



**WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE  
CORPORATION BOARD**

**Minutes of the Corporation Board meeting held via Microsoft Teams on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021  
at 5pm**

**GOVERNORS PRESENT:** Sean Lyons, Chair  
Andrew Cropley, Principal & CEO (from 6.45pm)  
Neil McDonald  
Charles Heaton  
Rebecca Joyce  
Sardip Sandhu  
Kate Truscott  
Spencer Moore  
Keith Spiers  
Andrew Spencer  
Bev Whitefoot  
Joshua Charles (from 6pm)  
Tony Westwater (from 6pm)

**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  
Gavin Peak, Director: IT, Estates & Learning Resources

	<b>ACTION by whom</b>	<b>DATE by when</b>
<p><b>1      <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></b></p> <p>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.</p>		
<p><b>2      <u>WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from David Gillies, Mary Mamik, Steve Sutton, Angela Newton-Soanes, Elliot Parker and Nathan Clements.</p>		
<p><b>3      <u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021</u></b></p> <p>The minutes were reviewed, and the vice principal: curriculum and</p>		

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quality expressed the view that page 3 of the minutes could include more detail regarding the information provided/discussed. It was agreed that he would liaise with the director of governance outside the meeting to update. It was agreed that he would present proposals and the board all confirmed that they were happy to delegate formal approval of the final set of the minutes to the chair of the Board.

Chair

Sept. 2021

#### 4 **ACTION PROGRESS REPORT**

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

#### 5 **SCENE SETTING**

The chair reminded that this is the last meeting of the year and, therefore, he took the opportunity to thank everyone for their contributions in what he described as a momentous year. He stated that this was a year full of challenges and opportunities but that the college was now in a much better place than it was 12 months ago.

He advised that there were a number of themes for the meeting today, including:

- Strategic focus including objectives
- Progress in relation to a number of strategies
- Engagement opportunities for governors, with the aim being to be more outward-looking in the next academic year.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

#### 6 **BALANCED SCORECARD – 2020/21 YEAREND, INCLUDING POSITION STATEMENTS AND ACTION PLANS IN RELATION TO RED RAG-RATED AREAS**

Updates were provided on a number of aspects, including:

- 1) Financial – key matters noted were:
  - Apprenticeship provision earnings continue to be down against budget and forecast.
  - The overall trend at the end of the year is a significant positive.
  - Anticipated new starts for next year are significantly positive and, therefore, the college is expecting a good year in 21/22. 2020/21 saw the impact of COVID, with lower numbers at the beginning of the year.
  - The number of learners past their planned end date is high because of COVID.
  - There is a £3k incentive for employers to enrol an apprentice before the end of September 2021, and the college is seeing a positive response in relation to this.
  - In relation to AEB earnings, the college has built in full

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repayment to the ESFA of between £2.1 and £2.3 million.

- Uptake regarding AEB online learning is good but traditional recruitment has been significantly impacted by COVID. DWP are not forcing anyone to attend classroom-based delivery, and this is having a negative impact. That said, new activity is starting to pick up.

One member of the board asked whether, in relation to AEB, the college intends to submit a business case to the ESFA to reduce the amount of clawback. The finance director indicated that it was unlikely that the college would qualify because of the cash balance available. He indicated that the colleges most likely to succeed and secure a reduction in clawback are those who would potentially go into intervention and/or have geographical reasons, e.g., Leicester College. He expressed the view that, as WNC is now financially strong, it is unlikely that a business case would succeed; however, he provided assurance that, if there is scope, the college would make an attempt to secure benefit from this option.

