



Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held in the Board Room, Derby Road site on Thursday 25 April 2013 at 5.00pm

GOVERNO PRESENT:		Tim Clarke Terry Dean Diana Gilhespy Malcolm Hall Jean Hardy Adrian Harpham Asha Khemka Mike McNamara Amy Mellon Marie Oakton David Overton Hari Punchihewa John Robinson		
		Colin Sawers		
ALSO IN ATTENDA	NCE:	Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation Andrew Martin, Deputy Principal Patricia Harman, Deputy Principal Tom Stevens, Executive Director: Capital Projects & Estates Louise Knott, Director of Communications, Marketing & Learn Graham Howe, Vice Principal: Business Development Tracey Thompson, Director of HR Richard Skelhorn, Communications Manager (until 5.35 pm)		
			ACTION by whom	DATE by when
13.95	DECLARATIO	ON OF INTEREST		
	any interest noted. It	eminded those present to declare at the start of the meeting is to be considered. Standing declarations of interest were was agreed that none of the declarations prohibited in in discussion.		
13.96	WELCOME A	AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE		

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Allsop, Chris Bodger, Nevil Croston and John Holford. Absent without apologies was Chris Winterton.

13.97	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 MARCH 2013		
	AGREED: that the minutes were a true and correct record and were signed by the Chair.	Chair	25 April 2013
13.98	MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION PROGRESS REPORT		
	There were no matters arising. The action progress report was noted.		
13.99	STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH – COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT PRESENTATION		
	The Director for Communications, Marketing & Learner Engagement introduced Richard Skelhorn the Communications Manager. To put the survey in context, she confirmed that the last Stakeholder research was carried out in 2008, and therefore the College considered that it was timely to undertake another survey at this point. The report presented focuses on employers and local opinion makers. This is very much a narrower focus than the research undertaken in 2008.		
	Richard Skelhorn introduced his presentation summarising the survey content, and drew the following specifically to members` attention:		
	 Who? Predominantly employers. Local SME's who have a relationship with the College. Local SME's that do not and large employers that have or have had a relationship with the College in the past. Opinion formers, eg, Politicians, MPs, Business Leaders. How? Structured interviews over the telephone or face to face. 15 per grouping, therefore a representative sample size. What? Effectiveness of communication channels. Gaps in stakeholder knowledge/perception. Is the College renowned for anything? Areas of strength and areas for improvement. Effectiveness of Communication Channels. Higher profile over last five years. Many stakeholders hear about the College from the CHAD and other media, this justifies the team's efforts with the media. Proactive communication is important. What was found is that it is important to SMEs to have specific relevant information and not simply generic information. Personal contact and bite size sector emails. 		
	 Generic information not important to employers, but this is important to stakeholders, as allows them to be effective ambassadors for the College. 		

- Maintain relationships with employers.
- 5) Strategic Communications
 - Effective PR & Marketing.
 - Principal an excellent ambassador and communicator.
 - Mansfield 2020 is a key communications channels for employers.
 - High awareness of re-brand.
 - Few interviewees mentioned receiving regular mailings.
 - No appetite for an ambassadors` network, but stakeholders are keen to continue relationship. It was acknowledged that this is mainly an issue of time commitment rather than lack of interest.

6) Gaps in Knowledge

- Many interviewees positive about the College.
- Knowledge based on relationship.
- Little awareness of range of provision seen as traditional FE College. It was acknowledged that this is not necessarily a negative thing, but perhaps there is some work for the College to do. There is a need to greater equip employers with knowledge about the College.
- Opinion formers are better informed. This is principally to do with the relationships built up with the Principal and the Executive Team.
- Customer service levels vary. These were found to be from excellent to poor. Members were assured that some items identified are easy to address and good progress is being made to tackle the issues identified.
- 7) Aspects Considered Special
 - Most interviewees found it difficult to identify anything unique or particularly special. It was acknowledged that this could change with the development of Vision Workforce Skills and some of the niche areas it engages with.
 - Not necessarily a negative.
 - Opinion formers highlighted Principal's 'dynamism'.
 - Impact of this and visibility of reputation considered 'unusual and impressive'.

