



Minutes of the Board meeting held (via Microsoft Teams) on Thursday 14th May 2020 at 5pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Sean Lyons, Chair
 Andrew Cropley, Principal & CEO
 Mary Mamik
 Kate Truscott
 Tony Westwater
 Neil McDonald
 Rebecca Joyce
 Steve Sutton
 Sardip Sandhu
 Spencer Moore
 Charles Heaton
 Mark Williams
 Mel Stirland
 Clive Pitt
 John Gray

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
 Louise Knott, Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement & Student Experience
 Jon Fearon, Finance Director
 Matt Vaughan, Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
 Suzanna Smith, Director: HR & Organisational Development
 Gavin Peake, Director: IT, Estates & Learning Resources
 Mike Firth, ESFA Observer

		ACTION by whom	DATE by when
1	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</u>		
	The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.		
2	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>		
	Apologies for absence were received from Paul Frammingham, Lee Radford and Jane Hawksford. Absent without apologies were Jessica		

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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Stowe and Sophie Welbourn.

3 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20TH APRIL 2020**

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were a true and correct record.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2020.

There were no matters arising.

4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

The Board were happy to note the content of the update provided. In relation to line 1, the Principal advised that the most obvious provider that students travel to Nottingham for is Confetti, is a specialist creative provider working with NTU. He confirmed that, going forward, the college would be looking to work in partnership.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

5 **SAFEGUARDING, PREVENT AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY – EXCEPTIONS REPORT**

The Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement and Student Experience drew governors' attention to her detailed data report. She confirmed that two more learners attended site this week and the expectation is that there will be a further learner joining next week too. She advised that, generally, the college is seeing more vulnerable learners 'feeling the pinch' in terms of home working, who are therefore more inclined to come in to college.

In terms of COVID-19 and safeguarding, she indicated that there were 32 students who are RAG-rated as red, and she confirmed that these are being carefully monitored and supported, with regular contact in place.

The Board asked whether the college has had any instances of reported COVID infection. The Board were advised that there have been no instances of students attending with COVID. In terms of data held by the health and safety team, there are reports of family members with COVID, but no students have advised of an infection.

The Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement & Student Experience indicated that there is a growing concern regarding mental health, both in the current circumstances and when students are permitted to return to site; therefore, a link has been made with the Mental Health Trust with the intention of trying to improve links and put students in touch

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with primary health services. She advised that the college is looking to improve the transition process, particularly for those aged 19 when they move from adolescence support to adult support and a move away from CAMHS. She confirmed that the college has agreed to be part of a trial group to review the transition process; included within this will be staff and student training.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT FOLLOWING THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21ST APRIL 2020

The Committee Chair introduced his detailed written report and particularly asked the Board to consider the areas of assurance and also areas requiring further Board consideration. He confirmed that the Committee received an internal audit report regarding apprenticeship provision on-boarding and it was noted that, because it is quite an intense manual process, it does need ongoing vigilance. However, the Committee were assured regarding the content of the audit findings.

Key matters for the Board to note were:

- The internal audit plan for the academic year will be concluded.
- The Committee debated in detail the risk appetite, and the recommendation to the Board is that the existing appetite remains appropriate.
- The college has developed an anti-fraud and corruption strategy to fill a known gap.
- Whilst the college is making improvements in terms of recording off the job training for apprentices, there are still some areas of variability.
- The risk management strategy is being reviewed by internal auditors as part of their planned fieldwork and will be presented for committee review at the next meeting. Following Board approval to any changes suggested, it will then be for the Executive to review and align internal policies and procedures.

The Board discussed the risk appetite as set out in the risk register and it was acknowledged that this was substantially reviewed in autumn 2018. It was confirmed that, following review by the Audit Committee in April 2020, the recommendation is to make no changes at this point in time. It was agreed that the Audit Committee would undertake an annual review and report to the Board on this.

Audit Committee April each year

The Board were advised that any proposed amendments to the risk management strategy would come to the July Board meeting for full discussion.

Audit Committee July 2020

AGREED:

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- a) To note the content of the summary report provided.
- b) To note the content of the minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2020.
- c) To note the content of the updated risk register.
- d) To note and approve the Audit Committee recommendation that there be no change to the approach to risk appetite at this time.
- e) To approve the anti-fraud and corruption strategy as presented.

