



Minutes of the Board meeting held (via Microsoft Teams) on Thursday 20th May 2021 at 5pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Sean Lyons, Chair
 Andrew Cropley, Principal & CEO
 Charles Heaton
 Rebecca Joyce
 Sardip Sandhu
 Kate Truscott
 Steve Sutton
 Tony Westwater (until 7pm)
 Spencer Moore
 David Gillies
 Keith Spiers
 Andrew Spencer
 Mary Mamik
 Elliott Parker
 Bev Whitefoot
 Joshua Charles

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance
 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

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2 WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Neil McDonald and Nathan Clements. Absent without apologies was Anna Teal. Joshua Charles, the

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

Signed : _____  _____ Chair

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new student governor, was welcomed to his first meeting.

3 NEW GOVERNOR RECRUITMENT

The director of governance drew the board's attention to the written report and the proposal to:

- a) Appoint Joshua Charles as the second student governor, and
- b) Appoint Angela Newton-Soanes as an independent governor and vice-chair of the Standards Committee.

The chair confirmed that he and the chair of the Standards Committee had met with Angela Newton-Soanes again to be assured regarding the time commitment required, given that her day job is quite demanding. What was clear at the meeting is her enthusiasm and commitment to helping the college to move forward on its journey.

AGREED:

- a) To appoint Joshua Charles as student governor from 20th May 2021 until 21st July 2022
- b) Appoint Angela Newton-Soanes as an independent governor from 20th May 2021 to 20th May 2025.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH MARCH 2021

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

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2021.

There were no matters arising.

5 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The board were happy to note the content of the update provided.

6 SCENE SETTING

The chair indicated that he was now very conscious that it is necessary for the board and senior managers to turn minds to the external influences, plans and opportunities. Going forward, there are great opportunities for the board and governors individually to reach out and build new relationships and partnerships.

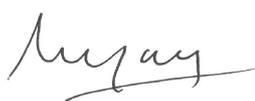
7 BALANCED SCORECARD

The CEO presented the written report. Key matters noted and discussed were:

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- Because of COVID, there are more red RAG-rated items on the scorecard than the college would like.
- In relation to finances, the college is starting to see some positive impact from the government initiatives and incentives regarding apprenticeships. Pipeline for next year is healthy, but the college will not catch up and meet the targets set for this year.
- In relation to AEB, the college is enrolling 30-40 learners per day but will not hit target. As a lot of this is provided by subcontractors, the loss to the college is 20% contribution only.
- The college is on target in relation to EBITDA and is confident that the yearend target will be 'there or thereabouts'.
- bksb has now successfully sold.
- In relation to learning and innovation, there are no red RAG-rated aspects.
- In relation to operational excellence, mandatory training is significantly behind target but reflects what else the college is having to ask staff to do. A CPD week is planned soon and will be an opportunity to catch up. The college is looking to make the training required more engaging going forward.
- The proportion of deep dives conducted in the different subject areas that judge teaching and learning to be good or better is now at 50%. However, all deep dives conducted this academic year judge that teaching and learning has improved in all subjects and some curriculum areas are improving at a rapid rate. There is more to do in some areas including maths, construction and health and social care but good progress is being made.
- Apprenticeship achievements have been impacted by the pandemic. Getting all end point assessments concluded is now a priority.
- The college's overall apprenticeships achievement this current year is predicted to be in the high '60s' %. This should be compared against the national rate of 67% for all types of apprenticeships and around 60% for standards programmes.
- Students' attendance on their English and maths lessons continues to be an area for improvement but it is important to note that this has been significantly impacted upon by the national lockdowns and tiered restricted attendance onsite. Students' attendance to these lessons once back on site from 8 March and fully at the start of the summer term has improved the cumulative total level. The college has been particularly self-critical in only recording learners' online attendance if they actively participated in online lessons. A specific negative code has been deployed for those learners who attend but do not participate.
- The number of applications for level 4 and above is below the previous year at this stage. It is believed that the national

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university experience this year has been so poor that it has deterred many students from considering that as an option. That said, it does have to be a focus for the college and there is a need to improve. Progression meetings with departments this year show that there is a much higher number of level 3 students choosing employment linked to their study or apprenticeships rather than university.

