maths department
 - The college has really invested in maths and English provision
 - There is strong support from student services.
- Attendance in vocational areas is good, but it is not yet good enough in maths and English

A challenge from one member of the board was that, if students do not attend, there can be no impact of good teaching and learning. All agreed that this was critically important for overall progression. The board were advised that the college is reintroducing the incentivisation scheme previously in place and is also providing positive comments for those who are good attenders, which should also motivate others. A challenge from one member of the board was to get students to spread the positive teaching and learning messages, as word of mouth is critically important. The board asked whether it would be possible to use social media more. The vice principal indicated that the college would need students who are prepared to use their own social media rather than college avenues. It was agreed to look at whether there is merit in identifying maths and English ambassadors/champions. The principal advised that the college is looking to introduce interclass

VP CESE

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competitions as another way to generate enthusiasm.

When considering the data, the board observed that there were a number of factors which were skewing the information and depressing the statistics, and they asked what the impact would be if they are removed. The board were advised that the data would still be fairly similar to that reported, and it was noted that January/February are always the low points in the year in terms of attendance.

A challenge from the board was to look at ways to change the context of English and maths, particularly in terms of employer skills demands (i.e. greater reference to problem solving, communication skills, etc.). The vice principal confirmed that the college does do this but, when students realise they have to sit the GCSE exam, it becomes an issue. It was agreed that governors would be invited into student sessions so that they could help to contextualise.

VP Q&S

2022

3) Progress against target grades

- At progress point 3, the college is usually at -0.25; however, the current overall position is -0.9.
- This was a really ambitious target set.
- There is a high percentage of 16-year-olds; there has been a real spike in some behavioural issues, which is related to the fact that they have had disrupted education for the last two years.
- Some students have not attended an education setting since year 9 and are just not used to formal teaching and learning. They are showing some immature and generally 'silly' behaviours.
- This is a nationwide issue, and the college has linked with Chichester College on this particular aspect to try to learn some lessons.
- The college is supporting teaching staff so that they are able to cope and address the issues; there is confidence that, over time, it will settle down.
- The college expects an improvement at progress point 2, but it is not anticipated that the college will get to the target set.
- Skills gaps for learners are much higher than ever before, which means that scaffolding is critical. There are some students who are not able to cope with the college setting and are 'acting out'.

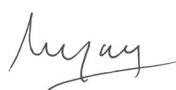
AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

7

ANNUAL KPIS 2021/22

Staff advised that the only KPI due for reporting at this time in the year relates to destination outcomes. Key matters highlighted were:

- The college was just short of target.

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- There is still a way to go, but very ambitious targets were set.
- 88.5% is still strong, particularly given the impact in the hair and beauty and health and social care sectors.
- There is a real turbulence generally in relation to destinations because of the market for jobs being so strong, particularly for 16-18-year-olds.
- There is a really detailed process now in place to track progression, and the college has ever-increasing confidence in relation to this area.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

8 **QUALITY AND STANDARDS**

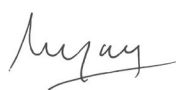
The board were happy to note the content of the Standards Committee chair's report and the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2022.

The vice principal presented the deep dive report in relation to health and social care. Key matters highlighted were:

- The college is at a transition point in relation to this area of provision.
- There have been significant positive movements in terms of teaching and learning.
- Historically, some staff did not have sufficient sector skills, and this has been addressed.
- There is now a full team in place who have expertise and industry experience.
- Students are now more ready to progress.
- Provision is at a tipping point in terms of quality.
- The college cannot yet say that provision is 'good', but staff are seeing improvements.
- Staff are really engaged with CPD, and they have showed remarkable resilience.
- The college has recently brought apprenticeship and study programme teams together, which really strengthens the department.
- Attitudes, commitment and enthusiasm are all there, and staff now need to build their confidence
- Teams are very aware of destinations and are working to support students.

As a general comment, the vice principal indicated that the big goals for the college are now getting English, engineering and health and social care to a grade 2 in the short term.

