

North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATION

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

Present: Mr Craig Humphrey, Mrs Helen Holley, Mr Simon Kirby, Prof Ray Linforth, Mr Anil Majithia, Miss Kaitlyn Peberdy, Mrs Marion Plant, Mr Clive Read, Mrs Tracey Simkins, 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), Mrs Heather Cross (External Governance Reviewer), Mr Tom Hamilton-Dick (Deputy Principal), Mr David Poole (Chief Operating Officer and Deputy CEO), Mr Paul Lawrence (Executive Director Employer Engagement) and Mrs Rachel Marshall Clerk).

Ray Linforth welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was quorate. Rebecca Suart and Tracey Simkins joined the meeting remotely.

David Poole introduced the briefing on estates and capital investment, giving an overview of the current capital projects taking place and the funding which the College had received.

Natalie Dawes then provided a detailed overview of the building fabric works, refurbishments and energy efficiency works which were taking place over the summer and highlighted the works that were planned for 2023/24.

Members raised questions about key risks including issues with works overrunning deadlines.

Ray Linforth thanked Natalie Dawes for her presentation and the hard work she was currently undertaking to manage the current capital projects programme.

Natalie Dawes left the meeting at 6pm

Ray Linforth then welcomed Heather Cross, who was conducting an external governance review, to the meeting.

1. Routine And Standing Items

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Steve Maxey.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

James Stanley declared an interest in discussion at agenda item 4.3 relating to a proposed staff pay award. Andrew Turner and Marion Plant declared an interest in agenda item 8.2 Coventry University Partnership Verbal Update. No further declarations, in addition to those previously disclosed, were received.

1.3 Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 27th April 2023

The minutes of the last meeting, held on Thursday 27th April 2023, were unanimously approved. (Proposer: Kaitlyn Peberdy; seconder: Helen Holley).

1.3.1 Schedule of Actions

Members noted the schedule of actions.

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 27th April 2023.

Members agreed that section 4 of the agenda should be taken next as Tracey Simkins Chair of the Resource Committee had to leave the meeting early.

4. Financial Matters and Arrangements for Internal Control

4.1 Performance Report including Management Accounts Period 9 and Capital Update

This matter was dealt with in the confidential section.

4.2 Forecast 3 including Year-End Financial Outturn

David Poole introduced the paper which presented forecast three and highlighted that the deficit position of £175k was not significantly different from the position set out in the previous 2 forecasts. He then gave an overview of the outturn, updated cashflow and reserves position and the impact on the College's financial health rating which would not affect the College's predicted financial health grade of 'requires improvement'. It was anticipated that the College's financial health grade would move towards 'good' over the next few years.

Following discussion, Members received the paper.

4.3 Draft Annual Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Business Plan 2023/25

James Stanley took no part in the discussion or approval of this agenda item.

David Poole introduced the paper and confirmed that the Resource Committee, following scrutiny at its last meeting, had recommended the approval of the annual budget and medium term business plan, which included a proposal for a staff pay award. He then provided an overview of the draft annual budget and medium term business plan, highlighting the risks and mitigations and outlined the proposed staff pay award.

Marion Plant then set out the proposal for the staff pay award, explaining the rationale for it and the considerations which had been given to it.

Members discussed the current challenges to retaining and attracting staff and the need to ensure the amount of the award was affordable.

Tracey Simkins then gave an overview of the discussions and challenge which had taken place at the last Resource Committee meeting and the need to support staff, which had resulted in the Committee recommending the 3% pay award proposal.

Following discussion, Members received the paper and (with the exception of James Stanley) unanimously approved the Draft Annual Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Business Plan 2023/25, including the 3% pay award to staff. (Proposer: Anil Majithia; seconder: Clive Read).

4.4 Updated Statement of Responsibilities of Corporation Members

David Poole introduced the paper which presented the "Dear accounting officer" letter of 29th November 2022 which Members were required to have read, and the six ESFA's 'bite size guides' which they were required to have listened to and provided an overview of those documents. He then highlighted that relevant approvals that had been sought from the DfE in respect of the partial disposal and the treatment of the bank loans, in line with the guidance contained in the bite size guides.

Following discussion, Members received the paper and all Members confirmed that they had read the "Dear accounting officer" letter and the 'bite- size guides'.

4.5 Draft Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 Audit Committee Recommendation

David Poole introduced the paper which presented the College's draft Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 which had been developed following the Audit Committee's annual audit strategy

planning meeting. The plan took into account the steers provided by the Audit Committee and as usual took a risk-based approach. The Audit Committee had scrutinised the draft plan at its meeting on 12th June 2023 and was now recommending it to Members for approval.

Following discussion, Members received the paper and approved the Internal Audit Plan 2023/24 on the recommendation of the Audit Committee. (Proposer: Anil Majithia; seconder: Clive Read).

