



Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held in the Boardroom at the Derby Road site on Thursday 26 January 2012

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Kate Allsop
 Howard Baggaley
 Tim Clarke
 Libby Crane (until 6.10 pm)
 Nevil Croston
 Terry Dean
 Diana Gilhespy
 Jean Hardy (Chair)
 John Holford
 Asha Khemka
 Philip Lancashire (until 6.10 pm)
 David Overton
 John Robinson
 Chris Winterton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
 Andrew Martin, Director of Finance
 Tom Stevens, Executive Director: Capital Projects and Estates (until 6.10 pm)
 Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal: Teaching & Learning
 Louise Knott, Director: Marketing & Communications (until 6.10 pm)
 Graham Howe, Vice Principal: Business Development (until 5.40 pm)

12.01 DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN ANY ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Standing declarations of interest were noted.

12.02 WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mike McNamara, James Stafford and Brian Stopford. The Clerk took the opportunity to inform members of the Board that, unfortunately, Nigel Cooper-Fowkes, because of ill health, had communicated his intention to resign from the Board. She explained that steps would be put in place to identify a replacement for him. Members of the Board requested that the Clerk, on their behalf, express their appreciation for his contribution to the work of the Board during his period of appointment.

ACTION by whom	DATE by when
Clerk	Feb 2012

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

12.03	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2011</u>	ACTION by whom	DATE by when
	The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record and were signed by the Chair.		
	AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2011.	Chair	26 Jan 2012
12.04	<u>MATTERS ARISING & ACTION PROGRESS REPORT</u>		
	There were no matters arising and members noted the action progress report.		
12.05	<u>PRESENTATION - LOCAL APPRENTICESHIP PROVISION</u>		
	The Vice Principal: Business Development introduced his presentation, which focussed on the College's contribution to local employers. The following statistics were noted:		
	Performance:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2008/9 982 starts, 438 regional and 321 local. • 2009/10 1280 starts, 676 regional and 379 local. • 2010/11 4205 starts, 2038 regional and 931 local. • Increased number of regional/local learners in the last three years. • Local provision as an overall percentage has declined over the last three years. 		
	Members accepted that, whilst the percentage of local apprenticeships is decreasing, the actual number of individuals to have locally undertaken apprenticeships has increased from 321 to 931 in three years.		
	In terms of external benchmarking, the National Apprenticeship Service has advised the College that for 2009/10 it has:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The highest number of apprenticeship starts in Mansfield. • The highest number of apprenticeship starts in Ashfield. • The highest number of apprenticeship starts in Nottinghamshire. • The 37th highest number of apprenticeship starts in Derbyshire (the College is however the largest provider in Alfreton and second largest provider in Bolsover). • The 5th highest number of apprenticeship starts of providers in the East Midlands. 		
	Members were reminded that the recruitment of apprentices is still a national priority, with a large budget for national provision. The		

Signed : _____Chair

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Principal underlined the importance of information, especially in relation to the perception of the College as only a national provider.

AGREED: to note the presentation received.

12.06 PRINCIPALS REPORT

The Principal introduced this item and drew members` attention to her comprehensive written advice. Of particular interest were the following:

- Feedback from the Leadership Conference, January 2012 – the focus for the day was to look at how the College could work in a more enterprising way to generate and tap in to other streams of income. Five key themes were identified: commercialisation, employability, entrepreneurialism, partnerships and progression/ outcomes. In terms of the latter, it was felt that development of a sophisticated tracking system was required.
- Key performing indicators for 2011/12 – data was reviewed on a line by line basis. Members noted that apprenticeship numbers were down significantly and debated whether the College was able to benchmark itself against the rest of the country. The Principal explained that nationally 16-18 recruitment is below target in almost all areas, and that this shows a challenging market in a national decline. She explained that age group quality issues have also impacted upon the number of starts with many students undertaking pre-apprenticeship programmes as they were not ready to move straight on to full apprenticeship programmes. It was also noted that NVQ numbers are down for adult learners, the Principal explained that the College has been able to reallocate some funds within the adult skills budget, but this is an area that needs to be looked at more closely.
- OFSTED Butterflies Day Nursery – very successful outcome from an unannounced inspection.
- Job evaluation – the College was very pleased with the outcomes seen.
- Accommodation update – whilst further detail will be provided later in the agenda, the £1.9million grant awarded to the College just before Christmas was a real success story and provides an unexpected cushion within the context of the overall plans.

The Principal drew members` attention to the list of forthcoming events for 2012 detailed at paragraph 10, page 12.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

Signed : _____Chair

Date:

ACTION by whom	DATE by when
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12.07 EMPLOYER RESPONSIVE PROVISION UPDATE

The Vice Principal: Business Development introduced this item and confirmed very positive results from partner surveys. He explained that the College has a long established strategy of working with partners and that during this time, feedback from partners was usually through meetings and development days.