7) Reasons not to Engage

- SMEs that do not work with the College are unaware of the range of provision.
- Assume that the College does not deliver bespoke training.
- No specific reason to engage with the College, or any other College at this time.

8) Perceptions of Re-Development

- High awareness locally. It was confirmed that the College has done a lot of press and communications with local residents.
- Many interviewees aware of purpose of new build.

- Some confusion with how it relates to original plans.
- Having state of the art facilities reflects well on Mansfield.
- Need to focus on business and industry.

9) Strengths

- Dynamic, forward thinking and flexible.
- Professionalism and quality of Assessors.
- High quality teaching (in some areas).
- Strong leadership.
- Facilities.
- Range of courses.
- PR, Marketing and ability to attract funding.

10) Areas for Development

- Quality of Teaching (in some areas).
- Focus on transferable skills there is a need to focus on core subjects in Maths, English and Science.
- More proactive contact with employers.
- Customer service lacking in some instances.
- Other Senior Managers to become more visible.

11) Issues to Consider

- Balance national agenda with local role. It was acknowledged that the former strengthens the latter.
- Share good practice in employer and account management in College replicate good practice and ensure consistency.
- All enquiries registered and responded to, ie, business portal or one stop shop.
- Personal communication and direct contact with SMEs that the College currently does not work with.
- Less bureaucracy both SMEs and large employers indicated that without a high level of bureaucracy they would be more likely to engage with the College.
- Targeted communications, ie, more information on possible courses for employees.
- Highlight success stories/examples of delivering bespoke training.
- Customer database and ensure it stays live. This is a necessary investment.

Governors discussed the report generally and confirmed that they have found it useful and in particular it highlighted a number of things to address:

- Terminology in the report is inconsistent with 'West Notts', 'Vision', 'West Notts College' etc being used on an interchangeable basis.
- Only a limited number of companies contacted 58. Within such a small group its concerning that there is some criticism with some calls not being returned. It is felt that even a few out of 58 is a large number. The Board agreed that it was very important

that the College responds to all calls and enquiries/queries from employers and that there was a need to work smarter and deal with calls to expedite any enquiries. All agreed that this was not an issue solely for the marketing team to address and that managers, including Mike McGregor and Sandra Cowley needed to be made fully aware of the criticisms.		
Graham Howe, the Vice Principal: Business Development, confirmed that the College is potentially looking at the need to have one call centre at Corby to deal with all enquiries. It was also acknowledged that Assessors need better training, as often they are the only contact with employers and the marketing tool for the College.		
In terms of the Executive Team's view of the report, it was confirmed that there were no surprises. The Team knows the issues and knows what needs to be done to address them. It was acknowledged and accepted that there are lots of improvements that the College can make in relation to its customer service.		
The Principal confirmed that the College did make a strategic decision not to contact every SME at this particular point in time, this was a conscious decision, as it was felt that key players/employers needed to influence the strategy at this time. What is clear from the report is that consistency is key and what was acknowledged is that when the College does 'get it right' it provides exceptional service, but there is a need to ensure that all employers are provided with this exceptional service and the mechanism for obtaining feedback is critical in this process.		
 The report confirms that the College is missing out on opportunities for additional income. The report is not really about the community at large, as it is focussed on employers who are not currently engaged with the College, and helps to identify what needs to be done to improve 		
 Service. The Board felt that, in the media, the College could do more about its work with employers. It was felt that Assessors are currently not geared to thinking about the service to employers as they are so clearly focussed on the service to learners. 		
 Action plan is required to address any negative comments. The report makes it quite clear that the College has not got it quite right with employers yet. It was agreed that the Director of Communications, Marketing & Learner Engagement would oversee the action plan and then devolve out activities required. Governors felt that it was important to carry out research more frequently, perhaps every two years, so that progress could be more readily tracked. It was also suggested that a 'rough and ready' follow up research project could be undertaken in 6-12 months to see if progress had been made. 	Dir CMLE	2012/13
 Some Governors present indicated that other colleges bombard SMEs with information, but WNC does not seem to do this with 		

employers. It was agreed that the College would look at regular eshots and newsletters to employers. All agreed that the focus on employers needs improving, as the College resources and facilities are fabulous and these can be more effectively used to engage with everyone more successfully.