7 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT FOLLOWING THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23RD APRIL 2020

Key matters that the Chair brought to the Board's attention were:

- Generally, the Committee is seeing improvements in the metrics and information provided.
- As requested by the Audit Committee, the Standards Committee will review the position regarding 20% off the job training for apprentices.
- Some of the metrics will now change given the impact of COVID-19, e.g. attendance will have limited relevance and what needs to now be measured is engagement. Whilst this is the case, she indicated that it was important for the college to acknowledge that it wasn't where it wanted to be in terms of attendance pre-pandemic.
- Maths and English has required significant improvement for some time. There is confidence that it is now receiving robust focus as needed and senior leaders are alive to the risks, e.g. the first 42 days. The college acknowledges the need to have a responsive approach to quality assurance.

Standards Committee June 2020

She explained that there are a number of areas requiring further consideration and review. These include:

- Ensuring the consistency and robustness of QA arrangements for online delivery.
- Ensuring that performance targets set for 20/21 are realistic and in line with the college aspiration for a 'good' outcome at the next inspection.
- Student numbers for 20/21 and the potential shift in trends; the Committee has asked whether there is a need for a specific risk in relation to this on the risk register.
- The requirement for more pastoral support and the capacity needed to deliver this.

The Committee Chair took the opportunity to thank Rebecca Joyce for joining the meeting as an independent observer. She confirmed that the Committee had found it really useful and it was pleasing to note that there was nothing that arose in the meeting that members of the Board who do not sit on the Standards Committee were not aware of. It was agreed that the Board would like the new 'normal' to include them

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having an opportunity to join meetings by Teams (i.e. a mixture of Governors present and also joining electronically) as it was felt that this gives Governors the broadest opportunity to become involved in all aspects of governance through the subcommittee structure as well as attending Board meetings.

IT

June 2020 onwards

In general discussion, a question and challenge was for the college to look to stratify what has and hasn't worked well for particular cohorts in terms of online learning and engagement, as this will influence future thinking and delivering.

One member of the Standards Committee indicated that it is important for the college to compare itself with others and not just internally; sitting alongside this, it is important for the Board to look at their own performance and continually challenge to improve. In relation to this latter point, the Clerk confirmed that there was a report scheduled for the June meeting which would allow the Board to discuss options in relation to this.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the summary report
- b) To note the content of the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2020.

8 SUMMER ASSESSMENTS 2020

The Vice Principal: Curriculum & Quality introduced his detailed report and explained that it was a very onerous task to both grade and rank student performance. This is a particularly significant challenge in the FE sector, given the volumes and narrowness of bands. He indicated that the vast majority of students are within the 1-4 band rather than the 1-9. He indicated that ranking is particularly difficult in some areas, given that learners have had a number of teachers.

The Board were advised that, to try to deal with this situation, a number of specific tasks are being undertaken, including:

- A very robust internal process
- A scientific approach is being taken
- Implementation of a series of checks.

He explained that GCSE Maths and English data has to be submitted by 12th June and that, whilst the college is working to achieve this, there are a number of anxieties, including:

- 2,200 English and maths entries.
- All qualifications have to be assessed.
- There are 2,600 vocational qualifications and within each there are separate units. From 20th March, the college has to work on a series of estimated grades with students having multiple entries

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- and units.
- The vast majority of teachers are working really hard to deliver the expected assessments.
- The issue is the scale of the task involved.
- The college is working to develop an appeals process for students.
- There is a risk in relation to data protection and, particularly, subject access requests.
- There is a task and finish group in place that meets every week to identify risks and challenges and mitigating steps required.
- The college is able to track exceptionally well, however, it is a vast exercise that needs to be undertaken. That being said, teachers are confident that they know their own learners.

The Board asked for a further explanation in relation to the weighting being undertaken by the MIS system. It was explained that the weighting relates to the topics and the units. Assurance was given that really robust and transparent data processes are in place. It was confirmed that any appeal will be if a learner thinks that there is a failure in the process, rather than them not agreeing with the grade.

A challenge from the Board was the need to be aware of the potential for students or parents to blame tutors and teachers rather than exam outcomes, which are black and white.

The Vice Principal confirmed that a further update would be provided at the next meeting.

Vice
Principal

11.06.20

AGREED to note the content of the update provided.

9 **COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT FOLLOWING THE FINANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30TH APRIL 2020**

The Committee Chair drew the Board's attention to the detailed summary and explained:

- Most of the content of this meeting is to simply note.
- It was a very positive meeting with no contentious matters identified.
- The college continues in a strong position with positive movements seen in relation to the forecasts.
- There is evidence of good cost control.
- The college is expecting a neutral position, even with the COVID-19 risks.
- The college intends to take a prudent approach to setting the 20/21 budget.
- Cash position is positive.
- The college wants to take a very fair approach to subcontractors, however, it is aware of the risks regarding double-funding as a

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consequence of furlough. There is confidence regarding the robustness of process in place to monitor this, with a very thorough report proposed and discussed by the Committee.

