North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

Thursday 27th April 2023 at 6pm - The Conference Centre - Nuneaton Campus

Present:	Mr Craig Humphrey (attendance via Microsoft Teams), Mrs Helen Holley, Mr Simon Kirby, Prof Ray Linforth, Mr Anil Majithia, Miss Kaitlyn Peberdy, Mrs Marion Plant, Mr Clive Read, Mr James Stanley, Dr Rebecca Suart and Dr Andrew Turner.
In attendance:	Mr Colin Butler (Executive Director People and Culture), Mr Ben Crook (Vice Principal Quality), Mr Tom Hamilton-Dick (Deputy Principal), Mr David Poole (Chief Operating Officer and Deputy CEO), Mr Paul Lawrence (Executive Director Employer Engagement).

Ray Linforth welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was quorate, and particularly James Stanley who had just been appointed as the Staff Member. Ray Linforth asked Members to introduce themselves.

Members then received a briefing from Ben Crook on the operation of the College's Box application.

Ben Crook provided a demonstration of the Box, highlighting that he would provide an in-depth overview of the Box, including the features that staff and students could access and how these features were used.

i. The Student Parliament recently spent time on line using the system.

ii. Individual student information was assimilated to provide the data in the key performance indicator dashboard. Progress information formed a large part of the information that staff needed to provide. It was therefore essential that student assessment data was accurate and updated regularly.

iii. Information in the Box would be used when Ofsted undertook a deep dive into a particular curriculum area or course. Improvements which had been made to the Box to ensure that this information was readily accessible and updated had been validated during the recent external review into Higher Needs and the Health and Social Care thematic review.

iv. It was important to note that the safeguarding information stored on the Box was not shared widely.

v. An overview of student targets was provided. The starting point for this information was at the meetings that staff had with students in Activate Week as they started to get to know their students.

Members asked the following questions:

i. It was apparent that the Box was an important interface between the College and students. Would notes of meetings held with students be put onto the Box?

Ben Crook confirmed that students' responses to staff questions could be uploaded, as well as students' targets.

ii. As the system had been described it appeared that significant data input was required. What measures were in place to ensure records were kept up to date?

Ben Crook explained that reports were automated on the Box. The input of information onto the Box was improving throughout the year and the Quality Team sampled the data intensively and provided feedback to curriculum leaders. Due to lecturers' workload levels training was taking place shortly with staff who would take notes during meetings with students and timescales were being introduced to ensure notes were typed up after meetings were held.

iii.   Did lecturers have performance objectives in this area?

Ben Crook explained that two hours per week were built into staff schedules to enable these meetings to be held and students could also add targets which staff could amend. Where this work was not undertaken staff would be performance managed.

Marion Plant stated that the Executive could also use the Box to moderate at a local level. Although there was a lot going on in College, keeping the Box updated was profoundly important. There was now a small minority of cases where records had not been kept up to date and the members of staff involved were being performance managed.

Ben Crook confirmed that the way the system worked meant staff were able to 'join up the dots' with what was happening with students and respond accordingly. Much of the data came from the EBS system and students' individual learner records. Reports were also sent out to parents which included conduct reminders, early intervention conversations and praise notes. A new behaviour element had just been added to the system.

iv.   Would staff pick up on issues such as dyslexia?

Ben Crook confirmed that where staff picked up on any such issues they would refer students to the SEND team.

v.   Why did there need to be an interface between Moodle and the Box?

Ben Crook explained that Moodle, which sat 'beneath' the Box was used a lot by students. They could submit work via Moodle or Turnitin or they could transfer it straight through from the Box. When students had been spoken to about this they had indicated that they preferred to use Moodle or Turnitin.

Kaitlyn Peberdy then explained how students used Moodle or Turnitin. Members indicated that they now understood the interface between the three applications.

Ben Crook highlighted that Turnitin also undertook checks on students' work for the use of AI. It was also possible for staff to use a voice comment facility which saved them time.

vi.   Were attendance targets discretionary or fixed by statute?

Ben Crook explained that FE colleges were not required to provide validated attendance data as schools were. Attendance targets were set by individual colleges on an annual basis.

vii.   Was it right that students were also able to use the Box to alert staff to issues?

Ben Crook confirmed that this was correct. Students could raise safeguarding concerns about themselves or others. Such referrals were held confidentially and were directed to the Safeguarding Team. Other Box functions were outlined and it was highlighted that the Box, which was a very useful tool driving evidence of progress, had been developed in-house.

Tom Hamilton Dick highlighted that as well as enabling students to track their performance the Box was a one-stop-shop for staff and provided access to other areas such as the HR and wellbeing portal.

Ben Crook gave an overview of the staff wellbeing hub which had been created 6 months ago in response to staff concerns.

Colin Butler emphasised that the Box was not static and was being updated with new applications all the time. Following the last staff survey, 82% of staff indicated that the College was doing well with its health and wellbeing initiatives.

viii.   How did staff use this wealth of data to drive performance?

Tom Hamilton Dick explained that it was woven into everything that the College did and provided a number of examples.

Members thanked Ben Crook for his excellent presentation and indicated that it might be a good idea to revisit this area in the future.

1. Routine And Standing Items

1.1   Apologies

Apologies were received from Steve Maxey and Tracey Simkins.

1.2   Declaration of Interests

No further declarations, in addition to those previously disclosed, were received.

1.3   Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 15th December 2022

The minutes of the last meeting, held on Thursday 15th December 2022, were unanimously approved. (Proposer: Clive Read; seconder: Andrew Turner)

1.3.1 Schedule of Actions

Actions 18 and 19 were marked as complete following the presentation to Members of an update provided in an Energy Summary 2022-23 paper.

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 Thursday 15th December 2022.

2.   Strategic Development

2.1   Principal's Briefing Update

Marion Plant introduced her update presentation and highlighted the following points:

    i.   Recent College awards and competition successes were outlined.

    ii.   Members' attention was drawn to two senior staff changes; namely the appointment of a new Director of IT and the resignation of the Director of Finance and his replacement.

    David Poole provided further information about the change in the Director of Finance position.

    iii.   An overview of further support for staff in the form of a grocery discount scheme and an electric car salary sacrifice scheme was provided.

    iv.   On overview of the Hyve Launch Event was presented.

    v.   A number of regional and national updates, including the Unions demand for a 15% pay increase.

    Colin Butler explained that the College's relationship with the Unions locally was very positive. The Unions understood and supported the College's current position and were appreciative of the benefits that were being provided to staff whilst recognising that the College was doing everything that it could for staff. The ESFA had recognised this positive relationship which was not the same in all colleges.

    vi.   Further matters not included in the presentation:

    -    To date three out of four of the scheduled parliaments had taken place and all were very positive. Helen Holley and Anil Majithia had attended on separate occasions.

    -    Student Parliament views at the Hinckley, Nuneaton and Wigston campuses had been positive although there had been some leadership issues at

Harrowbrook which had resulted in lower satisfaction levels. This had been a disappointing outcome but the issue was being resolved.

    ix.   An overview of current activity in the Midland Academies Trust was presented.

Following discussion, Members received the Principal's update.

2.2   Confidential - Strategic KPI Dashboard 2022/23

2.3   Update on Strategic Estates Developments

David Poole introduced the paper and confirmed that progress was being made on all estates developments. The College had received confirmation that it would receive £5m from the transformation fund, which was on top of a re-classification grant, a sustainability grant and a number of other grants, as well as business as usual funding. A task force had been set up to look at the best use of that funding.

Marion Plant reminded Members that it had been a decade since the College had received such capital funding and that it had felt like a rebalancing of the situation.

Members received the paper, indicating that it had been a very positive read.

2.4   Annual Accountability Statement 2023/24 (Draft)

Tom Hamilton Dick introduced the paper and provided the following overview:

    i.   The Department for Education's expectation relating to the development and publishing of an annual accountability statement as set out in the paper, was outlined.

    ii.   A significant number of staff had been involved in developing the Accountability Statement and had been able to use examples of best practice from the pilots which had taken place. There was however still work to do to finalise the Statement.

    iii.   The purpose of paper was to seek Members' views. A small working group would then meet to refine the Statement for presentation to Ray Linforth, Andrew Turner and Simon Kirby for their final consideration.

    iv.   The date for the publication of Accountability Statements had been extended until the end of July 2023. It was anticipated that the final draft would be finalised by 31st May 2023 for presentation to the small group of Members and then to the Corporation at its last meeting in July 2023.

    v.   In addition, there was a proposal to amend the Scheme of Delegation and Schedule of Matters Reserved to take account of Members' extended responsibilities in relation to the skills duty and to include the matters presented in the paper.

Members raised the following challenges:

    i.   Did the Accountability Statement reflect the fact the Vice Chairs had attended the recent Local Skills Planning meeting.

    Tom Hamilton Dick confirmed that this and other matters would be incorporated into the Statement which needed further refinement.

    Paul Lawrence gave an overview of matters which had taken place at the Local Skills Improvement Planning Group.

    ii.   There didn't appear to be anything in the Statement about staff and student welfare and safeguarding in the ethos section and what was the reason for not including all the college campuses, such as the Digital Skills Academy and MTI?

    Tom Hamilton Dick explained that the numbers included in the Statement came from year old data which didn't reflect the MTI. Clear was not a campus. Other colleges had not included their automotive learning, the reason for which was outlined, and a strategic decision had been taken not to include MTI and CLEAR in the demographics although they were included in other sections of the Statement.

	i.	Aim 1 didn't appear to have a measurable outcome.

Tom Hamilton Dick confirmed that this had been discussed by the Executive. The aims had not yet been finalised and would be 'tweaked' after the meeting and before submission. He was waiting to see what other colleges were doing before he made the amendment. It was his impression that the College's Statement was better than the national examples and was a fair representation of the College.

Paul Lawrence explained that this area could be updated annually.

ii. Leicestershire schools appeared to have been missed out of the Statement.

Tom Hamilton Dick explained that the Statement included detail about where the College was proactively targeting pupils but not all schools were included. The vast majority of the schools where students came to College from were identified, with a broad statement as to how the College worked with schools.

Ben Crook highlighted that the Statement was not a self-assessment report or a curriculum strategy. It was very targeted and has been streamlined. More information could be included but it wasn't developed for that purpose.

Ben Crook then explained that as a result of the new duties on Members to review provision in relation to local needs, as set out in the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, amendments to the Scheme of Delegation, as set out in the paper, were required. Members were also asked to approve the draft as it was.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the following matters:

i. the draft Accountability Statement (proposer: Andrew Turner; seconder: Helen Holley); and

ii. relevant amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to include, as set out in the paper, the range of additional responsibilities relating to the Members' duty to comply with the new section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act (FHEA) 1992 (proposer: Rebecca Suart; seconder: Helen Holley).

3. Teaching, Learning & Assessment (TLA)

3.1 Confidential - Published Achievement Rates 2021/22

3.2 Students Learning & Quality Committee Assurance Report and Minutes from 9th February 2023

Members received the Students Learning & Quality Committee assurance report and minutes.

Andrew Turner (Chair of the Students Learning & Quality Committee) highlighted that the two areas which had been given an 'amber' rating reflected the uncertainty around attendance and achievement.

4. Financial Matters and Arrangements for Internal Control

4.1 Confidential - Performance Report: including Period 7 Management Accounts and Overview on Forecast 2

4.2 Update on Recruitment and Financial Implications 2022/23

Tom Hamilton-Dick presented the paper and gave an overview of the current position and the actions currently being taken and planned for the next three years to increase the number of fulltime learners.

David Poole confirmed that the detail around the financial implications was currently being worked through. He reminded Members that if 97% of the Adult Education Budget was achieved the College would be paid the total amount. Recruitment of apprenticeships

continued to be challenging and a further reduction in income for 2022/23 was forecast. The curriculum plan would be reviewed to manage this drop off in income.

Following discussion, Members received the paper.

4.3 **External Audit Service Appointment Recommendation**

David Poole introduced the paper which explained that the contract for the College's current external audit service with Macintyre Hudson, was nearing its end. Consequently, a full tender process, independently managed by Tenet the College's procurement advisers, had taken place. The outcome of the tender was the recommendation to award the new contract to Macintyre Hudson, which had provided the best written submission and good answers to the tender panel's questions. The Audit Committee supported the recommendation to appoint Macintyre Hudson.

Following discussion; Members unanimously approved the award of the College's external audit service contract to Macintyre Hudson for a 5 year term based on a 3+1+1 arrangement. (Proposer: Anil Majithia; seconder: Helen Holley).

4.4 **Approach to HR Policy and Procedure Review and Approval**

Colin Butler presented the report and highlighted the following key points:

  i. The review dates of a number of College HR policies and procedures were not currently aligned, leading to the potential for inconsistencies to occur between them.

  ii. The proposal, which had been recommended by the Resource Committee, was for all HR policies and procedures to undergo a general revision in relation to logos, dates and gender neutral language and that the HR policies currently due for review were extended by up to 2 years to enable appropriate reviews and consultation to take place.

  iii. The review timeframe would be agreed with the Clerk.

Following discussion, Members approved the approach proposed regarding the review and approval of HR policies, on the recommendation of the Resource Committee. (Proposer: Ray Linforth; seconder: Anil Majithia).

