North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

Thursday 14th December 2023 at 6pm - The Conference Centre - Nuneaton Campus

Present:	Prof Ray Linforth (Chair), Mrs Marion Plant, Dr Andrew Turner, Mr Craig Humphrey, Mr Luke Robinson, Mr Steve Maxey, Mr Anil Majithia, Mr Clive Read, Ms Helen Holley and Mr James Stanley
In attendance:	Mr Ben Crook (Vice Principal Quality), Mr Neil Brayshaw (Vice Principal Curriculum and Innovation), Mr David Poole (Chief Operating Officer and Deputy CEO), Mr Colin Butler (Executive Director People and Culture), Mr Simon Lomax (Associate Executive Director 14-16 and Schools), Mrs Kerry Elkins (minutes) and Mr Stuart McKay (Macintyre Hudson, item 2.3).

Whole College Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 and Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24

Prior to the meeting Ben Crook, Vice Principal Quality presented the Whole College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2022/2023 and the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023/24 to Members. He explained that the SAR and QIP had been received at the last Students Learning & Quality Committee meeting and all amendments highlighted at that meeting had been made. The Chair of the Students Learning & Quality Committee had been part of the validation panel. It was noted that College achievement rates were compared to national averages throughout.

Members raised the following matters.

i. Ofsted skills meeting - when asked what involvement Members have had, could involvement with SAR development and validation be used as an example?

   Ben Crook confirmed this activity was relevant evidence. The report, once validated, would be shared with Ofsted which will review it prior to an inspection. The SAR would be used as part of Ofsted's risk assessment process.

ii. Members asked for North Warwickshire to be added to the boroughs detailed on page 10 of the Self-Assessment Report.

1. Routine and Standing Items

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Simon Kirby, Tracey Simkins, Rebecca Suart, Riley Sherrard, and Rachel Marshall.

Ray Linforth welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was quorate. Luke Robinson was especially welcomed to his first meeting as a Member. Helen Holley was welcomed back to the Corporation following a short absence and two new interim Executive Team members were welcomed and introductions made.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

No further declarations, in addition to those previously disclosed, were received. It was confirmed that Marion Plant and Andrew Turner had conflicts of interests in respect of item 2.5, however as James Stanley did not have a pecuniary interest in this matter, he would be able to vote on it.

1.3 Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 12th October 2023

The minutes of the last meeting, held on Thursday 12th October, were unanimously approved with the exception of Helen Holley who abstained as she was not at the previous meeting.

(Proposer: Ray Linforth; seconder: Andrew Turner)

1.3.1 **Schedule of Actions**

i. Action 16 - CLEAR will be added to the KPIs at the next Corporation meeting as new provision has been developed for January start and a refreshed oversight/partnership group has been developed. Coventry University have confirmed their intention to be the HE partner for this facility. Financial and curriculum KPIs will be added to the dashboard in time for the next board meetings.

ii. Action 17 - A briefing will be arranged in the spring or summer term (replaced with the Ofsted briefing in the autumn). Staff briefings on deep dives are being presented on 8th January and will be made available to members on Team Engine.

iii. Action 19 - on agenda.

iv. Action 22 - the extraordinary Resource Committee meeting took place on 9.11.24.

v. Action 23 - the meeting will be arranged prior to the next Corporation meeting.

1.3.2 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

1.4 **Chair's Action**

Ray Linforth reported that he had taken no Chair's action since the last Corporation meeting on 12th October 2023.

2. Matters For Decision

2.1 **External Governance Review Report - Recommendations and Actions**

Clive Read presented the external governance review report and actions and provided some background to the reason for not accepting a number of recommendations which were overly prescriptive and added burden to the existing governance workload. Clive Read agreed to follow up with the Clerk to draw up further narrative. **ACTION 24 PSG CHAIR & CLERK**

Following discussion, Members received the external governance review report – recommendations and actions. It was agreed that the PSG Committee would review the recommendations and revert to the Corporation with full proposals based on the report.

Clive Read left the meeting at 6.31pm.

2.2 **Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23**

Anil Majithia presented the Audit Committee Report 2022/23 to Members, thanking his fellow Committee Members, David Poole and Rachel Marshall for their support over the past year. The Audit Committee's opinion was that College had adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, and for this reason it would continue to adopt the 'going concern' basis in the preparation of its financial statements. Members were advised that they should also consider the disclosures within the financial statements on 'going concern', to ensure that these were an appropriate reflection of the College's position.

Following discussion, Members received the Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23.

2.3 **Annual External Audit Presentation**

Stuart McKay, external auditor at Macintyre Hudson, was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made.

David Poole introduced the financial statements and letters of representation to the meeting and also provided a summary of the College as a 'going concern'.

