

NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE

CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2020

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|-----------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Present: | Carole Thorogood (Chair) |) | |
| | Anja Beriro |) | |
| | Mary Carswell |) | |
| | Philip Crompton |) | |
| | Andrew Dickinson |) | |
| | Richard Donovan |) | External governors |
| | Mike Green |) | |
| | Jonathan Hawley |) | |
| | Neghat Khan |) | |
| | Andrew Unitt |) | |
| | Michael Wisher |) | |
| | John van de Laarschot |) | Chief Executive Officer |
| | Becki Pate |) | Staff governor |
| | Liam Perkins |) | Staff governor |

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|-----------------------|----------------|--|
| In attendance: | Ian James | Clerk to the Corporation |
| | Philip Briscoe | Principal (Curriculum & Education) |
| | Jo Clifford | Principal (Finance) |
| | James Whybrow | VP Partnerships, Apprenticeships & Enterprise |
| | Lauren Waters | Interim Executive Director Academic, Adult & Quality |
| | Karen Sanders | Interim Director of OD/HR |
| | Simon Kirby | Director of Marketing and Communications |
| | Mike Firth | ESFA |

PART 1

CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

160 In compliance with Government requirements during the Coronavirus pandemic, the meeting was held remotely via Microsoft Teams.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

161 Apologies were received from Shauna Hipkiss (Student governor).

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

162 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES

163 **Resolved** that the minutes (Part 1) of the meeting held on 24 February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair (actual signature would be delayed until the next normal meeting)

GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE

164 The Board received a report from the Committee meeting held immediately before this Board meeting.

Appointment of Patricia Harman

165 Following interviews conducted by the Committee for the vacancy caused by the resignation of Melanie Pope, Patricia Harman had emerged as the preferred candidate. The Clerk read out a brief summary of Ms Harman's experience in the FE sector.

166 **Resolved** that Patricia Harman be appointed as a governor in the 'external' category with immediate effect for a term of office lasting until 31 July 2023

Clerk to the Corporation

167 The Chair informed the Board of the steps being taken to identify a replacement for the current Clerk who would be retiring on 31 July 2020.

Impact of Coronavirus on Board business

168 The Chair advised that, together with the CEO and the Clerk, she would review the experience of this first remote Board meeting to see whether any changes to current practice were required and to consider the most efficient and effective means of conducting the business of the Away Day on 27April.

AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

169 The Board received the minutes of the Committee meeting held remotely on 26 March 2020. The Committee Chair reported that good progress was being made with the implementations of auditors' recommendations. The Business Continuity Policy had been reviewed and was in use during the partial closure of the College due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

170 The Committee had recommended the reappointment of KPMG as internal auditor; the external audit service was currently out to tender.

171 **Resolved** that KPMG be reappointed as internal auditor for 2020/21

POLICIES

172 The Board received the following policies which were due for review and reapproval. No material changes had been made to the policies and governors were asked to send in any comments by 3 April.

- Health & Safety Policy
- Data Protection/GDPR Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy

173 **Resolved** that the above policies be approved, subject to no material issues being raised by governors

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

174 The CEO had provided governors with email briefings on the impact of the coronavirus on the College especially following the Government requirement to close schools and colleges. He now provided a further update:

- the majority of provision for students had now been moved online and tutors were very active in seeking to ensure student engaged with home learning
- staff were being supported to work in a flexible and agile manner from home

- the Government closedown allowed for students in certain categories to continue to attend but the numbers were very low and were being catered for at Arthur Mee
- planning was commencing for when the Coronavirus restrictions were lifted
- uncertainties were emerging around the construction of the Hub and the refurbishment of the Adams building, but contingency plans were being developed
- the response from staff has been extremely positive with many staff going well beyond what might reasonably be expected
- the incident management group (Part of the Business Continuity Policy) was meeting on a daily basis chaired by the Principal (Finance)

175 Attention was drawn to possible data protection issues around staff using their own equipment for home working and this would form the theme for a staff briefing to be circulated this week. More resources would also be made available on the website supporting staff in home working. For CPD, webinars would be available for staff able to participate.

176 In answer to a question from a governor, the Principal (Finance) confirmed that the College was exploring the possibility of applying for Government support made available to employers towards the costs incurred during the closedown. Attention was also drawn to Government guidance regarding procurement and payments to suppliers and the College was aware of this and in discussion with contractors.