- 2) Operational excellence – updates were provided on a number of aspects, including:
  - a) Staff training – mandatory training is still below target at 84.56%; however, this does not include data from the CPD week, which is currently being collated. The board were advised that the position is way below where the college wants it to be but that there are some green shoots. There is a real focus on safeguarding and Prevent, and the intention is to step up and sharpen the appraisal reviews so that engagement with training is a key focus.
  - b) Percentage of deep dives graded as good or better – 75% is the target and the actual current position is 50%. The board were advised that 44 deep dives have been completed, which ensures a wide and comprehensive approach. However, 50% of outcomes were RI, and this does need to improve. The college has improved the proportion of good and better but is not yet where it wants to be, although the trajectory is in the right direction.
  - c) Apprenticeship achievement – currently this is red RAG-rated. If the college gets in all the achievements anticipated, it will be above the national rate of 67%. The Standards rate is 60% and WNC is currently at 55%. It was explained that this does include the JTL learners.
  - d) Percentage of apprentices completing 20% off-the-job training – currently 50% are at or above the 20% and 50% are below, but the board were given assurance that all will receive as required. The board were advised that there have been a number of very specific reasons for the lower-than-expected position, including furlough and health and social care and hair and beauty apprentices not being allowed time

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away from work to complete off-the-job training. It was confirmed that the position is improving in relation to construction and engineering, given the return to more levels of normality.

- e) Maths and English attendance – the current position is 74% for study programme learners, which should be compared with a target of 88%. Remote learning/lockdown has significantly impacted upon attendance, and it was explained that the college has taken quite a tough approach to calculating attendance. The college is, however, now more optimistic given the return to face-to-face delivery.

In relation to the position on mandatory training, one member of the board asked whether there is any potential for a financial sanction as part of the appraisal process for any member of staff who is noncompliant. The board were advised that the Executive team are looking into this but that it is not yet in place. The Executive feel that there is more to do in relation to this, and it was agreed that this would be monitored by the Workforce Development Committee. A challenge from the board was that the real focus needs to be on statutory training, e.g., fire testing/training, etc. The board indicated that, for future reports, they would like to specifically see the level of compliance regarding statutory training which will sit within other aspects determined to be mandatory training by the college.

CEO/Exec 2021/22

The vice principal was able to provide a specific update in relation to safeguarding training and explained that:

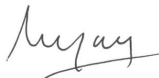
- There is initial mandatory training at induction; however, what the college has not done robustly enough is require these to be completed before sign-off of the probationary period.
- Staff are offered regular opportunities for updating, and the college is to look at sanctions for those who persistently fail to complete as required.

It was agreed that the Workforce Development Committee would receive a report on the oversight metrics to give greater confidence regarding the process and systems in place.

HR Dir/  
WDC 2021/22

A challenge from the board was that, if mandatory training is important enough to be on the scorecard, it is necessary to see improvements. Governors all agreed that it was necessary to be cognisant of the impact of the quality of delivery to learners should training not be completed.

As a general observation, one member of the board indicated that they felt that the tone of the report was slightly apologetic and felt that the college should have now moved beyond the 'disruption impact'. The board challenged the Executive to be more forceful in terms of the management of training and agreed that there needed to be a behaviour

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shift.

An observation from the board was that there is still a large element of red RAG-rating on the scorecard. Whilst acknowledging that the college has done a lot despite COVID, the board felt that there needed to be an operational focus in order to achieve operational excellence.

One member of the board queried the fact that staff absence is RAG-rated as green and asked whether the trend is actually improving. The Executive acknowledged that this should not really be RAG-rated as green and an observation made was that, if it had been RAG-rated as amber, it would highlight this as an area to probe. It was agreed that the Workforce Development Committee would look into this in more detail in the next round of meetings.

WDC

2021/22

- f) Students meeting the employability framework – the expectation is 95% attendance and punctuality plus ‘good behaviour’. The Executive advised that attendance is letting the college down but punctuality and behaviour are good. The current attendance position is 86.2%, and it was explained that this is directly associated with the COVID impact and also the college’s stringent method of calculating attendance. The vice principal confirmed that the college will be tightening up on its attendance monitoring arrangements for the next academic year, including the use of electronic scanners to log students in and out. It is believed that this will prevent bad habits from developing and there will be short, sharp four-week interventions in place.
- g) Apprentices moving to level 4+ – the college has not hit the target set for this, although the position is slightly better for A-Level applications to university but is still not where the college wants it to be. The board were advised that the OfS student survey has been quite damning in terms of the HE/university experience this year, and it is believed that this will have deterred some students from making the financial commitment. The board were advised that the college is really focusing on procedures to support destinations next year, including much earlier conversations and interventions with students.