It was explained that the college is paid in full by the ESFA in relation to 16-18 and AEB, and a big contributing factor to this is subcontractor prior performance and expected performance at the data submission date pre-pandemic. It was confirmed that the college has applied two principles in agreeing subcontractor payments: these are that payments are to come from the college so that they don't seek other government support, and it also helps subcontractors to stay in business so that they are ready to work with the college next year. The Board were asked to specifically review the processes adopted for payments and also the schedule summarising payments recommended.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the summary report
- b) To note the content of the minutes of the meeting
- c) To note the content of the March 2020 management accounts
- d) To endorse the process adopted for subcontractor payments and approve the recommendations made in relation to the schedule of payments presented.

One member of the Board asked whether there should be any concerns regarding the budget 20/21 and the alignment with the curriculum plan being raised as a matter to monitor and/or requiring future consideration. It was explained that this was raised as an area to monitor as there has been a significant review of processes this year. The prior year position was flawed, which has necessitated the changes. The Executive confirmed that they have a very good idea of the numbers and are currently going through a fine tuning exercise. Staff are working to the deadline date of 1st June 2020 to completely finalise. The Board were advised that there are two matters evolving; these are:

- Potential growth in 16-18 numbers and the impact of lagged funding in these circumstances
- Contingency regarding a significant disturbance to the market in terms of job opportunities. This may mean that there are significantly more 16-18 year olds who enrol for on-site activities.

The Board were given assurance that a real granular review has taken place this year, which gives a significant degree of confidence. It was confirmed that the budget for 20/21 will be fully aligned with the curriculum plan by 1st June 2020.

10 CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

The CEO introduced his detailed written report and provided an update in a number of areas:

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- Financially, in the short term, the college will not suffer any harm as a consequence of the pandemic.
- Operationally he is hugely proud of how people have responded to the challenges.
- Potential to reopen/return to site is now the focus.
- The college has spent a lot of time and effort to make sure that every student can access learning, and the vast majority have engaged really well.
- A concern now is that reopening will be disruptive and poses significant logistical challenges including buses, social distancing, staggered starts, cleaning, and safety.
- The college is trying to work fast to respond to the guidance but is taking a careful approach. The college needs to be clear in terms of its priorities and where the focus needs to be.
- The Director: IT, Estates and Learning Resources has done a significant amount of work in terms of risk assessments. The Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality is taking a curriculum-led approach; the Vice Principal: Communications, Engagement & Student Experience and her team will then support the plan once it is in place and approved.
- The college also has to consider HR implications and the view of unions and staff.
- Current thinking is that it will be a focused and limited approach, initially. The senior team are synthesising feedback from all curriculum areas and this is showing a mixed view.
- Expansion of testing may help with some concerns.
- There is a groundswell of support from parents and staff regarding the 'hit list' approach. This will help to really focus on the students who need to be on site. The Principal confirmed that the plan, once finalised, will be presented to governors at a special meeting; this will allow Executive thinking to be tested by the Board.

Principal

02.06.20

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

11 CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair indicated that he had no particular matters to bring to the Board's attention for this meeting. He did, however, ask that a note of thanks and appreciation from the Board be given to members of the Executive and all members of staff in college.

12 PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE

The Principal drew Governors' attention to his detailed report and an update was given in a number of areas:

- Section 1 – student applications remain a concern. The CEO indicated that he has written to all head teachers to offer for

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them to certify that students are ready to study and at what level. If head teachers become engaged in this process, it will allow the college to take early steps in terms of enrolment. The college is planning a virtual open evening on 2nd July 2020.

- Section 6 – business improvement projects. The CEO expressed the view that this had been a really good exercise, with another five projects emerging as ‘follow-ons’. The process was really effective and enabled staff to own the solutions. He expressed the view that staff have really stepped up to the challenges and fully engaged in the process.
- In September, all colleges will need to fully review the assessed grades. BKSb is working to help the sector and to capitalise on this opportunity. Client base retention is all on a positive trajectory. College maths and English staff are working with BKSb to develop GCSE data.
- Section 8 – the college’s bid to the LEP in relation to automation and robotics was not successful, which is a disappointment. The college is working to develop its offer and is really starting to build up a head of steam in relation to this. This will link in to developments in relation to advanced manufacturing, and it may be possible to align the two projects in to a single focus.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

13 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

14 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting is 11th June 2020. The meeting start time is 5pm, but is preceded by a strategy review session (1-5pm).

(Melanie Stirland, Suzanna Smith, Matt Vaughn and Gavin Peake left the meeting at 6.40pm)

15 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded separately.

Meeting closed at 7pm.

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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