One member of the board asked a question in relation to AEB and queried college capacity to deliver, and monitor staff who deliver, given the subcontracting cap. The CEO advised that the college has invested in adult and community learning with a real focus on teaching and learning, and the quality of the curriculum and technology support to deliver. The college has made it really clear to these teams that they will be supported with the resource required.

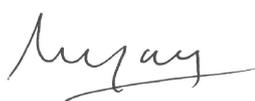
The board commented again on the level of activity on OneFile for apprentices. Whilst it is 'creeping up', there is still a way to go. The CEO indicated that employers could potentially be more proactive if they have access to the portfolios, and this is something being considered. The CEO advised that the percentage will continue to increase as there are a number of learners just awaiting end point assessments and to get through gateway. He provided assurance that apprenticeship boards take place every three weeks and that staff really do know what and who are the issues. He advised that a number of key areas, i.e. hair and beauty and health & social care, have been significantly impacted by COVID. The board were advised that, in some areas, the position is being managed apprentice by apprentice. There is a business improvement project also ongoing to look at how the college works with employers and apprentices, and it is clear that there is more that the college can do. A challenge from the board was to be really clear in terms of the statutory versus the mandatory training, and it was agreed that the Workforce Development Committee would pick up this issue in more detail.

Workforce
Dev.
Committee

Sept. 2021

One student governor present made a comment on level 4 progression and advised that, because of COVID, some A-level students have not had as much opportunity to meet with their allocated achievement coaches and talk about their next steps and, as a result, some don't really understand the options. He indicated that, following the return to site, advice and guidance is getting better. All acknowledged that it was not as easy to provide support online.

In relation to mandatory training, the board asked whether the failure to complete will impact on college standards and quality. The CEO advised that the levels of training completed are very high for safeguarding, which is a critical aspect that Ofsted will consider. Another potential area of focus is health and safety, and it is important to get staff to be better

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at completing at the right point in time.

In relation to OneFile, it was explained that the contract is between the apprentice, the college and the employer; therefore, employers should be able to access the portfolio. The board were advised that an additional status descriptor is to be added to OneFile which shows 'gateway', i.e. the learners who are just awaiting final sign-off and would, therefore, not have any further activity to be recorded.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

8 ANNUAL KPI REPORTING – STAFF SURVEY OUTCOMES FOR 'OVERALL SATISFACTION'

The CEO presented this report and confirmed that he is very pleased with the outcomes. He confirmed that the senior team have worked very hard to get staff to believe in the leadership team. This includes ensuring that staff feel valued and have opportunities available. He confirmed that the SLT has really focused on being visible, which seems to have been well received by staff.

The CEO advised that there are still a few areas to look at in more detail and that this will be discussed at the next meeting of the Workforce Development Committee. It is likely that COVID may have impacted on work/life balance for some, and this is an area to consider. Staff clearly want to be more involved in the strategic conversations, and there is more work to do in terms of appraisal and business planning development.

All agreed that the survey outcomes showed really positive signs that there was a sea change in relation to the culture and staff experience.

A question and challenge from one staff governor was that there may be some confusion regarding the confidentiality of the survey. The CEO provided assurance that it is confidential but acknowledged that there may still be pockets of cynicism within the college. He advised that the focus now is on a number of departments who are not as happy as others, and the intention is to see what can be done by the college to address this. He confirmed that an external organisation conducts the survey, and they manage the responses and undertake the analysis, which gives independence and impartiality. The board were advised that, internally, there was an opportunity for staff to attend a number of drop-in sessions where any questions could be answered on the survey, and HR were able to give more detail. He confirmed that work continues in relation to trust and confidence.

The board took the opportunity to congratulate the CEO and the college team for year-on-year improvements in incredibly challenging

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circumstances.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

9 QUALITY AND STANDARDS

The board considered a number of aspects.

- 1) Standards Committee chair's report and minutes of the meeting held on 6th May 2021

The committee chair drew the board's attention to the detailed minutes of the meeting. Key aspects noted were:

- Continued changes in terms of reporting and focus for the committee.
- The QIAP is considered at every meeting and provides assurance that the college's leadership deploys a high level of self-critical analysis and is candid in its self-assessment.
- Deep dives continue to highlight areas for improvement. The college knows itself well, even if it will not hit the annual target in relation to this.
- There are robust safeguarding arrangements in place.
- The Ofsted position is described as 'being on the cusp' – information gives the committee confidence that, whilst there are still areas to tackle, these are well known and there are plans in place. Particular areas of focus continue to be maths, construction, health & social care, and apprenticeship provision. In relation to the latter, focus groups remain and the committee is assured regarding the pace of improvements. The distance travelled is significant.
- There are still areas for further consideration; these are well known and reported on.
- The committee pushes for continual assurance, whilst ensuring that the college remains honest and self-critical.
- Angela Newton-Soanes has now joined the committee as vice chair and will be another suitably qualified critical friend who will provide support and scrutiny.