Governors were reminded that learners have to participate and not simply attend to count towards the attendance statistics.

A question and challenge from one member of the board was whether or not it is possible to systematically extract the impacts of COVID. They felt that, as the country would be living with the virus for some time to come, it may be helpful to think about how the impact can be measured and quantified.

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AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**7 TEL STRATEGY AND DIGITAL STRATEGY**

The vice principal introduced the detailed written report and described digital skills as the fourth industrial revolution. In terms of the development of the strategies, he explained that they have been informed by four different subgroups of staff and have been mapped across the five strategic aims, with a focus on students, staff and employers. Underpinning the strategies now is the financial strength which allows the college to consider the investment required.

The board's attention was drawn to pages 5 and 6, which detail the implementation proposals and include a series of tables with KPIs. He confirmed that the college was really clear in terms of expectations, i.e., outcomes, expertise, and interface. He confirmed that everything is aligned with the mission and vision.

One member of the board made an observation that, on page 5, there is a reference to 'all students to be offered guidance on Windows 10'. They indicated that Windows 11 is on its way and questioned how this will be integrated. The director of IT, estates and learning resources expressed the view that it was too soon to currently say as no one really knows what the differences will be. It was acknowledged that there is a lot of work to be done before Windows 11 is rolled out and that the college tends to provide training at the end of the year when it can ensure that there is dedicated time. With this in mind, September 2022 is intended to be the rollout of both strategies. It was confirmed that Windows 11 will specifically be made available to computer science students as this will be really relevant to their learning.

A question from one member of the board was when targets will be set. It was explained that these are currently being worked on and that timescales are planned for presentation at the next board meeting. These will include targets in relation to students, staff, and employers.

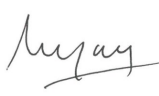
The board were advised that the aim is to have real staff buy-in for the benefit of students and that this will involve conversations in August before the start of the academic year.

One member of the board indicated that it was really pleasing to see that the strategies had incorporated points made by members of the Standards Committee, e.g., in relation to SEND students. All acknowledged that they could take assurance from the level of Standards Committee scrutiny and debates in relation to this.

In relation to TEL and digital, the board asked for a short summary in terms of the 'starting point'. The vice principal indicated that, in relation to curriculum, the starting point is good. Infrastructure is strong, albeit it

VP  
Curriculum  
& Quality

Oct. 2021

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can be improved in some areas. There is confidence regarding access, speed of connectivity and ability to articulate digital skills. It was confirmed that there will be mandatory elements on study programmes.

A challenge from one member of the board was, in terms of the digital skills for staff, that they will need to be given the time to be able to upskill. Also, there is an issue to consider when recruiting staff and the digital skills that they arrive with. All agreed that this needs to be a priority.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided
- b) Approve the TEL and Digital Strategy as presented.

A challenge from the board was that they would like to see a progress update at a future meeting.

VP C&Q

2021/22

## 8 EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

The vice principal introduced this item and explained that it is broken down into two sections, with key points highlighted as:

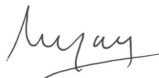
- The college has taken on board feedback from governors at the June strategy meeting, and a slightly amended employer engagement strategy has now been developed.
- What is fundamental to success is redesigning the college website and ensuring that employers are put first.
- The aim is to develop more strategic planning with employers.
- The college is still awaiting the outcome of the CRF bid and, if successful, this will provide the resource to develop as planned.
- The diagram on page 7 makes it clear that a focus is to develop English, maths, and IT.

A challenge from one member of the board was whether or not it is possible to separate out aspects of IT and call it 'digital skills' instead, as this would be more attractive to employers.

One member of the board asked for further information in relation to the reference of developing a 'hub'. They asked what it is meant to deliver and what is the intended effect. The vice principal advised that it is really about establishing the college as an anchor institution for skills development and that it could include a mix, i.e.:

- Use of space for smaller employers
- Showcasing facilities
- Showcasing students to facilitate jobs

The vice principal indicated that it was not necessarily a physical hub that was envisaged. A challenge from the board was that the college should really know its USP in advance of any investment and development in this area. A challenge from the board was to think more virtually rather

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than physically.