Stuart McKay presented a summary of the external audit findings report for Members and invited questions. He reported that the statutory accounts were anticipated to be unqualified and with unmodified opinions stating that no material changes had been made. Highlights of the report included section 4 where regularity issues now need to be reported and there was

only one item highlighted. Five recommendations had been made relating to the key financial controls, all of which had been accepted and actioned. Outstanding student fees (debts) were tested and an unadjusted item has been included in the representation letter as recoverable. David Poole confirmed that the latest audit report had been shared with Members.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the statutory accounts, as recommended by the Audit Committee, unanimously confirmed the 'going concern' assumption and approved the letters of representation. (Proposer: Anil Majithia; seconder: Helen Holley).

Ray Linforth confirmed that his electronic signature could be used to sign the statutory accounts and letters of representation.

Stuart McKay was thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

Stuart McKay left the meeting at 6.48pm.

2.4 **Whole College Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 and Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24**

Ben Crook presented the Whole-College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2022/23 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023/24 to Members.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the Whole-College Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2022/23 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023/24 on the recommendation of the Students Learning & Quality Committee. (Proposer: Andrew Turner; seconder: Ray Linforth).

2.5 **Confidential - Proposal Relating to the Coventry University Partnership**

2.5 **ICT Strategy**

David Poole presented the ICT Strategy to Members who were reminded that a draft had previously been presented to the July 2023 Corporation meeting. David Poole confirmed that the requested additions and amendments had been made and highlighted that the revised document provided comprehensive oversight of the plans and way forward.

Members raised the following points:

i. The potential for synergy and savings associated with the Coventry University partnership were highlighted and a question asked as to whether therefore a three year strategy was required?

   David Poole responded that a robust strategy needed to be in place as infrastructure changes were needed immediately and over the next three years, regardless of the progress with the partnership.

ii. The implementation of the strategy could incur unnecessary cost and therefore a decision making framework should be in place to review the impact of the partnership.

   David Poole responded that such a framework was already in place and gave assurance that the partnership would be taken into account in any decision making. Infrastructure changes were required to deliver high quality teaching and learning in the 'here and now'.

iii. More detail within the actions would be helpful.

   David Poole explained that this was a high level strategy and that the detail would be contained within the operational plan, procedures and risk measures.

   Members requested that training, which was a high level strategic issue, should therefore be added to the strategy. David Poole agreed and confirmed that training would be added to the strategy. **ACTION 26 COO**

iv. Members commented on the centralisation of cyber security and the impacts of cyber-attacks on other organisations.

David Poole explained that a whole management briefing on cyber security had taken place and that the College had solid cyber security mitigations in place including third party penetration tests; however full assurance on this issue could never be given.

Members recommended that a new Microsoft phishing hook be added.

v. Would an annual refresh/review by Members of the strategy take place?

David Poole confirmed that the strategy was a live document and the updated document could be reviewed by Members at least annually. **ACTION 27 COO**

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the IT strategy, subject to the agreed amendments and an annual review by the Corporation. (Proposer: James Stanley; seconder: Andrew Turner).

2.7 **People Strategy 2023-26**

Colin Butler presented the People Strategy to Members, confirming that it had been scrutinised and recommended by the Resource Committee and explained that responsibility for the oversight of this Strategy might move to the People, Strategy & Governance Committee (or both) following the review of the committee delegations and responsibilities.

Members raised the following points:

i. Scrutiny/oversight and committee delegation required review and should be expediated.

Ray Linforth confirmed that this work was underway and that a proposal would be brought back to the Corporation for approval.

ii. There appeared to be a financial bias within the Strategy.

It was acknowledged that staff costs were one of the College's highest streams of expenditure and therefore the review of committee delegation's was crucial to future strategy development.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the People Strategy 2023-26 (Proposer: Ray Linforth; seconder: Steve Maxey).

3. Strategic Oversight

3.1 **Principal's Briefing Update**

Marion Plant presented the Principal's update outlining the significant activity taking place within College, in line with changes in the national climate and regional priorities. She went on to speak about the positives within the College and the improvements which were being observed. Whilst there was much good work taking place, such as a successful Christmas Fayre held on the previous day, staff were feeling tired towards the end of the term. Some breaking news was that the George Eliot Hospital had asked the College to be its preferred training provider with the potential for a large amount of joint working and delivery.

Further matters highlighted were:

i. Six members of staff had gained HE fellowships with Coventry University.

ii. Some issues with the boilers and heating had been experienced with a boiler failure resulting in a campus evacuation at Nuneaton. Thanks were offered to the Estates Team for working throughout evenings and weekends to install temporary boilers to be in place until the new air heat pumps were installed at a cost of circa £30k.