The board were advised that the committee had considered the proposed Curriculum Strategy in detail and were happy to recommend its approval to the board. The full board's attention was also drawn to the safeguarding report and the detailed audit undertaken in relation to this.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the committee chair's update
- b) Note the content of the detailed minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 6th May 2021

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- c) Approve the Curriculum Strategy as presented
- d) Note the content of the safeguarding and Prevent report provided.

2) Student journey/talking heads – English and maths

The board received video recordings directly from students. Key comments noted were:

- Teachers helped me to get from a grade 2 to a 4
- Really helped my confidence
- Staff help students to succeed
- English tutors are very helpful
- Teachers put the class first
- Helped with punctuation and grammar
- College teaches you everything
- Encouraged to try it for yourself
- Tutors have been amazing
- Staff really help those who are struggling
- To improve further we should start to do literature and poetry
- Tutor was great but needs to work on class distractions
- Gained a better understanding of the subject
- Teachers make a difference
- Structure to support achievement works well
- A number of different teachers this year and would have been better if I had just one
- Coming back after exams for two weeks to complete doesn't make sense – the CEO advised that there was a break for two weeks so that tutors could do all the marking required and a pause in teaching was agreed
- Experience this year was better than last year where sessions were three hours long, which was too intense
- Smaller class sizes mean there is more support
- This year was better than last because of COVID
- Teachers continue to support through COVID
- Online lessons via Teams have been a challenge but the position is getting better now we are back on site
- Better here than at my old secondary school
- Confident I will pass the year
- College teaching is very different to school
- Really enjoyed maths and English, and the college has helped me get my grades up
- I've had so much help
- Learned a different way than at school
- Glad I have got support.

The board were advised that the talking heads piece had involved 27 learners from 18 different classes and, in the main, the college is helping

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them to improve sometimes from a low starting point. What is important for these students is the pastoral support available. The English department is improving the impact of its teaching on students. The maths team are improving its craft; to further bolster this, a maths consultant has been engaged to coach, train and support maths teachers to take calculated risks in their teaching and 'have a go' and 'try new approaches' in order to improve their impact on each and every learner. Within the 'Ten 2 Achieve' teacher assessed grade (TAGs) process in place since the start of January, there have been over 13,000 assessments completed for English and 13,200 for maths, which means that the average a teacher has had to mark is 1,100 in addition to moderating their peers' marking.

The CEO advised that it is important to fully utilise the weeks available, which is why the college will continue to teach after the two-week pause to do the assessment marking. There are around 1,070 students sitting GCSE Maths, 60 of whom have no assessments and 104 of whom have fewer than five. The vice principal confirmed that staff are still chasing down all outstanding assessments to ensure that the right evidence is available for the TAGs. He described it as a real collaboration between English and maths and the vocational areas.

One member of the board expressed the view that the film really captures the needs and vulnerabilities of the students and it is possible to really sense the more personal approach taken by the college when compared to the school environment.

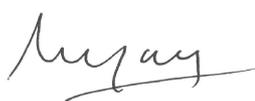
A challenge from the board was that college KPIs and metrics seem to contradict the student views in terms of support. The board were reminded that the KPIs are ambitious and stretching and that +1 and +2 grades improvement are key but are ambitious. The college is improving the proportion of learners who secure high grades as well as the proportion who improve their grades by one or more. There will be a continued focus on improving this proportion next year and beyond.

All acknowledged that the start of the year is really important to set the right scene, set high expectations and build high-quality relationship between staff and students. A challenge from the board was to carefully consider the impact of the 'baggage' students may bring with them from school in relation to maths and English.