Governors then received the talking heads video, which was focused on health and social care. Key points of feedback received included:

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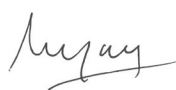
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- Provision is working better this year.
- There is a new room where students can undertake practical assessments.
- Students have an opportunity to learn new things.
- 'I have learned about child development, equality, discrimination, safeguarding and inclusions.'
- 'I am in my second year and recently learned about anatomy and physiology and also practitioner boundaries.'
- College provides a lot of opportunities.
- I have been out on trips, e.g. to universities.
- I feel confident that the college is preparing me for the future, and I have had an opportunity to visit the NTU facilities.
- I have undertaken a CPR session, which was more challenging than I ever thought it would be.
- College has given me an opportunity to meet new people.
- Tutors are really helpful and supportive.
- The social side of being at college is good.
- Teachers could improve on the timing of assignments, as they sometimes all come at once.
- I very much enjoy the practical side of the course.
- I am confident it is expanding my knowledge.
- Tutors are really nice.
- 'I would like fewer assignments and more activities which make it fun to learn.'
- In relation to work placements, some were cancelled because of COVID, but they are planned.
- Meetings are arranged with work experience coordinators.
- 'I would recommend this course and the college to others.'
- It has a nice atmosphere and lots of opportunities for student support.

The board were advised that the video presented had been created by the student film crew, and all agreed that they had done really well.

One member of the board asked what the male/female ratio is on the course. The board were advised that there are very few male students and that this reflects the industry generally.

A question and challenge from the board was in terms of the comments made regarding timings of assignments and work experience opportunities. The vice principal indicated that the senior team have moved on significantly in terms of quality assuring; however, there is still more that could be done. In terms of assignments, it was suggested that this may be more about perceptions from students, but it was acknowledged that there is more that the college can do to prepare them for the work required. The board were advised that students have done work on a number of assignment iterations and that this may have added to the workload. It was confirmed that there is more that the

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college can do to help students with planning and managing, particularly given the disrupted learning over the last two years.

In relation to work experience, it was confirmed that this is an industry-specific issue and that, following the emergence of Omicron, all organisations simply closed their doors in November 2021. The college is now starting to see the industry open up, but it is not yet where it needs to be to give students the opportunities they need. Several governors offered to meet with students to put the NHS in context, and it was agreed that this would be followed up outside the meeting.

VP Q&S

March
2022

Student governors then provided an update, and key matters highlighted were:

- We are looking at different ways to gather knowledge so that this can then be shared with the full board, Examples given were meetings with the Student Union and student reps.
- One meeting with the SU has taken place so far, and some of their ideas are really good
- We are speaking to heads of department regarding learner rep meetings, as it is really important for us to gather student thoughts and opinions. It was agreed that Richard Skelhorn would support in relation to this.

Richard
Skelhorn

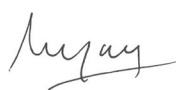
March
2022

Governors' attention was then drawn to the Quality Improvement Plan, and key matters highlighted were:

- Where there is green text, this highlights the most recent changes and provides focus.
- There is a more up to date version created, and this will be shared with the Standards Committee at the next meeting.
- The college is seeing some improvements (an example given was in relation to English); however, there are still some areas to develop.
- The document provides information regarding CPD and peer assessments.
- Data is provided in relation to attendance in maths and English.
- Progress is currently RAG-rated as red.
- In terms of leadership and management, the document details the cultural movement.
- Leadership development is critical and is starting to bear fruit.
- Apprenticeship provision is still RI but is improving. It is currently RAG-rated as amber, as there is still some work to do in certain sectors.

Governors' attention was then drawn to the safeguarding and Prevent exceptions report; however, it was noted that the document is missing from the portal. It was agreed that this would be circulated outside the meeting. Key matters highlighted were:

- Significant increase in the number of referrals following the

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introduction of the new CPOMS system, with figures almost doubled.

- New Keeping Children Safe in Education document for 2022, which is currently out to consultation.
- The Government has downgraded the terrorist threat level; this will impact upon the college's own risk assessments, policies and procedures.

Director of
Governance

February
2022

Governors' attention was specifically drawn to the updated self-assessment judgement grades detailed in the meeting minutes and recommended for board approval by the committee. The board were happy to support the proposals as presented.

AGREED:

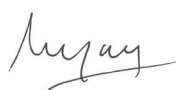
- a) To note the content of the summary report
- b) To note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting
- c) To note the content of QIAP
- d) To support the updated self-assessment judgement grades
- e) To note the content of the safeguarding/Prevent update
- f) To note the overview provided of health and social care improvements.

9

FINANCE AND ESTATES

The committee chair drew governors' attention to his summary report and the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2022. Key matters highlighted were:

- Numbers are currently lagging behind when compared to budget/forecast, but there is a clear understanding as to why this is the case.
- The expectation is that the deficit will narrow, but it is unlikely it will be entirely eradicated.
- Health and safety was discussed in detail, and the committee made the request to split data into categories so that there is greater clarity regarding the nature of 'incidents'.
- The committee discussed capital in detail, and there are a high number of projects currently underway. Staff resource was discussed, and the committee were given assurance in relation to this.
- £3.9 million has been secured from the Mansfield Towns Fund; however, the risk is the match funding element from the ESFA, given the decision date envisaged.
- A D2N2 bid has been submitted which is linked to NTU and has a value of £1.5 million.
- In relation to subcontracting, the ESFA have relaxed their criteria, which is helpful. The proposal is to increase allocation with two subcontractors, and it was also noted that the college is acting upon some delivery concerns in relation to others.

Signed :  _____ Chair

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Rebecca Joyce, the link governor for health and safety, provided some feedback and acknowledged the monumental effort that staff had had to make when dealing with COVID and that they were now hoping to get back to more 'normal' activities. The board all asked that their thanks and appreciation be passed onto the team, and it was agreed that the director of IT, estates and learning resources would do this.

Director IT
& Estates

Feb. 2022

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 2020/21 Health and Safety report
- d) To note the content of the December 2021 Management Accounts
- e) To endorse the D2N2 low carbon bid submitted
- f) To approve the recommendation to increase contracts with White Rose and Chameleon as presented.

10

AUDIT AND RISK

The Audit Committee chair provided verbal feedback following the meeting held earlier in the week (on Tuesday). Key matters highlighted were:

- The internal audit plan is slightly behind where it needs to be for the year, and the committee has pushed staff to arrange fieldwork dates.
- There was an excellent report provided in relation to HR recruitment and retention.
- The college has been subject to an intensive and intrusive OfS audit.
- There was robust discussion regarding the scope of the planned governance peer review.
- The committee considered the performance of external auditors, and there was a very positive review following feedback.
- There is nothing of concern to highlight in the risk register, and the committee all felt that the content was appropriate.

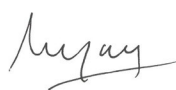
AGREED:

- a) To note the Audit Committee feedback following the meeting held on 8th February 2022
- b) To note the content of the risk register 2021/22.

11

PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY REPORT 2022

The vice principal introduced this item and explained that the college has a statutory duty to provide this. It includes a combination of both student and staff data, each of which is scrutinised in detail by the

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 10/03/2022

Standards and Workforce Development Committees. Key matters highlighted were:

- Page 7 provides information in relation to students, with key data being in relation to destinations and outcomes. There are a number of issues requiring focus, including:
 - The number of students who continue to study at the same level, and there are a whole series of actions that have been agreed to try and address this.
 - The gap in achievement for BAME and male students.
 - The Standards Committee has agreed four key KPIs that need to be monitored regarding EDI going forward.
- In relation to staff, there is a need to link more closely with the Equality and Diversity Steering Group, and actions have been agreed in relation to this.
- There is nothing overly concerning regarding staff data, but there is always more that the college can do to improve and be proactive.
- The plan is to introduce a rolling chair for the steering group, so that both staff and student data has a focus

One member of the board noted that the rate of absence was higher for females, and they questioned whether this includes absence as part of caring responsibilities. The vice principal indicated that it does not and that it is entirely focused on sickness absence.

Challenge from the board was that they, as a whole group, would like to see the EDI action plans, either directly or through the committees. It was agreed that:

- E&D action plans for 21/22 would be a standing agenda item at both Workforce Development and Standards Committees.
- The full board would see an overview report twice a year.
- Governors would also like to see the link made with steering group discussions.

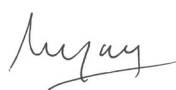
The board were advised that the annual report considered today is retrospective, whereas the action plans considered by committees are live. A challenge from the board was to see what improvements can be made and evidenced in the report that is presented at the same time next year.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the report provided
- b) To approve the publication of the Public Sector Equality Duty Annual Report 2022.