For 2011/12 it was agreed to undertake a partner voice process, in line with learner/employer voice - stage one of which was an anonymous survey of partners. At the time of undertaking the survey, the College had 44 active partners, and there were 27 completed surveys (61%), therefore sufficient responses provided to allow useful analysis. Overall it gives a very positive response to the services partners received from the College, interesting points noted were:

- 1 The overall results showed 90% of answers were either 'very pleased' or 'pleased' with Vision West Notts (60% agreed completely with questions, 37% agreed mostly with questions).
- 2 Though results are positive, the College could improve the support about completion of compliance documentation. It was felt that this criticism was not a bad thing as it showed that the processes in place were robust.
- 3 Though partners are pleased with the opportunity to share best practice, the percentages are lower than the College average.
- 4 All partners were pleased with the accuracy of their learner financial reports, this is a huge achievement.
- 5 76% of partners were pleased with the value for money the management fee provides, this is interesting feedback given that the College standard fee is 30%, and the sector average is believed to be 18%.

The Vice Principal: Business Development confirmed that, whilst the view was that the overall results were very positive, there are still areas that the College wants to improve.

Members` attention was drawn to the updated list of partner contracts at pages 35 and 36. The yellow variances (both positive and negative) were fully explained. Members were happy to support the proposal to accept and approve the contract variances.

AGREED: to approve amended Partner Commitment Proposals for 2011/12 detailed at appendix b.

In terms of survey analysis, members questioned whether the College has looked at the correlation between feedback from larger and smaller companies. The question was raised as to whether or not the College is better at supporting one or the other. The Vice Principal: Business

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Development confirmed that the College manages the support available on offer to companies based upon size and risk. The Vice Principal: Business Development confirmed that the sign up process for partners and apprentices is very complicated and that, inevitably, this will always lead to frustrations, particularly in relation to the completion of paperwork.

Members suggested that in the next survey an attempt be made for it not to be completed on an anonymous basis, and that this would then allow further in depth study on any patterns and issues that particularly needed to be addressed.

Members reviewed the joint investment programme partner commitments set out on page 36 and questioned why there were different calculations to the rates. The Vice Principal: Business Development explained that there may be different qualifications and programmes for each partner and that these would attract different levels of income.

Members' attention was drawn to the joint ESF tender submitted by local colleges, all agreed that getting 16 East Midland colleges to come together was a real achievement. The Vice Principal: Business Development confirmed that, geographically, the College has some really good partners, and that all percentage payments are pre-agreed in the consortium.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

(Graham Howe left the meeting at 5.40 pm).

12.08 PROPERTY STRATEGY UPDATE

The Executive Director: Capital Projects & Estates introduced this item and drew members' attention to the following:

- The College has been successful in its bid for £1.9million capital funding to support the cost of construction for the new Teaching Block. This is in addition to the recently received £100k SFA capital funding to support the cost of construction for the Sports Hall. He confirmed that formal written notification has now been received.
- Construction of the new Sports Hall & Car Park by Baggaleys Construction fully commenced on 31 October, with the stripping of top soil from the sports fields.
- The demolition of College House was deferred until after the formal opening of CREATE on 14 November 2011. College House was demolished on 15/16 November and Baggaleys were given approval to delay handover of the upper car park adjacent to CREATE until early in the new year. The car park opened for use by College staff on Monday 16 January 2012.

Signed : _____Chair

Date:

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- The extended Cauldwell Road car park will be partially handed back to the College around 18 January 2012, this is ahead of schedule.
- Overall the College will have around 25 car parking spaces less than existing from February to May 2012. From September 2012, this will reduce to around 8 parking spaces less until completion of the new Teaching Block in December 2012.
- Foundations for the Sports Hall are mainly complete and erection of the steel frame has commenced.
- Mansell Construction have been offered the contract for construction of the new Teaching Block and a letter of intent issued to enable work to commence on 16 January 2012.
- It is anticipated that the existing College Sports Hall will be demolished week commencing 6 February 2012.
- Formal contracts are to be signed within the next few days with a prompt start expected.
- Mansfield Library reopened to the public on 3 January 2012 after a 16 month closure for a £3.4million refurbishment. The College is providing adult education at the Library Discovery Room.