The board's attention was then drawn to the deep dive analysis in relation to English and maths, which is one of the focus areas from the QIAP.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

10 **AUDIT**

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A representative from the Audit Committee presented his summary report and also drew the board's attention to the detailed minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 27th April 2021. He confirmed that:

- There were two really good internal reports considered, which were in relation to the HR health check and payroll and benefits.
- The committee undertook a thorough review of the risk register.
- Internal auditors are slightly behind the plan but are expected to complete all the field work by the end of the academic year.
- The summary report highlights the areas of assurance and also the areas requiring further consideration.
- A very positive report with high levels of assurance provided.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

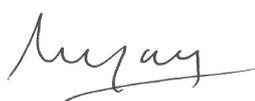
11 **FINANCE & ESTATES**

The committee chair presented his summary note and also drew the board's attention to the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2021. He described it as a positive committee meeting and that areas considered included finances, delivery, EBITDA and the bksb sale. In relation to the latter, this has totally transformed the debt position for the college.

Key matters noted were:

- Health and safety – the committee received a very positive report and an update on COVID testing. The college is very proactive regarding mitigating measures.
- There are no anticipated issues regarding capital spend, and the college believes it will utilise the full £1.3 million condition improvement funding provided.
- There are no potential clawback risks arising from the D2N2 projects
- The management accounts present a very good position. The waterfall has been included, which demonstrates the expected outturn versus budget.
- The committee considered a detailed report on subcontracting activity, the detail of which is included within the report and the minutes of the meetings. There are some changes proposed for 20/21 and proposals regarding early allocations for 21/22. The recommendation from the committee is that the subcontracting arrangements as presented are approved.

The committee discussed the 21/22 budget assumptions, and it was noted that this is scheduled as a separate agenda item to allow full board discussion and contribution.

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Rebecca Joyce, who is the link governor for health and safety commended the monumental work and effort done to respond to COVID in terms of time, effort and thought.

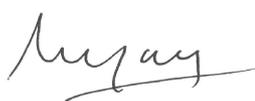
AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the summary report and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 29th April 2021
- b) Note the content of the March 2021 management accounts
- c) Approve subcontractor proposals in relation to 20/21 and 21/22.

12 2021/22 BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The finance director presented his detailed report. Key points noted and highlighted were:

- Positive impact of the bksb sale. The structure of the deal allowed the college to obtain both the sale value and the cash from the business. The college now owes the ESFA nothing.
- The Lloyds debt is down to just over £1.9 million.
- The college now has a very sustainable level of debt and is looking to maintain it at this level.
- The significant change will be the trading surplus, which now allows the college to invest.
- The college started its recovery journey owing £26 million, and this is now down to under £2 million. This has been achieved in two and a half years.
- Financial status has been agreed with the ESFA. Core provision is 'good' and the hope is that the college can now move out of financial intervention.
- The report shows that there are challenges for next year.
- The Finance and Estates Committee had detailed discussion regarding the fundamental assumptions for 16-18-year-olds, including in-year growth clawback. The college is not recognising this year as it is distorting the two-year position.
- The college is awaiting a decision from the ESFA regarding an allocation increase request of £128k.
- The most significant difference is budgeting for 16-18 growth and whether or not the college should recognise the revenue and then plan the costs. This includes both progressing and new students. There is a funding risk as it is not known how school sixth forms will respond to student movement.
- If the college does not plan for growth, it will constrain spending.
- AEB allocation for 20/21 is £5.7m. Initially, it could have been as high as £6.9m, but the college cannot spend this amount. There are key changes for next year as a result of devolution in Sheffield and West Yorkshire. Allocation for 21/22 is £5.5m, and this will impact on some of the subcontracting arrangements

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The board took the opportunity to thank staff and governors involved in the bksb sale, and they acknowledged the amount of work involved in getting the college to where it now is.

In relation to AEB direct delivery, the board asked how the college will increase by the amount required and the level of risk relating to this. The finance director confirmed that the college has been learning to work differently this year and has been working with partners to establish provision. There are five pilots underway which typically have a margin of 35%. The college is becoming much more responsive to the needs of employers; this is directly rather than through subcontractors. The college has increased the level of online marketing, which is different than in previous years.

(Tony Westwater left the meeting at 7pm)

The finance director confirmed that, whilst there is a lot of activity happening, this aspect will feature on the risk register for next year. The college has a wide combination of activity, including really developing a full adult curriculum and offer. The college is supporting curriculum heads to be more ambitious and creative. A challenge from the board was to see the sensitivity analysis. In relation to this, they indicated that they would like to see college growth year-on-year alongside financial security.