The vice chair of the board made reference to the statement included – i.e., ‘wanting to ensure we are agile, renowned and first choice’ – and she asked whether it is possible to weave these three aspects into all college strategies. She expressed the view that these could be the start of the strategic pillars and asked whether it is possible to diagrammatically create a pyramid so that it is easy to see how everything fits together.

The vice principal indicated that there were proposals in relation to four levels of engagement for governors. These include:

- a) Advocates – in relation to this, it is going to be important to know what information, materials and resources governors require to support them.
- b) Strategic relationship ambassadors – these will be where governors are able to open doors for and with the college and will take part in meetings and maintaining relationships. It is envisaged that governors will individually have a focus on a particular employer.
- c) Sector level – these are where governors lead on strategic curriculum thinking. An example given was Spencer Moore’s contribution to CIMSPA and Tony Westwater’s contribution to the development of automation and robotics. The aim would be for a governor to lead in an industry area to ensure that the college is aligned.
- d) Link governor roles – these would be at a strategic level. An example given was Steve Sutton for safeguarding and Kate Truscott for EDI. This will be a strategic champion and the governor who leads challenge at board level.

In developing governor engagement in this area, all agreed that it would be useful to have an ‘advocate pack’. A challenge from the board was for the college to better describe the level of commitment required so that governors can respond. All agreed that some thinking time was required so that governors could ensure that they are fully able to commit.

Spencer Moore took the opportunity to advise that he had found it a really enjoyable experience to work with the curriculum team. This has meant that he is better able to understand the college context and where it sits locally, regionally, and nationally. This, for him, was an opportunity to really bring the college to life and, in turn, it was an opportunity to provide CPD for staff in this area.

A challenge from one member of the board was that it is important to be cognisant of the recency of governor experience and expertise. It was acknowledged that networking and connections are just as important. The vice principal described these as a further opportunity to check and challenge and bring a new perspective, which she described as ‘the real-

VP CESE Sept. 2021

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world piece'. The board acknowledged that everyone has something to give, even if it is just chance encounters.

VP CESE

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To progress this, it was agreed that the vice principal would arrange one-to-ones with governors so that there can be best-fit discussions and that part and parcel of this would include time commitment estimates. The aim is to conclude this piece of development work by the end of September 2021.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided.
- b) To approve/endorse the framework for governor involvement to progress the employer engagement strategy.

## 9 FINANCE AND ESTATES COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee chair introduced his summary report and also drew the board's attention to the detailed minutes of the meeting that took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021. Key aspects highlighted included:

- The committee took a significant amount of time to discuss the budget.
- The finance director has now provided the sensitivity analysis requested, and this gives a better understanding of the strength behind the numbers.
- The college is in a strong position.
- The curriculum contribution analysis sparked some debate and it was acknowledged that there is more work for the finance director and vice principal: curriculum & quality to do. That said, the committee were assured that a strong start is being made and college will now fine tune.
- The May 2021 management accounts were considered and are available for the board to review in detail. Key aspects are:
  - Costs are well controlled
  - The college will be slightly ahead of forecast/budget
  - The cash position is improved
  - Much reduced debt
- Facilities – banks are looking at covenants and will potentially take a more relaxed view now. They are looking to introduce a cash level covenant.
- Cash – December 2021 will see a major outflow in relation to AEB clawback. The college does have the cash available and is, therefore, not exposed.
- The college is now in a stronger position.
- Space and capacity are a challenge, particularly in relation to construction provision. A proposal was made to take on additional premises, i.e., the Making It centre; however, a potential issue regarding a tenant was identified. The college originally thought that the tenant would depart but now may

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not. The college is asking for in principle approval to take on additional premises if it is possible to conclude negotiations.

- The committee undertook a review of its own performance and felt that it had been possible to fulfil the role and responsibilities as set out by the board.

As an overview, he confirmed that there were positive and strong discussions, particularly in relation to the budget, which was scrutinised and challenged in detail.

The board were then advised that there are a number of recommendations for board approval, including:

- Minor changes to the subcontracting policy
- Increase in the value of one subcontract, White Rose, with an increase of a further £100k, taking the overall value to £950k.
- LIBOR change identified by the bank with a proposal to move to a base rate. This builds in more certainty and there will be limited impact as the college's loans are fixed in any event. The board were advised that the impact of the proposed change to LIBOR would only be if the college breached covenants and that there is a very, very low risk in relation to this.

The committee chair confirmed that there had been a transformation in terms of the accounts, particularly in relation to debts and cash, and took the opportunity to pass on congratulations to everyone involved in getting to this point.

In relation to the additional site proposed, one member of the board asked whether there is a longer-term plan. The director: IT, estates and learning resources confirmed that there is and that, in the fifth year, the college anticipates access to new centres. There is, however, a potential delivery risk regarding the new centres; therefore, the aim is to ensure slide out arrangements. Five years gives a buffer and protection to mitigate risks in this area. The proposal was acknowledged to be an ideal solution as a 'stop gap'.

**AGREED:**

- a) To note the content of the chair's summary report and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021.
- b) Approve the subcontracting fees and charges policy 2021/22 as presented.
- c) Approve the change in bank facility (LIBOR) as presented. The board discussed the proposal and, having considered the documentation in this regard, were happy to approve the transition proposal outlined in the documentation replacing LIBOR with bank rate plus credit adjustment spread, based 5YHM, with a switch date of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The board further authorised the following signatory, Jon Fearon, to sign the

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necessary documentation, including the transition agreement on behalf of West Nottinghamshire College.

- d) Approve the proposals regarding fifth site requirements.
- e) Approve the subcontract increase by £100k to White Rose.
- f) Approve continued committee membership and terms of reference unchanged into 21/22.

(Andrew Cropley joined the meeting at 6.45pm)

## 10 QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The committee representative introduced this item and drew governors' attention to the summary report and also the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021. It was described as a very thorough, comprehensive and wide-ranging meeting, with a number of areas of assurance identified, including:

- QIAP – a very honest and open approach taken.
- Deep dives – these appear to be well received by staff and are providing a really rich picture.
- A really positive approach to staff CPD, with development extended to support staff too.
- There will be new arrangements for reporting safeguarding in September, with all agreeing that this is a really good development. Sexual assault and harassment is now a national and very topical focus and all governors need to be assured regarding the college's arrangements in relation to this.
- Work continues to take place in relation to apprenticeship provision and OneFile, and improvements are happening.
- Consistency of tutorials is a focus.

Governors particularly considered the red RAG-rated items in the QIP and made an observation that it was really pleasing to see the improved changes, particularly in terms of greens and ambers.

One member of the board asked whether there are any concerns regarding the start of the new academic year. The committee representative indicated that there were not from a governance perspective and that what the board wants to see is the good work continuing within the context of the changes made. All agreed that they would really hope to see the college embrace the outcomes of the business improvements projects.

The CEO indicated that, from his point of view, one worry is whether or not the college has recruited enough high-quality staff to support the growth that is expected and that, associated with this, are risks regarding unfunded costs/finances (e.g., the need for temporary cover).

The board were advised that the proposal regarding leadership and

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management is that it is now self-assessed at a grade 2. The committee debated this at great length and were given a full explanation, particularly in terms of the trajectory of teaching and learning. The CEO indicated that there is not much more that the college could have done and didn't do over the last 12-18 months; therefore, there is confidence that leadership and management is now a secure grade 2.

The board were advised that one impact of the pandemic has been to make it more challenging to really know and see where teaching and learning is improving. However, the senior team are really able to see elevated pedagogy discussions, and this was clear in the June CPD week. The anticipation is that all of the training that has been provided will be beneficial and that the college will start to see the evidence of the impact of this when moving to a more normal set of arrangements in September.

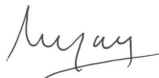
A point raised in the committee meeting was in terms of culture and the consistency of approach. This was in one particular area. The committee were given assurance that the Executive have met with all staff and that they will now feel more empowered, and the college has provided an open forum for discussion. In addition, there is mentoring in place for the head of department. This particular team now feel that they have been listened to, and this should form a solid basis for future development.

One member of the board asked for an update in relation to safeguarding, and it was explained that the committee had received very detailed information regarding sexual abuse and assault. The board asked whether the safeguarding plan for 2021/22 needs more specifics. The vice principal indicated that the team would look again, given that the new Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance was published last week, as well as updated DfE guidance on sexual abuse/harassment. There are some very set processes that the college has to follow and will mean a fundamental change to the safeguarding policy/procedure, which is currently out for consultation. She explained that the college will be taking a zero-tolerance approach and is very good at responding to referrals; however, what now needs to be a focus is tackling the lower level 'harassment', such as derogatory comments. The college is planning some single group focus groups next year, which will provide a safe space for discussion: i.e., female, male, LGBT, etc. The vice principal indicated she will look to assess whether separate action plans need to be put in place but that this has to be put within the context of zero tolerance regarding all issues, not just sexual.

She reminded the board that there are two action plans covering a) safeguarding and b) equality, diversity and inclusion. In relation to safeguarding, the college will need to publish its new policy before the board next meets and can give formal approval; however, it will be circulated to all members of the Standards Committee for feedback first.

VP CESE

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The board were advised that there is a staff development day on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 and safeguarding will feature within this, as well as a larger planned annual update round of meetings. It was agreed that governors would be provided with all of the staff development session times on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 so that they can attend the most convenient for them.

VP CESE

Aug. 2021

One member of the board asked what the college approach is to incidents that might take place outside the college and challenged that all learners should be signposted clearly to how to report both the internal and the external. The board were advised that there is a 'report it' button on the student portal which allows an easy way to record.

**AGREED:**

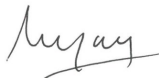
- a) To note the content of the chair's summary report and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.
- b) Support the recommendation that leadership and management be graded 2 as part of the self-assessment process.
- c) Note the content of the current QIAP.
- d) Note the content of the detailed safeguarding/Prevent report.
- e) Approve that membership and terms of reference for this committee remain unchanged into 2021/22.

**11 2021/22 BUDGET AND 2 YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST**

The finance director introduced this item. It was acknowledged that these had been discussed in significant detail at the recent meeting of the Finance and Estates Committee and that the minutes of this meeting give clarity regarding any areas of question, challenge and potential amendment.

The finance director indicated that the college has just been advised of success regarding the Strategic Development Fund bid, of which WNC is the lead. This was a fund bid with a total of between £3.1 and £3.2 million, with £1.1 million coming to the college. There will be an intensive seven-month period of activity, which is predominantly technology-based, and the college will need to reflect some of this spend in the budget. The board were reminded that the college also submitted two capital bids and that the first, which was in relation to SEN provision at Derby Road, was unfortunately unsuccessful but a bid in relation to Chesterfield Road was successful. Either of the successful bids could impact upon cash and, therefore, may have implications for bank covenants.

The finance director advised that he has prepared a budget which includes a significant increase in costs and staffing but not income. He reminded that 16-18 funding is paid on a lagged basis and that a prudent approach has been taken to income as there is no guarantee regarding

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in-year growth funding. The college is currently over 1,600 applications up on the prior year, particularly in the areas of construction and A-Levels. The college will need to staff this and is also taking on new premises, as discussed earlier in the meeting, to accommodate this. He indicated that there is less certainty regarding in-year growth funding in 2021/22 than there was in 20/21 and, therefore, a very cautious approach needs to be taken.

A question and challenge from the board was how the college will recruit staff to support growth. The CEO advised that there are lots of initiatives and that the college is looking to be as innovative as possible. That said, the college is very aware of the challenges of recruiting given the significant growth trajectory.

In terms of the successful bids, a challenge from the board was to ensure that the college has sufficient and effective project management in place so as to provide proper oversight.