Tracey Simkins left the meeting at 6.28pm

4.6 International Travel Request

Marion Plant introduced the paper which set out the reason for the international travel request in line with Financial Regulations.

Members considered the request, indicating that the College invested a lot into World Skills and its students were incredibly successful in the skills competitions.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the Principal's international travel request in line with the details set out in the paper. (Proposer: Ray Linforth; seconder: Kaitlyn Peberdy).

4.7 Audit Committee Assurance Report from 12th June 2023

Members received the Audit Committee assurance report and draft minutes from 12th June 2023

4.8 Resource Committee Assurance Reports from 18th May 2023 and 26th June 2023

Members received the Resource Committee assurance reports from 18th May and 26th June 2023.

2. Strategic Development

2.1 Principal's Briefing Update

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

- i. an overview of the significant number of end of year events taking place;
- ii. a review of the College's competition successes and the foundation community projects which were taking place;
- i. senior staff changes, the continuation of work to prepare for an Ofsted inspection, T-level capital funding bid success and progression to the next level in the Queen's Anniversary prize, competition success in a number of areas, a 'Good' Ofsted judgment following an inspection of the Wigston nursery.
- ii. an outline of a number of matters relating to Midland Academies Trust.

Members asked for the Wigston nursery staff to receive the congratulations of the Corporation for their successful Ofsted inspection outcome, and then received the Principal's update.

2.2 Strategic KPI Dashboard 2022/23

Tom Hamilton Dick introduced the paper, highlighting the following points:

- i. Attendance was a significant challenge for the College, which was also mirrored nationally. The measures being taken were explained and information on the implementation in the new academic year of attendance monitors and a new attendance app to support the tracking and reporting of attendance was provided.
- ii. The work experience KPI which had been reported at 68% had now risen to 91% and was continuing to climb.

- iii. Examples of ongoing challenges in the delivery of apprenticeships were provided and actions being taken to recruit staff were also outlined. The improvement plan was still in place and was having a positive impact.

Members asked whether the national advertisement for staff was having an impact.

Tom Hamilton Dick confirmed that it was and that he was confident in the innovative approaches being tried to retain and recruit staff.

Members asked whether the College was working with Coventry University on this issue.

Colin Butler confirmed that the College was working with Coventry University and provided some examples of the support that the College was receiving. The key challenge in this area was that the College could not match the salary levels which prospective staff were receiving when working in industry.

Following discussion, Members received the paper.

2.3 **Draft Strategic Plan 2023/26 including Purpose and Values**

Marion Plant introduced the draft Strategic Plan 2023/26, giving an overview of the paper and asking Members to approve the new 3-year strategic plan and the purpose and values which Members had challenged and provided steers on at the annual Strategy Day. Marion Plant also confirmed that the annual operating plan for 2023/24 would be presented to the Corporation at its first meeting in the new academic year. The development of the new mission, vision and values led by Colin Butler had taken a whole College-wide approach and had been well received by staff.

Members raised the following matters:

- i. The strategic plan appeared to be very much 'business as usual' and didn't include the Coventry University Partnership project.

Marion Plant explained that the Coventry University Partnership project would be included once Members had formally approved that it should go ahead.

- ii. The plan included a number of ambitions relating to project delivery which had not yet been successful. How would they be achieved this year.

Marion Plant accepted that there had been challenges in some areas; however significant work, on a scale which she outlined, had taken place and KPIs would therefore be met.

- iii. There was some inconsistency in language within the mission statement.

Marion Plant confirmed that this would be looked at and rectified.

- iv. There didn't appear to be any 'green' objectives.

Marion Plant agreed that the 'green' objectives were not very visible in the overarching objectives but there were two environmental sustainability objectives under the curriculum objectives. This approach had been taken deliberately to embed them into the objectives to ensure an integrated approach.

- v. An integrated approach was helpful; however these objectives needed to stand out.

- vi. There needed to be more innovation on this area to push the boundaries, for example having targets on recycling.

Marion Plant agreed that these objectives would be looked at again.

A short discussion was then held on how a number of the objectives would be measured.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the 3-year strategic plan and the purpose and values, subject to the proposed amendments. (Proposer: Andrew Turner; Anil Majithia). It was agreed that the updated 3-year strategic plan would be emailed to Members. **ACTION 18 PRINCIPAL.**

2.4 **Draft ICT Strategy**

David Poole introduced the paper highlighting that the draft ICT strategy was currently a work in progress and therefore a living document and gave an overview of key areas. He then asked Members to approve the draft ICT Strategy on the recommendation of the Resource Committee.