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

(Richard Skelhorn left the meeting at 5.35 pm).

13.100 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal drew members` attention to her detailed report and pulled out the following items for particular consideration:

- Government response to the Richard & Hesseltine reviews what does this mean for the College – in essence, the redefinition of Apprenticeship to mean new jobs, the introduction of Traineeships and a greater ownership in terms of curriculum and planning being given over to employers for apprenticeships, and a strong focus on the local through the creation of a local growth fund. The exact implications of these policies and imperatives will be known in the autumn statement.
- Rigour and Responsiveness in skills another new document which sets out six priorities for the sector,
 - a) raising standards,
 - b) reforming apprenticeships,
 - c) creating Traineeships,
 - d) meaningful qualifications,
 - e) funding improving responsiveness,
 - f) better information and data.

Much of the media focus was around the appointment of a Commissioner for FE to oversee the implementation and intervention process for FE colleges, with the proposal that colleges could enter into 'administered status' if improvement is not rapid enough. Many reported this as FE unable to get its own house in order. However, a different view is that this is a positive move towards dealing with ineffective and failing colleges and should help the sector towards improvement.

- Commission on adult vocational teaching and learning summary report – it is about work, excellent adult vocational teaching and learning. This is something that is going on and is happening, exemplars of best practice have been identified. However, how much it relates to the real world is still to be seen.
- Studio School update this is a significant and exciting opportunity for the College to offer a different learning experience for the young people providing an environment, experience and links with key employers that will prepare them for the world of work. The College's Studio School will specialise in Engineering, Transportation

	 Densely to the role of Executive Director: Strategic Planning. Sue will lead on the development of the Studio School and will form a strategic plan synergising the future with the needs of employers, the local community and wider Government agendas. Sue Densley will commence her role on 20 May 2013. Vision Workforce Skills update – transition has gone well and congratulations to everyone in the Team for all their hard work. It was confirmed that Mike McNamara would provide a general update later in the meeting. Engineering Innovation Centre Update – contracts to purchase Unit C, Gateway 28 for an Engineering Centre have been signed at an agreed purchase price of £1.1million plus VAT. The detailed design work for a comprehensive two-phase scheme is underway to commence in the summer vacation period. Tenders for the upgrade of electricity and gas to the site have been issued. 	Clerk Clerk	April 2013 2013/14
,	GREED: to note the content of the update provided.		
_	ROPERTY STRATEGY UPDATE		
	funding is available for FE colleges` capital developments in 2013/14 and 2014/15.		

•	College Capital Investment Fund (CCIF) – Expression of Interest. The
	CCIF is available to colleges on a competitive basis. The minimum
	project will be £3million. Colleges are expected to contribute two
	thirds of project cost and projects to be complete by September
	2015.

- Colleges can submit an expression of interest and detailed application for capital funding at the same time, applications were to be submitted by 1 March 2013, with final decisions by 24 May 2013.
- In the expression of interest round 145 colleges made 183 returns. The total amount requested is £286million for 2013/14 and £429million for 2014/15, which exceeds the £515million budget. It was confirmed that the College's application is to support its Engineering plans, and is still waiting to receive a determination on the application.
- Engineering Innovation Centre Finance & Estates Committee on 28 February approved the submission of an application for CCIF capital funding by 1 March to support the construction of the Engineering Innovation Centre. A decision on whether the application is successful is anticipated by 26 April 2013.
- Contracts to purchase Unit C, Gateway 28 have been signed at an agreed purchase price of £1.1million plus VAT. Detailed design work to convert the centre for use is underway.
- New build and enclosed courtyard. Hair, Beauty & Complementary Therapies together with A'Level and Health Staff and Curriculum relocated for the building to open on 25 February 2013. All parts of the building are fully open except the health spa, which is currently being used by students for training and scheduled to open to the general public on 20 April 2013.
- Cladding Six-storey tower and other buildings. The building contractor started work on 8 April as scheduled. Project completion is targeted for 18 July 2014.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

