

NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE

CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2017

Present:	Carole Thorogood (Chair))	
	Mary Carswell)	
	Trevor Clay)	
	Richard Donovan)	
	Gill Lane)	External governors
	Caroline Mackrory)	
	David Ralph)	
	Stephen Russell)	
	Sam Webster)	
	John van de Laarschot		CEO
	Debra French		Staff governor
	Charlotte Jackson		Student governor

In attendance:	Yultan Mellor	VP Curriculum
	Jo Clifford	VP Finance
	James Whybrow	VP Partnerships, Apprenticeships & Enterprise
	Emma Woods	Director of Quality
	Zoe Butler	Director of Customer Experience
	Matthew Varley	Director of Estates/Capital Projects
	Simon Kirby	Director of Marketing and Communications
	Ffyoana Baker	Director of OD and HR
	Tom Dick	Director of Curriculum
	Jane Peacock	ESFA

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

87 Apologies were received from Richard Cox, Michael Wisher and Ian James (Clerk to the Corporation). In the absence of the Clerk, Ffyoana Baker was appointed to act as temporary Clerk for this meeting.

88 The Chair advised that Caroline Houldsworth (teaching staff governor) had resigned from the Board to allow more time to pursue her studies. It was with regret that Caroline's resignation had been received and the Clerk would now take forward the process for the recruitment of a replacement.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

89 David Ralph and Sam Webster had a registered interest in the City Hub project.

MINUTES

90 **Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the substitution of Weston for Webster in minute 53 and the substitution of EDF for ERDF in minute 74

CITY HUB

91 The Director of Estates/Capital Projects presented an update on progress with the City Hub project. The Board were reminded that the Hub was part of the wider estates strategy which would be the subject of a presentation to the Board in January 2018.

92 The CEO advised the Board of the current position regarding discussions/negotiations with the City Council, the outcome of which would require decisions immediately after a funders' meeting to be held on 13 December.

93 **Resolved** that the Chair and the CEO be authorised to determine and implement appropriate action to be taken on the City Hub project following the funders' meeting

AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

94 The Committee Chair introduced the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 December 2017. He commented that the external auditor had been complimentary about how well the external audit had gone and the quality of the information provided for them. This feedback was a credit to the finance team who had faced challenging workloads in dealing with two sets of accounts.

95 The Committee Chair also provided an overview of the work of the Committee in tracking the implementation of audit recommendations and he explained that, while some were overdue, the Committee was satisfied that acceptable progress was being made. The Committee received an update at each meeting on the integration of the IT systems this was currently progressing well.

SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT

96 The Director of Quality presented the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and proposed College grade for the academic year 2016/17 for the Board's consideration and approval. She highlighted the fact that the report was written in line with the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework and this compared the College with the latest national averages for performance. The report identified key strengths and areas for improvement and was action orientated.

97 The Director provided an overview of each section of the report to explain the rationale behind the content of the self-assessment and advised that training had been provided to the Heads of Faculty to help them with their judgements when making assessments. She also drew attention to positive areas contained within the self-assessment along with areas for improvement, including the decline in English and Maths outcomes for 16-18 year olds (although still above the national average). Through discussions with the Senior Leadership Team the College was proposing to self-assess as a Grade 3 college whilst recognising that some areas were consistently performing at a higher level.

98 The Board thanked the Director for what they considered to be a realistic report and a discussion ensued on the College's approach to English and Maths improvements and whether the College was being radical enough to engage students and what might be learnt from other colleges.

99 Governors commented that the context section of the SAR appeared to be focused mainly on the City whereas the College also served the wider conurbation. It was proposed that the wording be amended to ensure that the College was seen to be giving due attention to areas outside the City boundaries.

100 Asked whether the College was being too cautious in grading as a 3, the Director confirmed that SLT supported the grade whilst recognising that it was not a straightforward decision.

101 **Resolved** that, with the amendment suggested in minute 99, the SAR and the self-assessed grade 3 be approved

CURRICULUM & QUALITY UPDATE

102 The Director of Curriculum presented an update on student attendance and explained that, whilst cleansing of the data was underway, attendance appeared to be slightly ahead of last year. He also advised that performance panels had been completed with each faculty area and that the retention position, currently around 99%, was being monitored closely across all areas.

103 The Vice Principal Curriculum supplied an update on English and Maths and explained that performance was behind the equivalent point last year and that a separate action plan for these areas had been developed with intensive monitoring.

104 The Director of Quality gave an update on the assessment of teaching & learning explaining that there was now an ungraded Observations Policy agreed with the Trade Unions. The consultation process had delayed the completion of the observations to April 2018 (instead of February).

105 The Vice Principal Partnerships, Apprenticeships & Enterprise presented an update on the 2017/18 direct delivery of apprenticeships and advised that there was a high number of enrolments in progress and, despite some earlier issues around coding, reviews were taking place on a weekly basis. He also provided an overview of vacancies and advised that the College had been successful in its request for inclusion within the Register of Training Providers from 1st January 2018 to a value of £3m.

106 The Board discussed progress against work experience targets and asked to what extent the College was using existing paid and part-time work undertaken by students as counting towards their work experience. Governors suggested that this could be utilised in quite creative ways e.g. by developing employability skills through working in a supermarket. The Board was advised that this possibility was being worked through with the curriculum areas.

107 The Director of Quality presented the outcomes of the ESFA Student and Employer surveys which were favourable for the college.

108 The Board was also asked to approve targets for education & training and apprenticeships for 2017/18 which were within the plan agreed with the Transaction Unit.