The chair of the board took the opportunity to pay tribute to staff and governors who were instrumental in achieving the bksb sale. These included Tony Westwater for his technical contribution; Neil McDonald as the chair of bksb; Steve Sutton for his commercial challenge; Charles Heaton for his expertise regarding activity in India; Jon Fearon, and Andrew Cropley, who have been outstanding; Suzanna Smith, who has dealt with HR challenges; and Kate Truscott for supporting on the HR issues that had to be managed. He also thanked Catherine Walker, Hannah Caplin and Eloise Hopkinson, who have tirelessly supported in terms of the administration required. A note of thanks was also given to Maxine Bagshaw, for advice and guidance, and Mike Firth, who has been a tremendous support.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

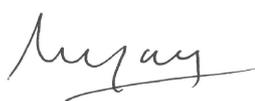
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EXTERNAL FUNDING BIDS

Spencer Moore declared a potential conflict and he advised that he is reviewing another bid. It was agreed that he would not participate in discussions regarding this item.

The CEO provided an update on two bids; these are:

- a) Skills Accelerator – he described this as a real collaboration

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between colleges, with £1.6 million coming to the college if the bid is successful. He described the likely chance of success as 1:40 and explained that it is a ministerial decision. The board asked whether Ben Bradley will support. The CEO indicated that he is not yet engaged in relation to this but that he will be if the bid is successful.

- b) Community Renewal Fund – this is almost entirely revenue-based funding and there is a two-stage approval process. He described the likely chance of success as two out of three; therefore, a stronger proposition.

The CEO also provided an update on a demographic growth capital fund bid. He explained that there is a submission deadline of 14th June and that it requires board approval to submit. The college is not yet in a position to present the detail of the bid, and the CEO therefore asked for delegated authority to be given to a number of governors to approve on behalf of the board. It was agreed that delegated authority would be provided to Kate Truscott, Sean Lyons, Andrew Cropley, David Gillies and Tony Westwater. It was agreed that the group would meet on Friday 11th June to consider the bid and, if felt appropriate, to approve on behalf of the board.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided
- b) Delegate authority to approve a demographic growth capital fund bid to Kate Truscott, Sean Lyons, Andrew Cropley, David Gillies and Tony Westwater

14 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

CEO drew governors' attention to his detailed report and provided an update on a number of aspects, including:

- Really exciting partnership developing, particularly in relation to sports provision.
- The college has decided not to take the partnership forward in relation to the College Collaboration Fund.
- The college is still waiting for DfE feedback on the capital bid submitted.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

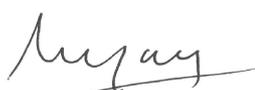
15 **GOVERNANCE**

The director of governance introduced this item, and a number of aspects were considered.

- 1) External board review action plan update – the board were happy to note. It was agreed that the board would have a

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21/22

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specific slot to meet with students on the agenda for termly learner voice meetings. Knott

- 2) AoC consultation on the updated Code of Good Governance – the board considered the content and questioned what the college’s position is in relation to its environmental and sustainability strategy, given the increased expectations within the code. The CEO advised that the director: IT, estates and learning resources will lead a session on this as part of the June strategy review day. This is in addition to equality and diversity, which will also be a focus for the session on 17th June.
- 3) Meet the staff and student sessions – these have been well received and will be repeated in the next academic year.
- 4) Internal validation of position statements – a schedule has been created and governors were invited to inform Catherine Walker if any of the proposed sessions were incompatible with their availability.
- 5) Calendar of meetings for 21/22 – an early draft was shared for information.

16 STRATEGY REVIEW PLAN

The CEO advised that the intention is to look at fundamental changes to the objectives but not the mission vision and values. Feedback from stakeholders is being obtained, and he shared the intended question framework. The board were advised that this is an opportunity for them to influence the questions asked. A challenge made by the board was that there are maybe too many questions and some do overlap. The CEO welcomed any further detailed feedback via email outside the meeting.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

17 AOB

There were no items of additional business.

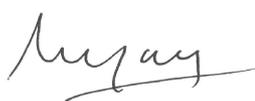
18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

This was confirmed as 15th July 2021 at 5pm

18 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded separately.

Meeting closed at 7.40pm

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