13.102 HR - SIX MONTHS UPDATE

The Director of HR introduced this item, she drew members` attention to her comprehensive report. Key items drawn to Members attention were:

- Staff resignations have increased from this point last year from 5.1% to 6.3%. However, it was acknowledged that this still remains below benchmark, with no trends seen in any particular area.
- Staff absence is now back in line with sector benchmarks at 4.1%. It was clarified that this percentage relates to time lost and not specific days. The Board indicated that for the annual and six month update, in future reports, they would also like to see data in terms of days lost.

Governors took the opportunity to discuss the appraisal process and were advised that the trend at this time of the year is always to see a decrease

Director of 2013/14 HR

	 in the number of appraisals. The Director of HR confirmed that she does always remind Heads of the need to focus on completion rates. This does then always have an immediate rectification rate. She confirmed that her six-month update does always coincide with a dip in the number of appraisals, and she gave assurance that this is just a timing issue. It was noted that the HR report does not incorporate Vision Workforce Skills Staff. It was confirmed that this would be a separate report provided at a later stage. AGREED: to note the update provided. 	Director HR	2013/14
13.103	MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO 28 FEBRUARY 2013		
	The Director of Finance introduced this item and drew the following to members` attention:		
	 The financial performance for College and Group to the end of February 2013 is well below mid year forecast position. The performance of the College, with a loss of £1,251k for the year to date compared with a mid year forecast of £909k loss is of concern, with a number of issues needing to be tackled. The Group is slightly better with a loss of £310k, compared to forecast loss of £23k. The budgeting process for 2013/14 will require some tough decisions if the College is to return to a better financial position and meet its long term financial objectives. It should be noted that all comparisons in the report are now against mid year forecast, which have been profiled to give no adverse variance for the first five months of the year and do not incorporate any Vision Workforce Skills information. The mid year forecast for the College projects a mid year surplus of £44k compared to the initial budget of £1,525k. In month, the Group operating surplus is expected to be £1,281k compared to a forecast of £72k surplus. The key area of concern is still the 16-18 apprenticeship programmes, where at current rates the College will only generate £5.39million, £961k below a much reduced forecast. This is largely through partner delivery, where current volumes of activity, if continued, will result in less £667k shortfall on plan. It was confirmed that there are further actions to be implemented to improve the end of year position, but this area is proving to be a real thorn in the College's side. Total Group turnover for the year to date of £25.872million is £199k behind the phased mid year forecast. Operating loss for the Group of £310k is some £28k behind forecast and includes a loss for the College of £1,251k and strong profit contributions from bksb, £613k and Safety Plus Training & Consultancy £306k. 		

