



**WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE  
CORPORATION BOARD**

**Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held in the Boardroom, Derby Road site on Thursday 10 April 2014**

**GOVERNORS PRESENT:** Ian Baggaley  
Tim Clarke  
Nevil Croston, Chair  
Dame Asha Khemka  
Beverley Nita  
Marie Oakton  
David Overton  
John Robinson  
Colin Sawers

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation  
Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal: Teaching & Learning  
Tom Stevens, Executive Director: Capital Projects & Estates  
Andrew Martin, Deputy Principal/Director of Finance  
Louise Knott, Director: Communications, Marketing & Learner Engagement  
Graham Howe, Vice Principal: Business Development  
Tracey Thompson, Director HR

**14.35 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

The Chair reminded those present to declare at the start of the meeting any interests in matters to be considered. No interests were declared.

**14.36 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Bodger, Terry Dean, Malcolm Hall, John Holford, Mike McNamara, Diana Meale and Hari Punchihewa. Absent without apologies were Kate Allsop, Amy Kendal-Smith and Chris Winterton.

**14.37 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2013**

AGREED: that the minutes were a true and correct record and were signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**14.38 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

Members noted the content of the progress table presented.

<b>ACTION by whom</b>	<b>DATE by when</b>
Chair	10 April 2014

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

## 14.39 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal introduced this item and drew a number of matters to members' attention:

- Stakeholder event London 2014 – members discussed the Principal's investiture at Buckingham Palace. All agreed that this was a very high profile and amazing event. To coincide with the occasion the College also hosted a stakeholder event in London later that day in order to engage with some of the UK's largest and influential businesses, ministers and business leaders. The Vice Chair will be hosting a similar event on 1 May in the College's Refined restaurant for more local businesses and key stakeholders to which all Governors have been invited to attend. The Principal confirmed that the College has been able to host some really high profile events at the College premises recently, which shows much improved engagement. All acknowledged that the quality and consistency of organisation and facilities at the College were excellent. The Chair took the opportunity to personally thank Rachel Bates and the team for organising the event on 14 March, which really was a credit to the College.
- College funding – the College has now received confirmation of its funding allocation from the two main funding agencies, SFA and EFA. In summary, the EFA will be reducing funding for 18 year old learners by 17.5% compared to 16 and 17 year olds and the SFA adult skills budget (not including 16-18 apprenticeship) by 8.5% across the sector. These cuts will obviously have a significant impact on all providers and the impact on WNC includes a 7.1% reduction on the adult skills budget and a 6.0% reduction in 16-18 EFA allocation. As a result, the process of budget management over the coming year will need to be extremely tight. The implications of budget changes have been shared at management level with the Leadership Team who are aware of the issues facing the College in the immediate future. A detailed report will be provided to Governors from the Deputy Principal/Director of Finance at the next meeting.
- D2N2 strategic economic plan – the D2N2 LEP submitted their final economic plan (SEP) to central Government at the end of March. All 39 LEPs have submitted plans and have bid for sums of money over and above that which is available. The Government has three key themes, a) value for money, b) deliverability of projects, and c) leverage regarding match contributions. It is felt that the D2N2 LEP has good connectivity, but there was a concern raised regarding lack of capacity at Board and delivery level.
- HS2 College – Government are currently running a consultation to determine where a new college to support the skills requirements of HS2 will be located.
- India developments – the College has been approached by Lord Rana to work in partnership with him to open a construction college in India within his current educational facilities at Sanghol in Punjab. The building already exists and the College is in the process of describing the construction curriculum that could be offered in

Director of  
Finance

22 May  
2014

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date:

partnership along with the equipment that Lord Rana would need to provide in order to deliver that curriculum. It was noted that a detailed plan and assessment of these opportunities would be presented at the next meeting.

Principal

22 May  
2014

- Work related training update – a programme of change was proposed for the work related training provision within the College. Consultation with staff was concluded on Friday 7 March 2014. In summary, two staff left the team due to changes in personal circumstances prior to the formal consultation commencing, ten staff accepted voluntary redundancy, leaving six staff who were affected by the compulsory redundancy and one having an enforced reduction in hours.
- Vision Workforce Skills – VWS is currently consulting with its staff over proposals to improve the business performance of the Company. The closure of five centres has been proposed in Newcastle, Bristol, Romford, Southampton and Banbury, with a reduced operation in Birmingham and Manchester. The impact of the proposal is that currently 42 staff have been placed at risk of redundancy. Formal collective consultation commenced on 19 March 2014, which is due to end on 22 April 2014. Meetings with employer representatives are taking place twice a week to consider the proposals and discuss any issues, ideas and questions raised by staff at the Company. Individual consultation meetings also commenced on 24 March. Whilst this is a difficult time for everyone involved in VWS, the proposals are necessary in order to maintain the viability of the Company.
- Events – members` attention was drawn to the schedule of events planned for May and June 2014.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### 14.40 PROPERTY STRATEGY UPDATE

The Executive Director: Capital Projects & Estates introduced this item and drew members` attention to the content of his written report:

- Cladding six-storey tower – installation internally 100% complete, doors to the main entrance are renewed. The partitioning in the lobby has been removed, but the entrance will remain closed until completion of the bridgeworks, which are scheduled to reopen on 28 April 2014.
- Sail – design finalised and the stainless steel ordered for manufacture. Installation of the steelwork in preparation of fitting of the sails is complete. The delivery of sails as scheduled on 28 March 2014 and installation has commenced. The final part of the tower refurbishment will take around three weeks, after which scaffolding will then be dismantled for completion of this project element by Easter.
- Three-storey block – insulation and boarding of north and south elevations underway. Refurbishment work in the kitchen will be

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

undertaken during the Easter vacation period commencing 14 April 2014. Work is scheduled for completion for 14 July 2014.

- Engineering Innovation Centre – project progressing to schedule. Meetings have been organised with curriculum to organise decant of Fabrication and Welding from Derby Road at Easter 2014. Student tours of the site took place on 4 and 7 April 2014. This allowed students to orientate themselves with the new location and access.
- Electricity and Gas supply – a generator to provide sufficient power for commissioning of section one of the project is on site, sufficient power is available for the Fabrication and Welding curriculum. Energetics will maintain the generator on the site in the interim period at no cost to the College. Installation of a gas supply is confirmed subject to legals. No date has been provided yet for the main electricity supply for the Engineering and Motor Vehicle curriculum.
- Further Education (FE) Condition Fund – following approval of the works by the Board in March, consultant engineers have been appointed to draft a specification for the heating improvement works. It is anticipated that this work can be tendered to commence at the start of the Summer term 2014.
- Studio School – programme of works is running to time with no delays. The contract for works has been confirmed with the Education Funding Agency for approval and sign off. Prestart meeting arranged with Kiers for Friday 11 April 2014 with commencement on Tuesday 22 April 2014. It was noted that contractors will be working at risk given the outstanding lease, but all are satisfied that the project will progress to sign off and completion.
- Visual Arts Project – a letter of intent has been issued to the successful building contractor, J Tomlinson. The programme for refurbishment of the Trades Building is scheduled to start on Monday 28 April 2014 for completion on Monday 1 September 2014. Fit out and installation will follow completion of refurbishment. It was noted that the delivery of curriculum in the Visual Arts Building will be delayed by one week to allow for the fit out. All acknowledged that this was a very very tight timetable.

All acknowledged that the facilities that the College now provides are excellent. One Governor indicated that at the Invest In Nottingham event hosted at College, lots of new people were shown around the premises for the first time. All were very impressed with the quality of facilities on offer.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### **14.41 HR SIX MONTH UPDATE**

The Director of HR introduced this item and confirmed that her report relates to staff employed directly by the College unless otherwise indicated, a number of particular items were drawn to members' attention:

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

- Turnover has stabilised and currently stands at 17.9% of the workforce and 8.2% of resignations. The highest level that the College has seen since 2008 were reached in December 2013. All acknowledged that it was quite healthy to have turnover with the start of new people into College. The Director of HR confirmed that exit interviews are undertaken with all leaving staff and there were no particular areas of concern raised from these meetings.
- Absence levels have stabilised at 3.8% of lost working time. The AoC survey of sickness absence in further education colleges in 2012/13 was released in December and reported the trend within the FE sector to be a higher proportion of absence due to short-term sickness than long-term cases. This is contrary to the College and what would be expected within a healthy working environment as published by the HE Executive.
- Appraisal completion rates are above those of last year but remain disappointing at 86% of both permanent and all staff. It was confirmed that the Senior Team are relentlessly trying to get this figure to 100% and in some cases, it is simply a matter of staff accurately recording that appraisals have been completed.
- The College's workforce declaring a disability has increased to 4.2% meaning the College is closer to achieving its target of 4.3%. It was confirmed that the new HR system which will be rolled out soon will assist in collating broader information.