Members raised a number of concerns about the draft ICT Strategy as it was currently being presented and following discussion agreed that it should be reviewed and re-presented in the autumn term for further consideration. **ACTION 19 COO**

2.5 **Business Development Strategy Presentation**

Paul Lawrence gave a presentation on the College's business development strategy highlighting the main areas of the strategy including the five focused impact arms, the commercial innovation unit pipelines, details about Hyve (the delivery of hydrogen power vehicle courses), the local skills improvement fund in the East and West Midlands, the use of business marketing differentiations and work being undertaken with JLR and Bentley.

Tom Hamilton Dick then provided some further details about the JLR cohorts and how the contract with Bentley would work.

Members indicated that the work being undertaken was very exciting and questioned whether the College has sufficient internal resource in place to ensure it was successful.

Paul Lawrence confirmed that the resource needs had been presented to the Executive together with the strategy and he provided an overview of the detail. A dedicated member of staff was in place to look after this area.

Tom Hamilton Dick confirmed that there was a properly resourced team in place working with Paul Lawrence and outlined how skills development funding was being used to ensure sufficient capacity.

Members highlighted that the College was good at building partnerships and collaborating and that what was being achieved was excellent and showed real potential. Paul Lawrence was asked whether the College was also looking at collaboration with other parts of the community such as the NHS or prisons.

Paul Lawrence indicated that the College was looking at how it could support prisoner rehabilitation with another organisation and the prison service.

Following discussion, Members thanks Paul Lawrence for his presentation.

3. **Teaching, Learning & Assessment (TLA)**

3.1 **Accountability Statement**

Tom Hamilton Dick introduced the paper presenting the final version of the College's Accountability Statement which the College was required to produce and update annually and throughout the year. Members had seen the previous iteration and had proposed amendments which had been made. This version was better than the exemplar which had been provided and had been presented to the Students Learning & Quality Committee which was recommending its approval.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the Accountability Statement subject to minor changes required to clarify the mission statement in line with discussion earlier in the agenda. (Proposer: Helen Holley; seconder: Simon Kirby).

3.2 **Members' Student Parliament and Learning Walk Experience Verbal Feedback**

Members provided feedback relating to their experiences attending Student Parliaments and on learning walks, highlighting the following matters:

- i. A session focused on foundation learning, with discussions about student learning programmes with staff, visiting learning areas and speaking with staff and students,

and attending a Student Parliament where students had raised issues relating to the refectory, the toilets, the use of the Box and Moodle and assessments. Both experiences had been very positive and enjoyable.

- ii. Observing a Student Parliament expertly chaired by Kaitlyn Peberdy.
- iii. A learning walk at the Hinckley campus had been a very useful exercise and provided some great insights. It had been impressive seeing the commitment and enthusiasm of staff which they then passed on to their students. The music lesson observed had been stunning and demonstrated the alternative routes into education through FE.
- iv. A learning walk at the Hinckley campus watching competition preparation work with students positively and enthusiastically engaging in, followed by a very good Student Parliament where issues were raised and students were also very positive about improvements being made.
- v. Two Student Parliaments which had been observed at the Harrowbrook and Nuneaton campuses, were both professionally run, chaired and organised, and were conducted very openly. The Harrowbrook campus had been eye-opening, very different from the other campuses. The students had been very articulate and included disadvantaged students. Student Parliaments clearly provided a platform for students to raise issues which were taken away by staff and managed.

Marion Plant confirmed that staff reported back to the subsequent Student Parliament and issues had been actioned and changes made.

- vi. A learning walk at the Nuneaton Campus showed quality engagement between staff and students and the passion and commitment of students which was a testament to them and staff.

3.3 Student, Learning and Quality Committee Assurance Report from 15th June 2023

The assurance report was noted.

Andrew Turner highlighted that the 'amber' RAG rating provide by the Committee had shown a cautious approach; however that rating would now be moving to a 'green' RAG status due to the work staff were undertaking.

5. Governance

5.1 Outcomes of Nominations for Chair and Vice-chairs

The Clerk introduced the paper and confirmed that the following nominations had been received and duly seconded:

- i. Chair - Ray Linforth.
- ii. Vice-chair - Anil Majithia.
- iii. Vice-chair - Andrew Turner.

Consequently, Ray Linforth was appointed as Corporation Chair, and Anil Majithia and Andrew Turner were appointed as the Vice-chairs for the year 2023/24, as from 1st August 2022.

Ray Linforth thanks Members for the confidence they had shown in him and Anil Majithia and Andrew Turner.