109 **Resolved** that the targets for education & training and apprenticeships be approved

2017 ENROLMENT ANALYSIS REPORT

110 The Board received the enrolment report and analysis and were advised that 16-18 student numbers were 13% below the funding allocation. The analysis covered the key points relating to non-enrollers, late enrollers and withdrawals. The Director of Marketing and Communications advised that the aim was to have a year-long marketing relationship with potential students although the team were mindful that the geographical location of each potential student played a key part in their eventual choice of college. This aspect needed to be a consideration of the Estates Strategy when rationalising campuses.

111 The Board were advised that withdrawals were predominately as a result of poor attendance and behavioural issues, ICT problems, delays in financial support and undefined pastoral support structures. An enhanced post-enrolment strategy was being developed with a view to addressing the shortfall in student numbers

112 The Director of Customer Experience provided an overview as to how her team were working to improve students' experience so as to increase the conversion of applications to enrolments. This included the redesign of the enquiry and application process, redesign of the student services team, first contact resolution approach and relationship management.

113 The Board asked how the College was addressing NEETS and the VP Curriculum advised that there was a foundation level programme and other work on this issue was underway.

HE ANNUAL REPORT & ACTION PLAN

114 The VP Curriculum presented the annual report on the College's HE provision and the associated action plan. She was pleased to report that the three-year revalidation with NTU had been confirmed. The governors were advised that the CEO was required to sign a statement for HEFCE confirming that the Board had undertaken an annual review of quality assurance for HE. This had been required prior to 1 December and the Board's review would need to be carried out earlier in future years in order to meet this deadline.

115 On the basis of the annual report and the recent review by QAA, the Board was content that suitable quality assurance arrangements were in place.

116 **Resolved** that the statement to HEFCE be endorsed

PROPOSAL TO INSOURCE CLEANING SERVICES

117 The Director of Estates/Capital Projects presented a report on the proposed insourcing of cleaning services. A strategic review and benchmarking exercise had concluded that, to achieve savings and improved productivity, cleaning services should be brought in-house from April 2018. Subject to Board approval, the Trade Unions would be advised on the 19th December 2018 of the proposals which were subject to due diligence.

118 **Resolved** that the proposal to bring cleaning services in-house be approved

FINANCE REPORT

External auditor's report and Letter of Representation

119 The VP Finance presented the external auditor's report on the 2016/17 financial statements and regularity audits together with the Letter of Representation. The Board were advised that the audit was substantially complete and that there were no significant audit findings or matters outstanding.

Audit Committee's Annual Report on Nottingham College for 2016/17

120 The Chair of the Audit Committee presented the Committee's Annual Report which gave a positive view of the College's assurance arrangements with no significant audit recommendations.

Financial Statements 2016/17

121 The VP Finance presented the financial statements for Nottingham College & subsidiaries for 2016/17. The Chair of the Audit Committee commented that the Committee had discussed the pension deficit which was outside the College's control and which was a potentially serious factor affecting many FE colleges.

122 **Resolved** that the Financial Statements for 2016/17 and the external auditor's Letter of Representation be approved

Management accounts

123 The VP Finance submitted a detailed report on the management accounts for the period to 31 October 2017 highlighting a shortfall against the TU plan of £1.1m due to a projected reduction in adult skills funding which it was hoped would be recovered during the year.

124 Asked whether there was likely to be an increase in non-pay costs the VP advised that this would not be the case as these were front loaded this year and will phase out. She commented that there was a commitment for a 10% saving across the Board for non-pay in the areas of Exams and HE due to under-recruitment of students.

125 The governors were concerned over the current position and asked that a discussion on the College's financial position takes place at the next Board meeting as the first item on the agenda. The Board also asked for a full forecast for the rest of year.

ESFA Financial Plan Assessment

126 The VP Finance presented the ESFA Financial Plan Assessment, the response and analysis from the Agency following submission of the College Finance Plan 2017-2019 in July 2017. Based on the Plan, the assessment showed a 'satisfactory' health rating for 2016/17 followed by 'good' in 2017/18 returning to 'satisfactory' in 2018/19.

LETTER FROM ESFA CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO ALL FE COLLEGES

127 The retiring Chief Executive of the ESFA had written to all FE colleges drawing attention to a number of areas relating to college governance that had been identified from the agency's work in supporting colleges in difficulty.

128 In view to the importance of this item and the limited time remaining at this meeting that this item would be carried forward to the January Board meeting.

RISK MANAGEMENT

2016/17 Annual Report

129 The Board received the Annual Risk Management Report noting the approaches in place to underpin the management of risk across the College. Governors expressed a concern that the high risks were not appearing to be mitigated despite the actions taken and emphasised that robust measures were needed to bring the risk scores down.

Risk register 'red' risks

130 The VP Finance presented an overview of the risk register and the red risks. Governors asked whether the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was being addressed by the College pointing out that this needed to be included in the Register as a high risk. The Board was assured that work was underway to address the challenges of GDPR throughout the College.

Risk Management Policy & Framework 2017-2019

131 The VP Finance presented the proposed Risk Management Policy & Framework for 2017-2019 which had been reviewed by the Audit Committee and now required Board approval.

132 **Resolved** that the Risk Management Policy & Framework for 2017-2019 be approved

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Employee Engagement Survey

133 The CEO advised the Board that the College would be launching an Employee Engagement Survey this week which would remain open until mid-January. The Director of OD and HR advised that the College was committed to hearing the views of colleagues to baseline the strength of feeling prior to start of a colleague engagement programme.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

134 Monday, 22 January 2017

Chair

Date