Governors noted at page 22 that 2012/13 saw an increase in the number of people leaving the College with less than six months service to 17% from 12% in 2011/12. This figure is above the AoC benchmark of 13% as reported in their survey of recruitment and retention in FE Colleges 2012. Governors were slightly concerned that the College may have a staff retention issue in this area and questioned whether there were any particular trends. The Director of HR confirmed that there were no particular themes appearing across College and that in a lot of instances it was actually the completion of a fixed term contract. She indicated that the data presented relates to 2012/13 and in her view, it is anticipated that the 2013/14 (current year) position will have reduced from this. Governors indicated that in the end of year report they would like more detail regarding the reasons given for staff leaving so that they could more accurately assess whether there were any particular issues to address.

It was noted that performance management information is also now provided within the report provided.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### **14.42 POLICIES & PROCEDURES – ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Director of HR introduced this item and confirmed that HR policies, as a matter of good practice, are reviewed annually. A summary of key changes was noted:

Director  
HR

Sept 2014

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

- The HR procedures have been reviewed but there have been minimal changes.
- The changes relating to CRB and ISA merging to form the Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS) have been taken in to account and the impact of these changes reflected in the relevant procedures.
- Parental Leave has been increased from 13 to 18 weeks in line with legislative requirements.
- The appraisal procedure has more of a focus on performance management than previously and a simplification of paperwork, particularly related to CPD.
- A home working procedure is currently being discussed and is subject to agreement with the unions.

It was confirmed that the annual review has been shared with the Trade Unions and all of the changes agreed by them.

AGREED: \_\_\_\_\_ to note the update provided.

#### **14.43 QUALITY REPORT**

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and drew members` attention to a number of items:

- For classroom based provision in year retention is the most effective indicator of final success rates during the academic year. In year retention can be used to provide an indicator of end of year success rates in broad terms. To do this, in year retention is used alongside the end of year achievement rates (success rate = retention x achievement). This provides an indication of the potential success that could be achieved if no further students withdraw from the course and achievement rates are in line with the previous year. At the current point in the year retention is 1% up on the same point in the prior year. If the College can maintain this, then there is the likelihood that there will also be an increase in success rates
- Lesson observations are progressing well. External inspectors have been utilised and staff have found this a very supportive process. The Principal indicated that staff feedback to her is that they actually prefer external observations and feel that they are more objective. The Deputy Principal indicated that there were cost implications of such a blanket approach, and that what was proposed is additional training for the College`s own internal observers, so that they are in a position to give more constructive and supportive feedback. It was confirmed that, overall, staff have had a very positive response to the process. The external observations of teaching and learning indicate a 77% good or better grade profile. Themed observations are continuing, providing an ongoing view of teaching and learning rather than a single point in time observation.
- Observations with partner provision are graded 53% good or better. All partners with 3s or 4s now have support in place. There are lots more partner observations planned for the remainder of the academic year.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

- Three of the five curriculum reviews of each curriculum area have been completed focussing on different aspects of the student experience, action plans are in place to address any issues identified. The QIP has been reviewed in detail at the most recent Standards Committee meeting (Monday of this week) the Committee were happy with the progress being made.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### **14.44 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 28 FEBRUARY 2014**

The Director of Finance introduced this item and a number of matters were specifically noted:

- The financial performance for the Group continues to be adversely affected by the trading performance of Vision Workforce Skills, as the business is further restructured. All comparisons in this report now refer to mid-year forecast unless explicitly stated. Excluding the result of VWS, the College Group (old) has generated an operating surplus before interest and depreciation of £852k for the first seven months of the year. This compares to the forecast of £849k and the prior year result of £280k.
- The old Group position continues to be affected by the weak performance of Work Place Learning within the College, which is £197k behind forecast, a forecast which will generate a 31.9 % contribution, below high cost areas such as Engineering. This is partly offset by the continued strong performance of bksb, which generated a £694k surplus before depreciation.
- Including VWS, the College Group result before interest and depreciation is a loss of £2,275k, with the VWS loss of £3,107k in the seven months to date being slightly better than the approved forecast position.
- The College has generated a surplus of £167k before interest and depreciation in the year to date, which is £25k better than forecast, and better than the prior year loss of £482k.
- College income was £69k behind forecast at £31,357k for the year to date. The main adverse variance being 16-18 apprentices which continues to underperform (£130k for the year to date) generating only £3,137k of income. College own delivery has weakened over the last few months and is now below phased forecast at £931k.
- The adult skills budget income was below forecast by £320k, mainly as a result of the £202k under performance in month. There remains a disproportionate amount of adult learner responsive activity, which had a favourable variance of £41k at £4,272k. This cannot be sustained as there is no additional contract allocation for the year and may have an adverse impact on future Adult Skills contract levels.
- There were favourable variances within Educational Contracts (£213k) as a result of partner activity of ESF contracts (although at a very low margin) and other income £150k.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date:

- Pay costs are £85k below forecast. There are favourable variances in Admin and central services and teaching support of £72k and £56k respectively.
- Overall, teaching staff (teaching staff and sessional teaching staff) was £67k below forecast at £6,180k. Work Place Learning continues to overspend on pays costs with an adverse variance of £23k, compared to an increased forecast, no other School of Learning had an adverse variance.
- Non-pay costs are better than forecast by £21k as a result of a favourable variance on franchise provision costs of £90k. Excluding franchise costs, non-pay is £69k worse than planned, the main overspends being in other operating expenses (£79k adverse, which relates to ESF partner payments), administration and central services (£72k adverse) and Exams (£19k adverse). The most significant favourable variance is maintenance costs.
- Most Schools of Learning are now close to phased forecast the only exceptions being a £64k adverse variance in the Lifestyle Academy and a £48k favourable variance in Care & Education Studies. Weaker financial performances are the 26.3% contribution made by Business Professional & Continuing Education; and the 24.3% contribution of the Lifestyle Academy, both of which are a small improvement in month. Academic, Public Services & Sport Studies continues to produce a strong contribution of 47%. All other Schools made contributions between 29.6% and 35.9%.
- Vision Workforce Skills performance continues to be poor (a loss of £3,107k before depreciation) mainly as a result of the lower than planned 16-18 apprentice income, whilst fixed costs retained to deliver these courses remain high (property occupation). This, however, is slightly better than the forecast of a loss of £3,131k.
- bksb continues to perform well as a result of consistent growth and strong cost control. The surplus for the year to date at £694k is however below forecast by £6k. Total Income at £1,386k is £78k below plan.
- Vision Apprentices is showing a loss of £9k, £15k worse than forecast due to the substantially lower than planned income, consistent with the College sales performance in apprenticeships.
- The Balance Sheet includes borrowing associated with the new build programme with a total value of £17m at the end of February 2014, a draw down of £8.5m since last financial year end. This has incurred interest costs of £322k in the first seven months of the year.
- Group short term solvency has improved from year end (by £3.558m) as a result of the financing drawn down and receipt of £1.503m of deferred capital grants more than offsetting the capital expenditure of £3.421m and group loses for the year to date.
- Cash balances, excluding VWS at £12.174m, are £6.506m higher than forecast, with a small increase in month as a result of the further draw down of loan funds. Cash balances for the group stood at £13.125m.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date:



In general discussion the Director of Finance confirmed that for VWS the team are still expecting a loss in March, but it is a reducing loss. The expectation and plan is that from April onwards, the Company will start to generate a surplus.

Members commented that BKS B seems to have very strong cost control. The Director of Finance indicated that the team have been very ambitious this year in relation to the budget income. Unfortunately it is not likely that the Company will achieve the income target, but there will be an improved bottom line figure. It was confirmed that there are still opportunities for BKS B, both nationally and internationally and that the Board of Directors are looking at capacity and where support can be provided. The Director of Finance indicated that whilst there were opportunities, there were also aggressive competitors, and these could be a potential threat to the Company.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### **14.45 EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

The Vice Principal: Business Development introduced his report, which included very comprehensive statistical information. A number of items were specifically noted:

- Pages 61 and 62 show the volume of learners across the three routes to market, in most areas (save for 19+ apprentices) the College has been able to hit its target of a 50/50 split between College and Partner delivery.
- The focus of the team has been to increase timely success and, as a consequence, there has been a significant decline in the number of outstanding learners not achieving. This is a much more positive position.
- The team are working hard with Partners and are seeing improvements, this is shown in the statistics on page 65 and 66.
- Page 66 gives a summary of financial performance.