Members discussed the report generally and were advised that the major issue to address at the moment is the perception of significantly reduced car parking by staff, when in reality the College actually has more than it has ever had in the past, (simply because the car park at the front of the Enviro Centre has not yet closed). It was confirmed that the College is looking at alternatives and, in particular, the introduction of a park and ride system. Members all thought that this was a useful solution and asked that the offer be extended to students and not just staff to undertake car share and park and ride.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.09 BANKING FACILITIES – TENDER REPORT

The Director of Finance provided a verbal report in this area. He confirmed that a special meeting of the Finance & Estates Committee had taken place earlier this afternoon where presentations from four banks had been received regarding loan facilities. He explained that he had hoped that the Committee would be able to make a recommendation for the facilities needed, but that following four extremely good bids and four good presentations, there was still more work to be done. He explained that the Committee felt that it needed more time to obtain firm proposals, as during presentations, the vast majority of banks had hinted that the tender bids put forward were negotiable and that potentially better terms could be obtained. The Director of Finance confirmed that all of the bids submitted give the College affordable proposals and are to the level of finance needed.

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The Director of Finance indicated that, as a result of the inference from the banks that they have a greater level of flexibility than originally anticipated, there is a need to go back to them to request formal final proposals. Because of this, the recommendation regarding banking facilities and the outcome of further tender negotiations will be presented to the Board at its next meeting.

AGREED: to note the verbal update provided.

12.10 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS UP TO 31 DECEMBER 2011

The Director of Finance introduced this item and drew members' attention to the following:

- The financial performance of the College and College Group up to the end of November 2011 is substantially in line with budget following clarification of guidance supporting the use of the adult skills budget. However, within the reported performance, there remains a concern with the slow rate of increase in Safety Plus activity, which is leading to a loss making position for the year to date.
- Total income of £16.3million is almost exactly on budget and leads to an operating surplus of £804k for the year to date. This position is supported by a strong performance from both the College and Skilldrive.
- At College level, an operating profit of £585k is £112k ahead of budget, which is mainly due to the continued underspend within pay budget. Whilst the rate of underspend has slowed, a year to date position of £249k underspend offsets the weaker than budgeted 16-18 apprenticeship programme.
- College income for 16-18 apprenticeships at £2million for the year to date is £968k behind budget and it now looks extremely challenging that a full year position of £8.9million will be achieved. If the budget is reduced by £1million at the mid year forecast, the impact on operating profits would be in the region of £300k.
- The adult skills budget is delivering on profile with some further acceleration of the NVQ programme required to meet targets. Adult apprenticeship has already earned £2million in four months against a full year budget of £4.2million. Whilst additional funding may be available, the College will be encouraged to use the flexibility of the adult skills budget to manage the position.
- College pay costs of £7.7million continue to underspend with a further £66k in the month contributing to £249k for the year to date. The underspend covers many departmental areas and has now offset the favourable sessional variance reported early in the year. A full year underspend on pay costs now looks increasingly likely.

ACTION by whom	DATE by when
Director of Finance	8 March 2012

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- Total non pay costs are mainly in line with budget with small over and underspends reported in some areas. Of particular satisfaction is the controlled position for the maintenance and running costs budget which is underspent for the year to date. However, further challenges lie ahead with specific maintenance works required.
- Subsidiary company trading performance for the year to date continues to be strong for Skilldrive and less so for Safety Plus. Skilldrive has delivered operating profits of £270k (budget £203k), in the three months to November, turnover of £750k, (budget £685k). Safety Plus however has returned a loss of £53k for the year to date on turnover of £558k. The increase in learner activity has yet to be delivered and will be required by the end of period six, if the year is to prove successful. Vision Apprentices continue to deliver a small profit contribution, with Safety Plus Construction performing close to expectations.
- The College balance sheet and solvency continue to be satisfactory considering the capital investment programme. Total net current assets of £242k for the Group includes cash of £6.6million which, whilst declining, still remains sufficient to complete the Sports Hall scheme without recourse to borrowing.

Members reviewed the accounts in detail and noted that the real challenge for the College is the 16-18 provision, as the current belief is that the College will not hit the volume predicted. Conversely, the College has seen a good increase in adult apprenticeship activity, and because of this is pushing the SFA to get additional funding as the College has very clearly supported Government initiatives.

The Director of Finance confirmed that there will need to be a review of the model of Safety Plus Construction Ltd at the end of this academic year, as its viability is marginal.

Members were advised that borrowing for the capital project will not be required until well into April 2012, and that the £1.9million grant really helps to delay the cost of borrowing for as long as possible.

Members were advised that the College has now received some indicative allocations for 2012/13, where the following was noted:

- Adult Skills – this allocation has already been given with significant savings being sought in the sector. The College’s allocation is £1.8million lower than the current 2011/12 year. The College is meeting with the SFA to argue the need to increase this allocation because of the successful achievement of meeting Government priorities.
- Under recruitment is significantly contributed to by partner delivery, recruitment and quality. Whilst the College expects to close the gap, it will not eliminate it entirely.

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AGREED: to note the Management Accounts to 31 December 2011.