5.2 Re-appointment, Co-option and Committee Membership 2023/24

The Clerk introduced the paper and outlined the recommendations of the People, Strategy & Governance Committee which Members considered and following discussion approved unanimously:

- i. The re-appointment of:

- Rebecca Suart for 4 years to 31st July 2027. (Proposer: Kaitlyn Peberdy; seconder: Anil Majithia).
 - Craig Humphrey for 4 years to 31st July 2027. (Proposer: Kaitlyn Peberdy; seconder: Helen Holley).
- ii. Co-option for a period of 12 months to 31st July 2024 of:
- Leanne Newitt to the Students, Learning & Quality Committee. (Proposer: Andrew Turner; seconder: Ray Linforth).
 - Nick Simkins to the Audit Committee. (Proposer: Anil Majithia; seconder: James Stanley).
- iii. The Committee membership as set out in the paper. (Proposer: Ray Linforth; seconder: Anil Majithia).

5.3 Annual Review of Committee Terms of Reference

The Clerk introduced the paper explaining that as was usual practice, each Committee had undertaken an annual review of its terms of reference and made a number proposals for minor changes. Those proposals had been considered by the People, Strategy & Governance Committee and a number of amendments, highlighted in the paper were recommended. The Resource Committee which met subsequently to the meeting of the People, Strategy & Governance Committee meeting had recommended two amendments to its terms of reference, as set out in its paper.

Following discussion, Members unanimously approved the proposed amendments to the Committee terms of reference as set out in the paper. (Proposer: Clive Read; seconder: Ray Linforth).

5.4 Written Resolutions and Sealing of Documents

Members noted the following outcomes from recent written resolutions:

- i. The approval of the procurement of 12 month fixed contracts for gas and electricity, and award to the best value supplier on the day, on Tuesday 16th May 2023 at 2pm by a majority of Members with no abstentions or dissentions.
- ii. The approval to proceed with a final one year extension of the Churchill Cleaning Contract on Wednesday 24th May 2023 at midday by a majority of Members with no abstentions or dissentions.

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

- i. A lease agreement between Coventry University and NWSLC on 16th June 2023 authenticated by Ray Linforth and Marion Plant.
- ii. Design and Build Contract between Alternative Heat and NWSLC on 20th June 2023 authenticated by Ray Linforth and Marion Plant.
- iii. Multiply Contract - Deed of Variation between West Midlands Combined Authority and NWSLC authenticated by Anil Majithia and Marion Plant

5.5 Corporation Meeting Schedule 2023/24

Members noted the Corporation meeting schedule for 2023/24. It was agreed that relevant meeting calendar invitations should be sent to Members, with Teams meeting invitations to be sent two weeks before an online meeting was held. **ACTION 20 CLERK**

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 and the adoption of

the AoC Further Education Governance Code as recommended by the People, Strategy & Governance Committee. (Proposer: Anil Majithia; seconder: Helen Holley).

6.1.1 Financial Regulations Audit Committee Recommendation

6.1.2 Student Bursary, Discretionary & Advanced Loans, Bursary Funds Policy

6.1.3 Sub-Contracting & Charges Policy

6.1.4 Tuition Price Policy

6.1.5 Corporation Guiding Principles

6.1.6 Senior Postholder Remuneration Policy

6.1.7 NWSLC Student Union Constitution

6.1.8 Apprenticeships Overnight Stay Policy

6.1.9 AoC Further Education Governance Code

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 Draft Strategic Plan 2023-26 including Purpose and Values as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.
- iii. Agenda item 2.4 Draft ICT Strategy as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.
- iv. Agenda item 2.5 Business Development Strategy presentation as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.
- v. Agenda item 3.3 Students Learning & Quality Committee Assurance Report as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.
- vi. Agenda item 4.1 Performance Report: including Period 9 Management Accounts and Capital Update as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.
- vii. Agenda item 4.2 Forecast 3 including Year-End Financial Outturn as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.
- vi. Agenda item 4.3 Draft Annual Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Business Plan 2023/25 as it contained information which was planned for publication in advance of that publication.
- vii. Agenda item 4.6 International Travel Request as it contained personal information relating to a named individual or individuals.
- vii. Agenda item 4.7 Audit Committee Assurance Report from 12th June 2023 as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.
- viii. Agenda item 4.8 Resource Committee Assurance Reports from 18th May 2023 and 26th June 2023 as they contained information which was commercially sensitive.
- ix. Agenda item 6.1.1 Financial Regulations as it contained information which was commercially sensitive.
- viii. Agenda item 9.2 People, Strategy & Governance Committee Assurance Report as it contained information which was commercially sensitive and personal information relating to a named individual or individuals.

7.2 **Date of the Next Meeting**

Members agreed the date of the next meeting as Thursday 12th October 2023 starting at 5.30pm with A SEND briefing at the Wigston campus.

It was agreed that Members would be provided with a video of the annual safeguarding briefing which would be delivered to staff at the start of the autumn term.

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

The meeting finished at 8.45pm