Governors, whilst appreciating the level of detail provided, did request that a more simplified summary of data be presented at future meetings.

VP BD

Sept 2014

Members` attention was drawn to the partner lists at page 68 and 69, the Board were asked to approve the variances noted.

AGREED to:

- a) Note the update provided.
- b) Approve the updated Partner list at pages 68 and 69.

#### **14.46 EXCEPTION REPORT – SAFEGUARDING AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

The Deputy Principal introduced her report, which was noted. Members` attention was specifically drawn to page 71, section 4.3. It was confirmed that at previous meetings details had been provided relating to a mature

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date:

student who had made continuing complaints that had been investigated, but no evidence found to substantiate the claims. This student continued to email staff within the College, including the Principal, these emails were often inappropriate and disrespectful.

Following this, the College took legal advice and the student was subject to the Learner Disciplinary Procedure. An investigation was completed in line with the disciplinary procedure and a panel held. The outcome of the Disciplinary Panel was that the student be excluded from the College. An appeal against the decision was received and considered in line with the College policy as to whether there were sufficient grounds for an appeal to be progressed. The procedure states that an appeal can only be considered if it includes:

- a) Evidence of procedure error.
- b) New evidence supporting the case.
- c) Objections to penalty given if considered been excessive.

It was considered that there were insufficient grounds for the appeal to proceed, and this was communicated to the former Student.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

#### **14.47 GOVERNANCE ITEMS**

##### 1) 12th edition of the Code of Conduct

The Clerk to the Corporation introduced this item and apologised for the fact that the version presented did not include the track changes. It was agreed that these would be emailed out to Governors for information. The Clerk confirmed that the vast majority of changes related to the appendices, and she gave assurance that no material changes were included to the main body of the document.

Clerk

April 2014

AGREED: to approve utilisation of the twelfth edition of the Code of Conduct.

##### 2) Calendar of meetings 2014/15

The Clerk to the Corporation introduced this item and confirmed that the plan of meetings presented followed a similar pattern to prior years. Members were happy to approve the document presented.

AGREED: to approve the calendar of meetings 2014/15.

##### 3) Board Work plan 2014/15

The Clerk to the Corporation introduced this item and confirmed that the work plan was presented as a framework and that items were added as required during the year to respond to particular circumstances.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

Members were happy to utilise the framework as a working document.

AGREED: to approve the Board Work plan 2014/15.

**14.48 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2014**

AGREED: to note the content of the minutes provided.

**14.49 AOB**

One additional item of other business was raised by the Clerk to the Corporation. She confirmed that this meeting would be the last meeting for Marie Oakton, the Student Governor. She confirmed that Marie has been appointed Student Experience Officer at College and will take up the post after Easter. This means that she will no longer be the Students` Union President. The current Vice President will `act up` in the interim period until a permanent appointment on 1 July 2014. The proposal was made to appoint Declan Searson as an Acting Student Governor to reflect his acting Students` Union President role. Governors were entirely happy to support this proposal and noted that a permanent Students` Union President would be in place with effect from 1 July 2014.

AGREED: to approve that Declan Searson be appointed as acting Student Governor from 10 April 2014 until 1 July 2014.

**14.50 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk confirmed that the date of the next meeting was 22 May 2014 at 5.00pm.

(Staff and students left the meeting so that confidential items could be reviewed.)

**14.51 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2014**

AGREED: to note the content of the minutes.

**14.52 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE VISION APPRENTICES BOARD MEETING HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2014**

AGREED: to note the content of the minutes.

**14.53 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE BKSB BOARD MEETING HELD ON 5 MARCH 2014**

AGREED: to note the content of the minutes.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date:

**14.54**      **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2014**

AGREED:            that the minutes were a true and correct record and were signed by the Chair.

Chair

10 April  
2014

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

**14.55**      **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE VWS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2014**

AGREED:            to note the content of the minutes.

Meeting closed at 6.10 pm.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_Chair

Date: