



CORPORATION MEETING

15 September 2016

MINUTES

Present:	Carole Thorogood (Chair))
	Larry Greenwell)
	Clive Rix) External governors
	Stephen Russell)
	Brendan Coulson	Staff governor (non-teaching)
	Ann Reddington	Staff governor (teaching)
In attendance:	John van de Laarschot	Designate CEO Nottingham College
	John Snow	Vice Principal Corporate Services
	Yultan Mellor	Vice Principal Curriculum
	Debbie Duggan	Vice Principal Organisation Development
	Ian James	Clerk to the Corporation

PART 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1 Apologies were received from, Richard Cox, Mark Dunwell, Gill Lane and Jason Folkett (Vice Principal Learner Services).

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2 The Chair reminded governors of the requirement to declare their interest in any agenda items. Following any such declaration governors would not be able to speak or vote on the matters under discussion.

MINUTES

3 **Resolved** that the minutes (Part 1) of the meeting held on 21 July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE

4 The Board received, for information, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 July 2016. Matters arising from the minutes had been dealt with at the last Board meeting.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

5 The Committee Chair introduced the minutes of the meetings held on 26 July and 8 September 2016 and was pleased to report that the Internal Auditor's Annual Report had provided the highest level of audit opinion. Out of six audits conducted during the year, five had resulted in 'green' (substantial assurance) opinions and one amber/green with no high priority recommendations.

6 In addition, the Committee had been tracking the implementation of a series of recommendations relating to the College's IT systems and were pleased that these had now all been completed. However, there was some concern that there was little synergy between the MIS systems at this College and those of New College and this was an area that would require fairly urgent attention as part of the merger planning process.

7 The Committee Chair advised that no Internal Audit Plan had been prepared for 2016/17 as the College had expected to merge on 1 August. Given that the merger had now been delayed until December/January and that audit fieldwork did not typically commence until the New Year, the issue arose as to whether the College required any assurance on internal control for the period from 1 August until the date of the merger.

8 The Committee had concluded that this was a matter for the Board to decide as the Chair of the Board was required to sign the statement of internal control in the Financial Statements that would eventually have to be prepared for the period from 1 August 2016 to the date of merger. However, the Committee's view (supported by the internal auditor) was that, provided the merger date did not slip further, the Board could take assurance from the strength of the internal controls in place as evidenced by the Internal Audit Annual Report.

9 The Board concurred with the views of the Committee on this matter. The reappointment of the external auditors had also been recommended to undertake the audit of the accounts for the period.

10 **Resolved** that Grant Thornton be reappointed as external auditors for the period from 1 August until the date of the merger with New College Nottingham

ENROLMENT UPDATE

11 The Vice Principal Curriculum submitted a report detailing the current position with enrolment of students for 2016/17. For 16-18, enrolment was estimated to be around 5% below target for the EFA allocation although enrolment was continuing and further recruitment would be undertaken in January if necessary. There was a similar picture at New College and factors thought to be affecting numbers were an improvement in GCSE results with more students taking A levels in school sixth forms, an increase in the number of 16-18 year olds taking up apprenticeships and the demographic downturn.

12 Apprenticeships were recruiting well as was the International Foundation programme. HE numbers were currently below target although recruitment was continuing.

ANNUAL PARTNERSHIPS REVIEW

13 The Vice Principal Curriculum presented a report showing details of the work undertaken with external training organisations in 2015/16 amounting to provision valued at around £13.2m with 25 partners. The report set out details of the work undertaken including the industrial sector, the numbers of students and the contract value. More stringent rules on partnership arrangements had been introduced by the SFA and an audit of the College's compliance with these new requirements had shown a very positive result.

14 Planning for the future and the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, the College was developing a 'managed service' for partners/employers as a commercial venture.

SELF ASSESSMENT PROCESS

15 In recent years, the Board had established a practice whereby governors reviewed and, if necessary, challenged sections of the College's SAR. This exercise was valued by both governors and management and a report was received requesting a similar exercise this year. Governors volunteered once again to undertake this task.

LEARNER SURVEY RESULTS

16 The Board received a detailed report setting out the results of the course completers' and employer responsive learner surveys for 2015/16. The governors noted the increased participation rate in the course completers' survey and that course related satisfaction levels in this group had shown an improvement of 6% on the previous year. Overall, the picture showed good progress and, as usual, the exercise had highlighted some areas for attention which were being addressed through self-assessment and development plans.

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS & COMMENDATIONS REVIEW

17 The Board received the annual review of complaints and commendations and governors were pleased to note the overall reduction in the number of complaints and an increase in the number of commendations.

ANNUAL HR REPORT

18 The Board received and noted the annual HR report and the Vice Principal Organisation Development drew attention to a number of areas of positive improvement. Attention was drawn to the increase in absences due to work related stress and the Vice Principal commented that this varied year on year for no discernible reason.

19 Asked whether there was a gender pay gap, the Vice Principal advised that while there was no significant difference when looking at individual jobs, overall female pay was lower than for males largely due to the higher proportion of females in part time employment.

PROPERTY UPDATE

20 The Vice Principal Corporate Services reported that the sale of the NETA premises had been agreed, subject to the prospective purchaser obtaining planning permission for a change of use although this was not thought likely to prove a problem

FINANCE UPDATE

21 The Vice Principal Corporate Services advised that the external auditors would commence their on-site work on the 2015/16 accounts in the second week of October. The first set of management accounts for 2016/17 would be produced at the end of this month.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

22 In view of the present difficulties with ensuring a quorum for Board meetings, the Clerk advised that it was within the power of the Board to reduce the number of governors, thereby reducing the quorum. A reduction from the current 15 governors to 12 would reduce the quorum by one to 5.

23 **Resolved** that a fresh determination of the number of governors be made under clause 3(2) of the Instrument of Government reducing the number of governors in the external category from ten to seven

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

5.30pm, 13 October 2016

Chair

Date