David Poole outlined the investigations that were taking place into the failure of the boilers.

iii. There had been a delay in the new town centre build of almost 12 months. The additional time would be used for enhanced curriculum planning and collaboration with Coventry University.

Following discussion, Members received the Principal's update.

3.2 **Strategic KPI Dashboard 2023/24**

Neil Brayshaw and Ben Crook introduced the paper and provided an overview of the teaching, learning and assessment dashboard which had been shared with the Students Learning & Quality Committee.

Neil Brayshaw spoke about the improvement in monitoring.

Members highlighted that the improved attendance levels were welcome.

Ben Crook explained that the current position remained the same as reported in November 2023, despite the shift to online learning at the Nuneaton campus when it had closed due to the boiler issue.

Ray Linforth recommended Members read the Ofsted Chief Inspector's annual report.

David Poole then provided an overview of the corporate services section of the dashboard which had been shared with the Resource Committee.

Members welcomed the improvement in cash days in hand.

David Poole explained that this had been supported by the ESFA's new payment profiles.

Following discussion, Members received the paper.

4. Financial Matters and Arrangements For Internal Control

4.1 **Confidential - Performance Report incl. Period 3 Management Accounts and Procurement Timetable 2023/24**

4.2 **Strategic Risk Report 2023/24**

David Poole presented the strategic risk report 2023/24 speaking to the red and amber rated risks in detail.

Following discussion, Members received the paper.

5. Governance

5.1 **Proposal to Appoint a New Member**

Ray Linforth and Marion Plant proposed the appointment of a new member, Mr Steve Dover.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the appointment. (Proposer: Ray Linforth; seconder: Marion Plant).

5.2 **Corporation Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 PSG Committee recommendation**

The Corporation Self-Assessment Report 2022/23, as recommended by the People, Strategy & Governance Committee, was presented to Members.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the report (Proposer: Andrew Turner; seconder: Helen Holley).

5.3 **Written Resolutions and Sealing of Documents**

Members noted the following outcomes from a recent written resolution:

i. The approval of the appointment of Riley Sherrard as the student member until 31st July 2024 on Thursday 2nd November 2023 at midday by a majority of Members approved with no abstentions and no dissentions.

Members noted the following document was sealed since the last report to the Corporation:

i. Warwickshire County Council & Department for Education Multiply Funding Agreement and Back-To-Back Agreement between Warwickshire County Council and NWSLC authenticated by Ray Linforth and Marion Plant.

Members then noted the following assurance reports.

5.4 **SLQ Committee Assurance Report**

5.5 **Audit Committee Assurance Report**

5.6 **Resource Committee Assurance Report**

5.7 **PSG Committee Assurance Report**

6. Consent Agenda

Members received the reports on the recommendations of the Committees.

6.1.1 **Annual Safeguarding Report**

6.1.2 **Annual Student Engagement & Involvement Report**

6.1.3 **Annual Health and Safety Report**

6.1.4 **Annual Human Resource Report**

7. Other Matters

7.1 **Release of Papers**

Members agreed to the release of papers with the exception of:

i. Agenda item 2.1 External Governance Review Report - Recommendations and Actions as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

ii. Agenda item 2.5 Proposal Relating to the Coventry University Partnership as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

iii. Agenda item 2.6 Proposal Relating to the ICT Strategy as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

iv. Agenda item 2.7 Proposal Relating to the People Strategy 2023-26as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

v. Agenda item 3.1 Principal's Update Report as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

vi. Agenda item 3.2 Strategic KPI Dashboard 2023/24 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

vii. Agenda item 4.1 Performance Report incl. Period 3 Management Accounts and Procurement Timetable 2023/24 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

viii. Agenda item 4.2 Strategic Risk Report 2023/24 as it contained personal information.

ix. Agenda item 5.4-57 Committee Assurance Reports as they contained information which was commercially sensitive.

vi. Agenda item 6.1.1 Annual Safeguarding Report 2022/23 including Summer Term 2023 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

vii. Agenda item 6.1.2 Annual Student Engagement & Involvement Report as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

viii. Agenda item 6.1.3 Annual Health and Safety Report s it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

ix. Agenda item 6.1.4 Annual Human Resource Report as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

7.2 **Date of the Next Meeting**

Members agreed the date of the next meeting as Thursday 2nd May 2024 at 6pm at the Nuneaton Campus and noted that the Corporation Strategy Day would be taking place on Monday 29th January 2024 at the MTI.

Members were also reminded that the College Achievement Awards Ceremony was taking place on Friday 26th January 2024 at the Leonardo Hinckley Island Hotel (formerly Jury's Inn).

Matters on the confidential section of the agenda were then dealt with.

The meeting closed at 7.42pm, with the Chair offering his thanks to Members for their work and support.