12 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The principal drew governors' attention to his detailed report, and key

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

Date: 10/03/2022

matters highlighted were:

- There was a major event at the Oddicroft site yesterday. This was an open event for employers, with 75 attending. They were able to see the automation and robotic equipment in action. There are opportunities for this site as part of the strategic development funding. There was very positive feedback from attendees, with some good leads made in terms of future developments. There were really interesting discussions, and it was a successful event which has also identified opportunities to collaborate.
- Consultations on funding and accountability – the college has now submitted its position
- Sponsorship of the Business Hour on local radio – this is really worth listening to, and the college has a whole hour dedicated to apprenticeship provision this week.

The board all agreed that they were really pleased to see the level of external focus.

The principal advised that the college had its annual strategic conversation with the ESFA and FEC last week. The meeting was very positive, and they appear pleased with the progress made.

One governor commented that the summary provided in relation to levelling up funding was very insightful and helpful.

AGREED: to note the content of the report and update provided.

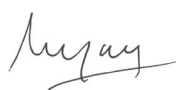
13

GOVERNANCE

The director of governance provided an update on a number of aspects, including:

1) New governor recruitment

- She put forward a proposal for the appointment of Jane Peacock as an independent governor. It was confirmed that she was interviewed by Charles Heaton and Angela Newton-Soanes. She is someone who is known to the college and was an ESFA employee until retirement in May 2020. Charles Heaton advised that, during interview, it was clear that she respects the difference between the executive and non-executive role and that she has developed her own non-executive experience since retirement. All agreed that she would be a real asset to the board, and governors expressed the aspiration that she will be pleased to see the transformation since her work with the college. The board were supportive of her appointment and also approved her appointment as a member on the Finance and Estates Committee.

Signed :  _____ Chair

Date: 10/03/2022

AGREED:

- a) To approve the appointment of Jane Peacock as an independent governor from 10th February 2022 to 10th February 2026
- b) To approve her appointment as a member on the Finance and Estates Committee.
- Staff governor (academic) – the board were advised that there have been two nominations and, therefore, an election will take place. The closing date for voting is Monday 28th February 2022. The board were happy to delegate authority to the chair of the Corporation Board to appoint the successful candidate.

2) Notes of the training session held on 13th December 2021

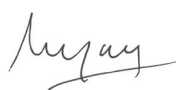
The director of governance provided an update in relation to a number of actions agreed, including the proposal to schedule quarterly informal meetings. Given planned meetings for the remainder of this academic year, it was not felt necessary to add in another session and, instead, it was agreed to look to schedule in 2022/23. Governors' attention was drawn to the update provided in relation to student governor support to enable wider student feedback and also opportunities for governors to meet with staff and students. Details in the principal's report in relation to this were cross-referenced.

The board were advised that a proposal in relation to impact analysis of the external board review was considered at the Audit Committee meeting earlier in the week and that the proposal for reciprocal peer review is being presented to Stoke-on-Trent College tomorrow.

Governors' attention was then drawn to the proposed links, and these were agreed with the addition of:

- Health and social care – Kate Truscott
- Employer engagement – David Gillies and Spencer Moore
- Health and safety – Rebecca Joyce

The board were then asked to consider the proposal that the meetings on 10th March 2022 be held at Chesterfield Road, although constraints were noted in relation to rooms available, IT/use of Teams, and parking. The board all agreed that they would like to try to have the meeting at Chesterfield Road but acknowledged that it would only work if everyone was available to attend in person, given that the technology on site is not as sophisticated as in the Derby Road boardroom. It was agreed that governors would be asked whether they can attend in person but that, if a blended approach is required, hosting the meetings at Chesterfield Road would be reconsidered.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

14 AOB

There were no matters of additional business to consider. Bev Whitefoot took the opportunity to thank the board for the opportunity to be a staff governor and described it as a real privilege to be on the board.

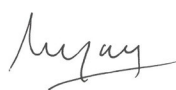
15 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

This was confirmed as Thursday 10th March 2022 at 5pm.

(Student and Staff governors left the meeting at 7.10pm)

16 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

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

Signed :  _____ Chair

Date: 10/03/2022