One member of the board asked what risks will keep the executive awake at night. The CEO advised that, in the main, these are AEB and the cap on subcontracting. However, the college is working with partners regarding a number of opportunities and, in terms of AEB, the college knows it needs to ensure that the £5.7 million is spent in D2N2. This funding is approached on the basis of 'use it or lose it', and to fail to spend it will negatively impact upon the community.

In relation to the £8 million capital project, the board were advised that the intention is to engage AAT Projects, as outside resource is required. Restated challenge from the board was to make sure that there is sufficient resource in place to manage all of the projects.

The board discussed the anticipated increase in learner numbers and asked whether it is possible to codify why there is an increase so that it can be analysed (e.g., reputation, demographics, COVID, etc.). They asked whether it is possible to better understand the drivers.

The board acknowledged that there were a number of key decisions that had been made over the last 12-18 months, and all agreed that it would be interesting to test their impact. These include:

- Development of the Mansfield and Ashfield Sixth Form College – the decision made was not to sell the Chesterfield Road site to support this, and the board indicated that it would be interesting to track the year 1 and year 2 numbers as it looks, at this stage, like this could be a significant centre. The board were advised that there is a risk that schools will react and fight to keep as many of their students as possible, and this is something to be added to the risk register in terms of A-Levels. It was acknowledged that students turning up on day 1 will be key.

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- Construction – the college has removed some barriers to entry, and this sits alongside a significant increase in workforce demand. The college now has more professional progression and links to NTU.
- There is growth generally across the board (e.g., apprenticeships in engineering).
- Public services – numbers are looking good and this is entirely down to reputation.
- The health and social care curriculum has moved forward, including the development of a hospital ward, which uses robotic dummies. There are also close links with the school of nursing. Like for like, college resources are now better.
- College reputation, particularly in relation to its response to COVID.
- Recruitment activity and progression.

AGREED:

- To note the content of the update provided.
- Approve the 21/22 budget and two-year financial forecast as presented.

## 12 **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

The committee chair introduced this item and drew governors' attention to her summary report and the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021. She indicated that some issues and concerns raised earlier in this meeting had been discussed by WDC (e.g., mandatory training and appraisals).

The committee undertook a review and it was felt that there is more that can be done in terms of report presentation and focus moving forward. This work will start over the summer.

Key aspects highlighted to the board included:

- The college is not as far ahead in terms of the people strategy action plan as it would have liked to have been.
- The intention is for the committee to focus on key items each meeting, but it will be sighted on all areas requiring attention.
- An agreed timetable to undertake policy reviews is now in place and appears to be reasonable.
- In terms of recruitment, there is still more work to be done in terms of attraction and selection.
- In relation to home-working arrangements, there need to be some discussions with staff and implications fully understood.
- The staff survey is good evidence that progress is being made.
- Support staff development is now intended to be a focus.
- New appraisal processes are planned for implementation in May 2022.

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AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided.
- b) Note the content of the chair's summary report and detailed minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021.
- c) Approve that committee membership and terms of reference continue into 2021/22 unchanged.

**13 EDI STATEMENT OF INTENT AND YEAR 1 ACTION PLAN**

The vice principal introduced this item and explained that the equality and diversity steering group has met since the June strategy review meeting, and what is presented today incorporates both governor and steering group feedback. Provided is the first draft of the action plan.

One member of the board questioned the proposed governor oversight and asked whether it should be split across two committees; however, it was acknowledged that there is a need to balance between any gaps and duplication. It was agreed that EDI information and progress in relation to students would be monitored by the Standards Committee and that the same information in relation to staff would be monitored by the Workforce Development Committee.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided.
- b) Approve the EDI statement of intent as presented.

**14 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE REPORT**

The committee chair drew governors' attention to the summary report and also detailed minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and key aspects highlighted included:

- The risk management annual report was received and there has been great progress made in the year, with lots of risks managed and mitigated.
- The risk register will look very different for 21/22.
- The committee were assured regarding the focus given to risk management and the risk register.
- An update on the whistleblowing disclosure will be given at agenda item 24 later in the meeting.
- The committee were given strong assurance regarding the performance management audit undertaken.
- External auditors explained that the changes in the audit code of practice means that external auditors will need to do more testing this year in relation to funding.
- ACOP was considered in detail, and it is reassuring to know that the college will only need to make minor changes to respond to the revisions.
- The committee undertook a review of its own arrangements:

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with one member having resigned, there is a need to consider this.