• • •	The College performance includes an under spend on pay costs of around £87k. This is mainly on teaching staff, £98k and administrative and central services £32k), it should be noted that forecast pay is £541k above budget. In month, there was a £113k overspend with substantial adverse variance on sessional and specialist staff, £97k and restructuring costs £19k. Budgeted savings of £112k have not been met in the month. College non-pay expenditure is over forecast by £230k, the most significant factor on this is overspend on administration and central services of £147k. This includes a number of specific variances across a range of support budgets. Other operating expenses were also overspent by £26k. Premises cost in total are on forecast. There are significant favourable variances for the year to date. Currently only Academic, Public Services and Sports Studies is producing above the target contribution of 40%. However, Creative Industries and Digital Technology is currently producing a 39.1% contribution and is expected to be above 40% at year end,. Given the re-basing of the comparator, the only Schools producing adverse contribution were in Business, Professional & Continued Education (£12k), Construction & Building Services (£29k), Workplaced Learning (£225k). The balance sheet includes borrowing associated with the new build programme with a total borrowing of £8.5million as at the end of February 2013. This has incurred interest costs of £151k in the first seven months of the year. Short term solvency has improved slightly over the first seven months of the year. Short term solvency has improved slightly over the first seven months of the year. Short term solvency has improved slightly over the first seven months of the year. Short term solvency has improved slightly over the first seven months of the year. Short term solvency has improved slightly over the first seven months of the year. Short term solvency has improved slightly over the first seven months of the year, as expenditure on fixed assets has		
we Wł nu	embers discussed the report generally and acknowledged that there are tough decisions to be made regarding the College's core provision. That is key in the next academic year is a realistic view of the 16-18 mbers and resourcing for this provision. It was agreed that the College I have to acknowledge that this is a very very tough market.		
ad thi sho pe the co Vis	general terms, it was acknowledged that the College has increased the ult skills budget, but not accelerated at this stage. It was noted that s position will improve by the end of the year to offset the 16-18 ortfall. All Governors acknowledged that the subsidiary companies are rforming well. It was noted that the current report does not include e impact of Vision Workforce Skills and this will have a positive ntribution with benefits seen between now and the end of July. embers all agreed that hey would like to see distinct reporting for ion Workforce Skills so that they have clarity regarding the College's re provision at all times.	Director of Finance	Ongoing

Members acknowledged that the solvency and the cash position is strong. The College has been able to postpone the draw down required for the capital build, and in this regard, there is nothing immediately to be concerned about.

Members discussed the subsidiary companies use of College facilities, and acknowledged that as these are not fully recharged, the subsidiary companies do benefit, and the College's reported financial position is detrimentally impacted.

Governors were advised that when the College takes the next draw down of the loan facility there will be a significant interest charge and this will impact on the operating position. The Director of Finance indicated that going forward he will report earnings before interest and depreciation to ensure that the true nature of the core provision is accurately reported.

It was acknowledged that the current year end forecast is not an accurate position, as the College knows that there are other positive benefits expected. It was accepted that because Management Accounts are produced monthly and the Board meets on a monthly basis, there was no real benefit in providing a varied year end forecast. It was, however, accepted that a positive year end position was expected. It was noted that interest charges are included in the forecast.

In terms of the treatment of Vision Workforce Skills, it was noted that income will come into the College and then be separated out. Members all agreed that this was important as there is a need to clearly know how the core provision is performing.

Members all agreed that there were significant concerns regarding the 16-18 provision both at College and VWS and the potential that this has to exacerbate the challenges. Members were advised that Vision Workforce Skills has a very niche provision in relation to 16-18 year olds and will be very different to the College core provision, but that there will still be challenges. All Governors were left in no doubt that this is a very tough market. Members indicated that on the figures it was clear that the College has under performed regarding 16-18 year old learners in the last two years, if Vision Workforce Skills does not recruit as planned, then this will really hit the bottom line as this provision is very price sensitive.

AGREED: to note the content of the Management Accounts and report to 28 February 2013.

13.104 EMPLOYER RESPONSIVE DELIVERY UPDATE

The Vice Principal: Business Development introduced this item and drew the following to members`attention:

• Funding changes (acquisition of Pearson in Practice, strong adult skills performance and weak 16-18 apprenticeship performance) has

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increased the budget by £4.3million – there is £3.3million head room to allow the College to deliver.