4.5 **Confidential - The National and Real Living Wage**

4.6 **Confidential - Alignment of NWSLC and Legacy SLC Policies and Salary Scale Points**

4.7 **Strategic Risk Report 2022/23**

David Poole introduced the College strategic risk report and presented the following overview:

  i. The College risk report contained 31 risks of which there were currently 2 high risks, 17 medium risks and 12 low risks.

  ii. The 2 high risks related to the impact of the energy costs and staff retention, neither of which would be a surprise to Members.

  iii. The Audit Committee last received and challenged the risk report at its meeting on 20th March 2023.

Following discussion, Members received the strategic risk report.

4.8 **Resource Committee Assurance Report and Draft Minutes from 6th February 2023**

Members received the Resource Committee assurance report and draft minutes from 6th February 2023.

4.9 **Extraordinary Resource Committee Assurance Report and Draft Minutes from 17th April 2023**

Members received the Extraordinary Resource Committee assurance report and draft minutes from 17th April 2023.

4.10 **Audit Committee Assurance Report and Draft Minutes from 20th March 2023**

Members received the Audit Committee assurance report and draft minutes from 20th March 2023

5. Governance

5.1 **Written Resolutions and Sealing of Documents**

Members noted the following outcomes from recent written resolutions:

i. The approval of the appointment of James Stanley as staff member until 31st July 2027 on Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 4pm by a majority of Members with no abstention and no dissentions.

ii. The approval of the award of the Salix decarbonisation works contract to Alternative Heat on Thursday 6th April 2023 at midday by a majority of Members approved with no abstention and no dissentions.

Members noted the following documents were sealed since the last report to the Corporation:

i. Deed of variation contract between Leicestershire County Council and NWSLC authenticated by Anil Majithia and Marion Plant on 27th March 2023.

ii. Admission Agreement To Participate in the LGPS between Leicestershire County Council, Aramark Ltd. and NWSLC authenticated by Ray Linforth and Marion Plant on 30th March 2023.

iii. Funding Agreement between WMCA & NWSLC Relating to Grant Funding To Operate in 2022/23 - 1st August 2022 - July 2023 authenticated by Marion Plant and Andrew Turner on 19th April 2023.

6. Consent Agenda

6.1 **Policies**

No requests from Members had been received to discuss any item on the consent agenda and therefore Members unanimously approved the following policies. (Proposer: Anil Majithia; seconder: Andrew Turner).

6.1.1 Travel and Subsistence Policy

6.1.2 Pay Policy

6.2 **Matters for Note**

Members noted the following matters:

6.2.1 Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2022 which had been considered by both the Resource and Students Learning & Quality Committees at their last meetings.

7. Other Matters

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

i. Agenda item 2.2 Strategic KPI Dashboard 2022/23 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

ii. Agenda item 2.3 Update on Strategic Estates Developments as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

iii. Agenda item 2.4 Annual Accountability Statement 2023/24 (Draft) as it contained information planned for publication in advance of its publication.

iv. Agenda item 3.2 Students Learning & Quality Committee assurance report and draft minutes as they contained information which was commercially sensitive.

v. Agenda item 4.1 Performance Report: including P7 Management Accounts and Overview on Forecast 2 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

vi. Agenda item 4.2 Update on Recruitment and Financial Implications 2022/23 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

vii. Agenda item 4.3 External Audit Service Appointment Recommendation as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

vii. Agenda item 4.5 The National and Real Living Wage as it contained information as it contained information where ongoing negotiations may be prejudiced.

viii. Agenda item 4.6 Alignment of Policies and Salary Scale Points as it contained information where ongoing negotiations may be prejudiced.

viii. Agenda item 4.7 Strategic Risk Report as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.

ix. Agenda item 4.8 Resource Committee assurance report and draft minutes from 6th February 2023 as they contained information which was commercially sensitive.

x. Agenda item 4.9 Extraordinary Resource Committee assurance report and draft minutes from 17th April 2023 as they contained information which was commercially sensitive.

xi. Agenda item 4.10 Audit Committee assurance report and draft minutes from 20th March 2023 as they contained information which was commercially sensitive.

xii. Agenda item 8.4 Resource Committee Confidential Daft Minutes from 6th February 2023.

7.2 **Date of the Next Meeting**

Members agreed the date of the next meeting as Thursday 6th July 2023 at 6pm at the Nuneaton Campus. The Members' briefing would start aa usual at 5.30pm.

Kaitlyn Peberdy and James Stanley left the meeting at 7.55pm

Matters on the confidential agendas were then dealt with.

The meeting finished at 8.35pm