- In relation to the performance management audit undertaken, there were some sector best practice items identified and, therefore, the college should be congratulated for this.
- In relation to projects, the committee has asked that arrangements in relation to this are part of internal audit testing next year. All acknowledged that this links in with previous discussions in the meeting.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the chair's summary report and minutes of the meeting.
- b) Note the content of the risk register.
- c) Note the content of the external audit planning memorandum for 2020/21.
- d) Approve that Audit Committee membership and terms of reference continue into 21/22 unchanged.

## 15 **STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024 (INCLUDING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES)**

The CEO presented the suite of documents provided and confirmed that they cover a number of areas, including:

- The current position against objectives in place for 2020/21
- The plan agreed last year for 21/22
- Updated proposals following the strategic review at the June meeting.

He advised that there are four areas which are either new or enhanced, and these are:

- Community engagement
- Sustainability
- EDI
- Employer engagement

In terms of quality and standards, he indicated that they remain relatively the same for 21/22. A challenge from the board, to ensure consistency, was to change any fractions to a percentage. A challenge from one member of the board was whether or not there are sufficient aims to cover the AEB drive needed. The CEO expressed the view that there are and that the budget assumes 100% delivery. He confirmed that this aspect in particular would appear in the new risk register for 21/22. He advised that community and employer engagement will also be focused on AEB and that resources have been increased to support this area.

A question and challenge from the board was whether there is sufficient line of sight between the vision, aims and strategic objectives. In

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discussion all felt that there was. In terms of the digital and employer engagement strategy, a challenge from the board was to carefully look at language to ensure consistency and to be very clear regarding the strategic pillars.

The CEO advised that the next step is to turn this into a new version of the balanced scorecard and that the first presentation of this would be to be the October board meeting. He confirmed that the vice chair, Sardip Sandhu, would be invited in to test developments on behalf of the board.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided
- b) Approve the mission, vision, values and strategic objectives for 2021/22 as presented.

## 16 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The CEO presented his detailed written update. Highlights provided to the meeting included:

- There was a partnership board meeting with NTU yesterday, which went very well and included a tour of the college sites. This was an opportunity to talk about the future of engineering, and the college was able to reach a positive agreement in that the college is able to lead and have control and subcontract delivery to NTU.
- There have been a number of consultations launched in the sector, including exams 2022, simplification of FE funding and accountability (which is very important), and the National Skills Fund.
- Statutory guidance for governors has been issued in terms of their role in ensuring effective local delivery and the offer provided by colleges, and this is something that will be considered in more detail in the autumn term.
- The sector is seeing a relentless sea of consultations and bidding.
- The advanced manufacturing and distribution centre goes from strength to strength.
- There has been the development and finalisation of a Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement, and the CEO would like board approval to sign. The board asked whether there were any particular benefits for the college. The CEO advised that just being part of the conversations was of benefit and that this is a senior group through which the college can better understand what is shaping the future direction of travel.

CEO

Dec. 2021

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the detailed report provided
- b) Approve the college signature to the Universities for Nottingham

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Civic Agreement.

**17**      **GOVERNANCE UPDATE**

The director of governance presented her short, written report and summarised the two governor recruitment proposals, the first being in relation to a student governor and the second in relation to an independent governor.

AGREED:

- a) To approve the appointment of William Burton as a student governor from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022, or until such time as he ceases to be a student, whichever is the earlier.
- b) Approve the appointment of Ben Owen as an independent governor from 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021 to 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

It was noted and agreed that Ben Owen would join the Standards Committee as a member.

In relation to both vacancies, the board agreed that they were assured that robust processes had been followed in terms of identifying candidates for the vacancies.

**18**      **AOB**

There were no matters of additional business.

**19**      **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING.**

It was confirmed that this is Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021 at 5pm.

(Staff and student governors, together with members of the Executive, left at 8.05pm.)

**20**      **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

It was confirmed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis.

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