- Current learners would equate to 74% of this target.
- Actions in place to deliver the full funding allocation.
- NVQ success currently 97% (target 94%).
- Apprenticeship success currently 79% (target 80%).
- Comprehensive risk analysis of provision by College/Partner sector area.
- 64% of lesson observations rated good or better.
- Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 1.3 of the report, which illustrates the performance to date for Learners currently enrolled on the MIS. This shows a total performance by the end of year of £20.042million (74% of the new target). This shows a current shortfall of £7.258million to achieve the new targets.
- Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 1.1 which illustrates the planned additional activity to achieve the new funding targets. It was acknowledged that given the fact that it is relatively late in the year, there are plans to do a significant amount of work with the unemployed, where qualifications can be achieved within the year and therefore the total funding claimed. The College is confident that the new funding targets can be achieved, although there is still going to be a challenge regarding the 16-18year olds.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 1.5 and the updated partner schedule. It was noted that there have been a significant increase in partners, given that the College acquired 26 new partners from Pearson in Practice. It was noted that the College is currently reviewing the quality for future contractual arrangements.

AGREED: to approve the updated partner schedule.

KPIs at paragraph 1.6 were reviewed and of particular concern was case load efficiency. It was acknowledged that Vision Workforce Skills has impacted upon this. The inclusion of Vision Workforce Skills has increased the proportion of the contract being delivered by the College Group to 32.6%, and the anticipation is that this will be over 58% next year. It has, however, had a negative impact on the case load efficiency, whilst customers are engaged with Vision Workforce Skills, this will be addressed in the new academic year.

In general discussion it was acknowledged that there has been a real focus on partner provision this year, and some partners have had activity postponed until quality has been addressed. It was noted that lesson observations off campus are 10% below the same point in the previous academic year, there is therefore a lot of work to catch up. All acknowledged that there is a lot of good work but there were some issues to address.

One correction was noted at page 62, paragraph 2.21, the number of withdrawals should be 28 and not 18. Members raised an issue with the

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number of student apprentice enrolments and questioned whether the College and subsidiary companies are matching skills capabilities as well as they could as there appears to be a high number of withdrawals. Members discussed the calculation in relation to withdrawals and the six week cut off mark, it was acknowledged that whilst this was a sector method, it was not something that the College and subsidiaries encourage.

Members discussed the enrolment pattern for Vision Apprentices, and were advised that currently 80%+ was local, but that this would change given the impact of Vision Workforce Skills.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

13.105 EXCEPTION REPORT – SAFEGUARDING EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and drew members' attention to the content of her written report. She indicated that one member of staff has been investigated for harassment and has been charged. The intention is for the College to now undertake its own review given the police report provided.

AGREED: to note the update provided.

13.106 QUALITY REPORT

The Deputy Principal introduced this item and drew members` attention to her comprehensive report. Members were asked to particularly note:

- Paragraph 3, self assessment quality improvement plan and self inspection improvement plan.
- Paragraph 4, retention and success rates. 16-18 long programmes ending 2012/13 have retention at 92%, when compared to 89% in 2011/12. For 16-18 all courses, retention is 93% and compared to 89% in 2011/12.
- Retention in all areas of on campus provision is at a higher point than at the end of 2011/12.
- Curriculum review is ongoing.
- Hair & Beauty preparation for inspection is well advanced. New students have had a successful move from Regent Street to Derby Road and have settled in well to the new environment. The client base for Hair and Beauty Therapy is growing and gaining momentum and many positive comments have been received from clients regarding the new facilities.

Members reviewed the lesson observation profile and agreed that it was disappointing to have some grade 4s. The Deputy Principal confirmed that re-observations have been undertaken and improvements have been seen. It was confirmed that external observations have been undertaken in tandem with internal and that this gives a good strong validation process.

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AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

13.107 <u>GOVERNANCE</u>

1) Calendar of meetings 2013/14

The Clerk to the Corporation introduced this item and presented draft schedule for consideration.

- AGREED: to approve the updated calendar of meetings for 2013/14.
- 2) Work plan 2013/14
- AGREED: to approve the work plan for 2013/14.
- 3) Draft Agenda Business Strategy Residential
- AGREED: to note the content of the draft agenda for the business strategy residential in June 2013.

13.108 <u>AOB</u>

There were no items of additional business.

13.109 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Clerk to the Corporation confirmed that the next scheduled meeting was 23 May 2013 at 5.00 pm.

13.110 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

It was agreed that the content of confidential matters would be recorded separately.