12.11 STUDENT GOVERNOR UPDATE

Libby Crane introduced this item and drew members` attention to the following:

- 1) Smoking Policy – she indicated that Student Governors have been receiving complaints about the smoking policy from both smokers and non-smokers. The general feeling is that the congregation of smokers outside the main College gates causes those who do not smoke to passively smoke as they walk past, and also gives a negative image when members of the public drive passed. However, the smoking policy is being observed by most students, although some are still using the smoking shelters on campus.

The Principal indicated that she was seeing students regularly and was receiving comments from both ends of the spectrum. She indicated that the continued existence of the old style smoking shelters on campus may be causing some confusion regarding what is acceptable behaviour. Members felt that, on the whole, the introduction of the smoking ban was working and the continued existence of smoking shelters ought to be addressed. Members were supportive of the proposal put forward to remove any outstanding shelters.

The Executive Director: Capital Projects & Estates confirmed that the issue of smoking on site was being monitored through the Health & Safety Committee and that this was a matter that they would continue to review. Members were assured that the Health Centre offers support for smoking cessation and that a holistic approach was taken in this area.

- 2) Buses – it was confirmed that three liveried buses are now available. Students are noting an improvement in the buses both internally and externally.
- 3) College New Build – students potentially do not feel that they know enough about the project development. It was agreed that the Executive Director: Capital Projects and Estates would do a presentation to Student Groups and that the use of televisions in the reception and dining room could be used to support increased awareness.
- 4) Student Union Activity – a busy term with lots planned for the year. One suggestion made was that the Students` Union should look to use the CREATE facilities more extensively, as this was an exceptional facility available on site.

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AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.12 EXCEPTION REPORT – SAFEGUARDING, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The Deputy Principal introduced this report and confirmed that:

- During the month of December 2011 there were no reported College incidents relating to Equality & Diversity.
- There were no College disclosures under the Young People and Vulnerable Adults Protection policy during the month.
- There was one College safeguarding related incident during this period, this related to a student who wished to read information to students in the form of a letter disclosing an action taken more than a year ago whilst living in Poland. Children’s & Social Care were informed, they were aware of the family situation and visited the family the same day as the incident was reported.
- There were no partner reported incidents relating to Equality & Diversity in November or December 2011 in relation to partner provision.
- There were no partner disclosures in November or December 2011 for safeguarding for partner provision.
- In November 2011, one partner reported an incident of bullying, this has been dealt with by the partner, and included the introduction of an anti bullying workshop.
- In December 2011 there was one partner reported safeguarding incident. Work has been undertaken with the partner relating to CRB checks for learners. The partner is working with the employer concerned in order to ensure that all appropriate pre-employment checks are in place in the future.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.13 CODE OF CONDUCT – 10TH EDITION

The Clerk to the Corporation introduced this item and confirmed that good Governance arrangements include the regular review of key documents. She explained that Eversheds, who are legal advisors to the FE Sector, have provided an updated Code of Conduct, which places greater emphasis on the voice of the learner and community engagement. It also makes specific reference to the Bribery Act legislation and now includes the College’s approved Bribery Act Policy and the Foundation Code of Governance as source documents. Members noted the amendments to the proposed document, which were clearly highlighted in blue.

AGREED: to adopt and approve the tenth version of the College Code of Conduct for Corporation members.

Signed : _____Chair

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ACTION by whom	DATE by when
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12.14 BUTTERFLIES DAY NURSERY OFSTED INSPECTION

The Executive Director: Capital Projects & Estates introduced this item and drew members' attention to the following:

- The Day Nursery was inspected by OFSTED on Tuesday 30 November 2011, the overall quality of provision was judged to be 'outstanding'. The previous OFSTED inspection from 2007 rated the quality as 'good'.
- The report recommends that to further improve the high quality of provision, the College consider making more effective use of outdoor play areas so that children can choose from a wider range of activities promoting play and enjoyment.
- As part of a further improvement plan for nursery provision, it is proposed to form a Day Nursery Committee made up of representative College staff and parents with terms of reference to provide an overview and direction for the nursery reporting to the Corporation Board as appropriate.

Members all commended the excellent result of the inspection and accepted that there was a need to consider more widely the future plans for the crèche, particularly given the sports facility development. It was felt that the College will need to consider the feasibility of space requirements and that this has to be taken in the context of finances. Members were supportive of establishing a Management Day Nursery Committee. It was not felt that Governors needed to be represented on this Committee, but requested that a Governor link be established as a point of contact.

Clerk

2011/12

AGREED: to note the update provided.

12.15 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded separately.

Staff and students left the meeting at 6.10 pm.

12.16 AOB

There were no items of additional business.

12.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The clerk to the Corporation reminded members that the next meeting was scheduled for 8 March 2012 at 5.30 pm, this would be the mid year review meeting and would be followed by the Corporation Board Dinner.

Meeting closed at 6.15 pm.

Signed : _____Chair

Date: