

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Meeting/Committee | Corporation Board Meeting |
| Date of meeting | 14/10/20 (via Google Meet) |

1 Declarations of Interest and Eligibility

The Chair requested Governors declare any interests at the appropriate time during the meeting.

2 Welcome, introduction and apologies

Attendees:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Catherine Burn | Chair of the Corporation |
| Jason Austin | Principal & CEO |
| Catherine Witherington | |
| Angela Phillips | |
| Mirella Barnes | |
| Nigel Ruff | |
| Stephen Bulley | |
| Monika Rodzos | |
| Janet Pryke | |
| Veronica Bruce-McCoy | |
| Joanna White | |
| Katie Curtis | |
| Lindsey Littlewood | |

In attendance:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Tracey Mace-Akroyd | Deputy Principal/CEO |
| Tony De'Ath | Executive Director of Corporate Services |
| Kate Noble | Executive Director of Finance |
| Jane Hartog | Executive Director of HR & Marketing |
| Virginia Parkes | Director of Governance |
| Clive Howarth | ESFA representative |
| Catherine Mollart | Head of Corporate Services |

Apologies for absence

Gareth Owen

3 Minutes of the board meetings held on 8th and 23rd July 2020.

Resolved: The minutes of the meetings held 8th and 23rd July 2020 were agreed as true and accurate record.

4a Actions outstanding and matters arising from previous minutes

Nothing outstanding or arising that isn't covered under the agenda.

4b Action Progress Report

No further actions as part of the progress report that are not covered under the agenda.

5 CEO update

The CEO gave an update on the FE sector in general and stated that several elements of the White Paper were considered by governors at the recent strategy day in September. The paper is due to be published in the late autumn. The recent national skills fund announcement regarding level 3 provision will see an investment of £500m from April 2021, however college leaders are still waiting to see what this will actually include. This could present some concerns regarding approaches to learning if there are still restrictions in place impacting on the delivery of courses. There is new legislation to extend the scope of HE loans to cover more level 4 and 5 courses in line with recent recommendations made in the Post 18 review. The CEO stated this is very positive for the college.

The CEO gave an update regarding the capital fund in which £1.2m has been made available to the RNN Group from the £200m distributed. The proposals on apprenticeships includes a promise of more training funding for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). The 16-19 tuition fund has also had some changes made to it, which means it can now be used for transition courses as well as English and maths. This will help those students already possessing a level 4 qualification by enabling them to apply the skills they have learnt. Finally, the CEO gave an overview of the kick start programme for 16-24 year olds. In order to be able to make a claim a minimum of 30 vacancies are required and currently there are 4 with 2 companies. The marketing department has created several channels in order to promote the opportunities available along with partnering with the DWP to advertise roles. It is also being promoted directly with 120 employers with an initial focus being on engineering and hairdressing.

The Chair asked a question relating to the voluntary and community sector and whether or not the kick start programme would also include business administration as this would also be a key area for SME's. The CEO stated he would take the comments back to the Director for Employer Partnerships for consideration as, although engineering and hairdressing are key focus areas, it is possible to focus on other areas as well.

The CEO update the board in relation to the digital poverty agenda and how the college is meeting the needs of those deemed in need. Currently there are 600 laptops on order at a cost of £350k over a two-year rental agreement. The CEO met with a local MP who expressed concern as he has recently visited schools where there are approximately needs for c.70 laptops against a school population c.1800, which would suggest that proportionally there is a much greater demand in FE. The MP informed the CEO he would be taking his concerns to the DfE and relevant ministers to see what support was available. The CEO is providing further detail to support this conversation.

The Chair enquired as to whether or not capital fund can be offset against costs incurred for the purchasing of the laptops. The ED: Finance stated that unfortunately this isn't possible, however funds can be used for digital infrastructure if needed. It was stated however that for those students in receipt of the bursary fund it was possible to use some of that money towards the costs.

Finally, the CEO stated that in the past hour he has received an email from the DfE following a conversation with the Deputy FE Commissioner who has requested an overview of RNN's current situation in relation to IT. The CEO deems this to be positive and will update the board accordingly once he has further information.

The CEO provided more insight into how learners are being supported in the meantime such as through hub sessions, amended timetable, confidence building, supporting staff and students and training & development.

The CEO gave an update on the situation arising from COVID-19 which to date records show that 24 students have tested positive, with 255 learners self-isolating. Approximately 90 of these will return after the 13th October. The college is working closely with the DfE, reporting cases as requested. The cases are not linked to the college per se.

The chair asked how the college was supporting those students who are currently self-isolating and the CEO stated that those with access to IT are able to access blended learning and are being supported by staff.

The CEO gave an overview of the number of staff who have tested positive which currently stands at 3 confirmed and 1 suspected. There are a small number of staff currently self-isolating as a result of contact with a known positive contact and who are now awaiting test results themselves.

The CEO update the board on currently enrolment numbers but asked members to be mindful that the numbers were subject to any further withdrawals. The figures presented already included any known withdrawals.

The chair queried what the standard withdrawal rate is which the ED: Finance stated is approximately 7-9% year on year. The ED: Finance stated there have already been 100 withdrawals but they are already accounted for.

Enrolment across HE is showing extremely positive with over recruitment currently been shown. Adult education is difficult to assess at this point as recruitment is done throughout the year. Currently the figures are 2610 recruited against an annual target of 5935. CW stated that it was possibly an advantage to have some slack given the possible fallout from the economy and those looking to reskill. NR queried how funding is accrued which the ED: Finance confirmed was through the adult education budget (AEB) which comes through monthly, however any unspent funds are clawed back. The ED: Finance also stated that a large proportion of learners are distance learners and at the moment she doesn't feel the numbers are concerning.

