

NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE

CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2018

Present:	Carole Thorogood (Chair))	
	Mary Carswell)	
	Gill Lane)	
	Caroline Mackrory)	External governors
	Stephen Russell)	
	Andrew Unitt (from minute 218))	
	Sam Webster (to minute 232))	
	Michael Wisher)	
	John van de Laarschot)	Chief Executive Officer
	Debra French)	Staff governor
	Becki Pate)	Staff governor

In attendance:	Ian James	Clerk to the Corporation
	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
	Ffyona Baker	Director of OD and HR
	Tom Dick	Director of Curriculum

PART 1

APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS

214 The Chair reported on the recent recruitment exercise conducted by the Governance & Search Committee primarily to identify a qualified accountant to fulfil a requirement of the TU facility agreement. However, following the resignation of Richard Cox, the Committee had also sought to recruit a replacement lawyer.

215 The College had engaged Peridot to undertake the recruitment exercise for a qualified and experienced accountant and three candidates identified by Peridot had been interviewed by the Committee. Two of the candidates, Andrew Dickinson and Andrew Unitt, had impressed the Committee and, in view of the forthcoming retirements of Caroline Mackrory and Stephen Russell (both accountants), the Committee felt that there would be benefit in recruiting both of these applicants who would bring very different experience and perspective to the work of the Board.

216 The Committee also interviewed Anja Beriro, a partner at law firm Brown Jacobson as the replacement for Richard Cox and the Committee felt that Anja would bring valuable skills and knowledge especially in view of her experience of working with organisations in the public sector.

217 **Resolved** to appoint Andrew Dickinson, Andrew Unitt and Anja Beriro as governors in the external category for a term of office lasting until 31 July 2021

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

218 Apologies were received from Trevor Clay, Richard Donovan, Charlotte Jackson, Jermaine Williams and Jane Peacock (ESFA).

RETIREMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

219 The Chair advised that Richard Cox had resigned from the Board due to his business commitments and that Caroline Mackrory's term of office would end on 29 April 2018. On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Caroline for her service on the Board.

220 The Board was also advised of the resignation of Yultan Mellor from the post of Vice Principal Curriculum upon her appointment as Principal of another College.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

221 There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES

222 **Resolved** that the minutes (Part 1) of the meeting held on 6 March 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

SUBSIDIARY ACCOUNTS 2016/17 & PARENT UNDERTAKING

223 The Board received the statutory accounts for the two subsidiaries Emtech Colleges Limited and NCN Services Limited (renamed Nottingham College Services for 2017/18). A parent undertaking was also required in respect of Emtech College Limited. The College had one dormant company which would soon be wound up; the academy trust company operated by the former Central College Nottingham.

224 **Resolved**

- 1 that the statutory accounts be noted and that continuing support for both companies be approved
- 2 that the parent undertaking for Emtech Colleges Limited be approved

POLICY REVIEW

Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure

225 The Board received the proposed Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure. It was suggested that the College's Bullying and Harassment Policy be checked to ensure that sexual harassment is covered. It was further suggested that paragraph 1.8 should include reference to the procedure for student complaints.

226 **Resolved** that, subject to the amendments suggested, the Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure be approved

CURRICULUM & QUALITY REPORT

227 The Board received the curriculum & quality update advising the Board of current performance trends in key indices including attendance, retention and quality of teaching & learning.

228 Attendance at both 16-18 and 19+ had declined in term 2 and a query was raised as to whether this was attributable to the quality of teaching. The Director of Quality responded that, while this may be the case in some areas (for example where there were staffing problems), there was no consistent message emerging from the data. However, attendance at English and maths classed continued to be an issue, even in curriculum areas where attendance on the main qualification was on target. English & maths attendance was now being monitored on a fortnightly basis.

229 The governors were aware of the current relatively high level of reliance on agency staff and queried whether this was impacting on quality. The Director of Quality advised that this should not be the case since all staff went through the same preparation when they came to the College. There remained some difficult recruitment issues in specific areas although it was hoped to show progress on the use of agency staff in the next report.