177 Asked about the position regarding examinations, the Principal (Curriculum & Education) commented that the picture was not fully clear at this stage although it appeared that most assessments would be made based on predicted grades. Advice available so far from the Government and the awarding bodies was being followed.

178 It was reported that some students had been seeking a refund of fees based on the disruption caused by strike action and now by the Coronavirus. The CEO advised that the College was dealing with this although the numbers involved were small.

179 The Chair asked for the CEO to continue to supply the governors with briefings on the position as it unfolded. A staff governor asked whether briefings focussing on curriculum issues could be made available to teaching staff and the CEO confirmed that this could be done.

CEO'S REPORT INCLUDING SCORECARD AND KPI'S

180 The CEO introduced his report highlighting the following:

- activity geared to addressing the Ofsted action plan had been significantly curtailed by the College closedown although work was progressing as far as possible so that progress could be demonstrated in spite of the current difficulties
- the recommendations of the FE Commissioner were all receiving attention
- the estates projects were proceeding as planned although two possible scenarios were under consideration should there be a delay in completing the Hub; these were opening the building at half term or after Christmas
- there had been a significant level of interest in the Voluntary Severance Scheme and it was likely that most applications would be approved although this would be more costly initially
- new performance indicators were available in the report showing progress in the attract/join/retain/achieve/employ phases of student engagement with the College

181 A governor drew attention to a query over the accuracy of data relating to HE students and the Principal (Curriculum & Education) commented that this had been acknowledged and would be corrected; the data should include both conditional and unconditional offers. The data around FE students was affected by year-on-year changes but the governors emphasised the importance of planning ahead to engage as effectively as possible with potential students especially in the current difficult period.

182 A staff governor asked whether more detailed data on class sizes could be made available and the CEO advised that this could be provided if governors requested it.

FINANCE

183 The Principal (Finance) presented the P7 management accounts commenting that these related to the period prior to the onset of the Coronavirus which would have a significant impact on the College's financial position. The accounts showed that, at the end of the period, the College was broadly on track with the revised budget forecast. However, she highlighted the following key risks, mainly arising from the Coronavirus pandemic and College closedown:

- further pressure on apprenticeship income if apprentices were unable to complete their programmes
- student withdrawals/potential refunds
- reduction in commercial/full cost income and income from international work, although the Government Job Retention Scheme may mitigate this in part
- uncertainty around capital for the Hub project
- the Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) would be significantly overspent

184 The current cash position was satisfactory and should be within covenants for the rest of the year. However, whilst the financial position had been robust before the pandemic, this was no longer the case and discussions were taking place with the ESFA and other funders over the College finances and the question of covenants.

185 Asked whether there was capacity and scope for additional income generation through online learning, the Principal (Finance) confirmed that the College was exploring these avenues with partner organisations.

186 A governor asked whether a delay to the hub would cause problems with the sale of properties that the College would be vacating and was advised that the sales were proceeding as planned at present. The intention had always been that the properties would be leased back by the College for the period until they were no longer required. The only risk was the increased cost of continuing to occupy those properties.

187 With regard to the Voluntary Severance Scheme, the Board was asked to endorse the approach being proposed to release more applicants than originally envisaged. Although this would involve additional costs of around £500k in the current financial year, the full year savings would amount to £1.6m.

188 **Resolved** that the proposed approach to the VSS be approved

RISK REGISTER UPDATE

189 The Board received and noted the Risk Register Update

OFSTED INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

190 The governors noted that good progress had been made with the Action Plan although work had now stalled due to the partial closure of the College. Much of the development work now required depended on face-to-face contact with students although work was proceeding on any aspects that could be moved forward remotely.

INFORMATION ITEMS

191 The Board received the following items for information:

- Curriculum & Quality Report
- Performance Table Report
- Edi Action Plan & Report
- City Hub Update

ZOE BUTLER – DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

192 The Chair reported that Zoe Butler would shortly be leaving the College on voluntary severance and, in her absence, she expressed the Board's appreciation for Zoe's work during her time at the College.

JAMES WHYBROW - VP PARTNERSHIPS, APPRENTICESHIPS & ENTERPRISE

193 The Chair reported that James Whybrow would shortly be leaving the College to take up an appointment with RSM. On behalf of the Board she expressed appreciation for James's work during his time at the College.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday, 27 April 2020 (Away Day)

Chair

Date