230 The report included detailed data on performance in individual faculties which showed where the College needed to make improvements. The CEO commented that there were numerous challenges that had to be addressed and that it was the responsibility of all colleagues to work towards improving the College's performance.

PARTNERSHIP & ENTERPRISE PERFORMANCE REPORT

231 The Board received a detailed report from the VP Partnerships, Apprenticeships & Enterprise setting out the current position in relation to the College's activity on apprenticeships. Asked why the report might appear to present a more positive picture than that for apprenticeships in the management accounts, the VP commented that the College was operating broadly in line with expectations although his team were working hard to achieve an improved position.

232 Attention was drawn to the figure of 29% for timely reviews with a trainer/assessor on the assumption that, if reviews were conducted on a timely basis, the apprentice was more likely to succeed. The VP advised that a centralised system was being established to improve monitoring and compliance in this respect.

SCORECARD & KPI'S REPORT

233 The Board received the monthly report setting out the College's KPI's which were RAG-rated and updated through a commentary explaining current progress. Attention was drawn to the apparently low percentages of students undertaking work experience and the Director of Curriculum commented that the College may not be capturing this data fully at this stage.

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE REPORT

234 The Board received an update on safeguarding activity in the College in order for the governors to maintain an overview of this important area. The Board was asked to nominate a governor to take a 'special interest' in safeguarding and they preferred this terminology to be used rather than 'safeguarding lead'. Gill Lane agreed to undertake this role.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

235 The VP Finance presented the management accounts to 28 February 2018 which showed that the College remained ahead of budget at this stage mainly due to one-off items. However, the current year end forecast was an overall operating deficit of £2.533m against a budgeted figure of £1.93m, a shortfall of £603k.

236 The management accounts contained a full explanation of variances to budget and the governors highlighted and challenged management specifically on the level of expenditure on

agency staff which was running well ahead of budget and also on the early years service where the nursery was showing an operational deficit of £43k against a budgeted surplus of £153k.

237 The VP responded that agency staffing was being monitored and controlled as far as possible although difficulties in recruiting key staff and also small group sizes in some curriculum areas remained a problem. With regard to the nursery, a review was underway and a report on the future of this provision would be forthcoming to the Board in the near future.

238 A suggestion was made that it would be helpful to governors if variances could be categorised as (a) one-off, (b) due to timing or (c) evidence of a trend; with the last category being of most significance.

RISK MANAGEMENT

239 The Board received the routine review of 'red' risks which were monitored by the Audit Committee. Attention was drawn to the planned review dates, some of which had now passed, and the VP Finance commented that this was due to the timing of the last SLT update.

ESFA EVALUATION 2016/17

240 The Board received a report together with a letter from the ESFA confirming the College's underlying health grade as 'satisfactory'.

PROCUREMENT UPDATE

Utilities

241 The Board received a report setting out the details of contracts for gas and electricity following a review of utilities contracts. In order to avoid 'out of contract' charges, the Chair has authorised the approval of the contracts and this action was endorsed by the Board.

City Hub

242 During the governors' 'away-day' session immediately prior to this Board meeting, the governors had reviewed progress with the hub project and, specifically, the issues and risks surrounding the financing and contracting for the project. They now received a written report on this matter containing details of the early works orders now required to enable work to commence on site and on the timing of signing of the main construction contract.

243 Resolved

- 1 that the early works orders to commence work on site be approved
- 2 that the Chair (or in her absence one of the Vice-Chairs) and the CEO be authorised to sign the main construction contract, subject to the contract having first been reviewed by the College's lawyers

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Appointment of External Auditor

244 The Clerk reported that the Audit Committee had met on 9 April and had recommended the reappointment of Mazars as external auditors. The internal audit service was currently being retendered and would be subject to a report to the Board at a later meeting.

245 **Resolved** that Mazars be reappointed as external auditors for 2017/18

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

246 24 May and 18 July. In view of the gap between the July and September meetings, the CEO was asked to consider the possibility of holding a meeting in the intervening period.

Chair

Date