AP stated when viewing actuals against targets it would be beneficial to understand the trajectory throughout the year so that it possible to assess what the expectation is at that point in the year i.e. is it inline with previous trends and what is expected. It was agreed that this would be very useful.

Action: ED: Finance to map actual enrolment figures against targets throughout the year and compare with historical data to assess the trajectory is inline with previous experience.

A brief update was also given regarding apprenticeship enrolment figures; figures show that 297 were recruited in September against a target of 303. October enrolment currently stands at 31 against a target of 112. The CEO stated that the business development team are confident that they will meet their recruitment targets for December. Further analysis needs to be completed in order to understand which frameworks and standards have been recruited to so far. Similarly, for HE, analysis needs to be completed to understand full time vs. part time learners and the impact on income.

NR stated that this adds further weight to the work to be completed by the ED: Finance regarding the numbers, in year trends and the financial implications.

The CEO drew attention to the recent announcement for plans relating to summer 2021 examinations in which exams will now be sat 2-3 weeks later than normal with the exception of single maths and English papers. A single maths and English GCSE exam will be sat before the May half-term, to give any year 11 pupils affected by Covid-19 the best chance of completing a paper in each of these core subjects. Results days have been set as Tuesday 24th August for A/AS

levels and Friday 27th August for GCSEs so students will start the following academic year as normal.

Following the recent publication of the FE Intervention Assessment Report on 9th October the CEO noted that there was a positive update included on page 2 and that the next visit (stocktake) is scheduled for 27th November. The CEO informed the board of a governor recruitment pilot from the DfE to support colleges on recruiting governors to their boards depending on their current needs. The pilot is being run with a recruitment consultancy called Peridot. There is no charge for this service and the CEO and Director of Governance are currently working with Peridot to identify a suitable governor with experience and expertise in quality and curriculum.

The CEO updated governors on the recent development work being completed with the ESFA, highlighting conversations which took place during a meeting on 23rd September. The focus continues to be on finance, performance, capital & estates, staffing and stakeholder engagement. There is another meeting scheduled for week commencing 19th October.

The CEO gave an overview of the various engagement which has taken place with stakeholders recently including a meeting with Sheffield City Region to discuss AEB provision and noted their attendance at the strategy day in September. Other work includes the Institute of Technology bid, work regarding the Bridge Court Centre, Towns Deal Partnership for Rotherham, D2N2 LEP, NFPC and Universities discussion, discussions with RMBC and parent groups to review SEN provision for adults in Rotherham. The CEO has also spoken to John Healey MP (Wentworth & Dearne) & Shadow Secretary of State for Defence regarding blended learning and IT. The CEO recently showed Brendan Clarke-Smith MP – (Bassetlaw) around the North Notts college site who was suitably impressed with the provision and processes put in place in response to COVID-19. A conversation has also been had with Sarah Champion MP (Rotherham) and Chair of the International Development Select Committee about the positives from the FEC report. There had been a desire to invite MPs into the college during College's Week however the current restrictions have made this difficult. AP wonder whether there was an opportunity to do something virtually for MPs from existing content created. The CEO stated this was a possibility and that he would look into this.

Action: CEO to consider the practicalities and feasibility of offering a virtual tour of the colleges in the absence of a physical tour during the current restrictions.

Sheffield City Region has delivered a COVID-19 briefing regarding the impact locally. The key messages arising from the briefing were that the economy grew by 2.1% in August and is representing somewhat of a slower recovery than forecast by the Bank of England. Work by the IFS finds that the UK is one of the most geographically unequal countries in the world and the levelling up agenda faces significant issues in South Yorkshire. Additionally, despite being way below the average, the volume of online job adverts is increasing. However, certain groups of the labour market are experiencing greater challenges with economic turbulence affecting the youngest and oldest workers most. The CEO's report included slides taken from the full report which he stated he would circulate. The Chair also informed the group that the data is available from SCR and it is possible to subscribe to it for further updates.

Action: CEO to circulate SCR briefing to governors.

Finally, the CEO concluded with something to celebrate regarding the recent award of British Empire Medal (BEM) to the Chair, for her services to the local community during the COVID-19 pandemic and asked governors to join him in congratulating her for this significant award.

6 Strategy Review Day (22/09/20) Outcomes and Agreed Actions

The CEO deliver a paper and presentation following up on the discussion and progress made at the recent strategy day (September 2020). The presentation includes suggestions made by the

executive team as a result of the conversations which took place during the strategy day. This includes links to the operational and strategic plan and how this can be linked to the overall college targets and then, through the PMR process, individual targets. Based on the outcomes of today, a proposed timeline has also been included. Ultimately the CEO would like to be able to create a 'strategy on a page' which can be easily communicated to staff around college.

The CEO stated that from the discussion previously held the direction appeared to be that governors and the exec team wanted to see RNN as a leader in the community; addressing the needs of the community; obtaining funding from the AEB through close partnership working with the LEP; delivering high quality education in which the core offer is exceptional; and specialisms are key and tailored to what the region needs. Thoughts have been shared with the wider SLT. The CEO invited the views and feedback from governors based on the proposed vision, missions and values.

NR queried the point about inclusion including staff as well as students and wondered whether this was appropriate given the difficult working conditions that staff have been, and continue to be, working under including the lack of a pay award. The CEO stated that pay awards have been considered and that work is being undertaken by the unions relating to this with further work still to be done. The CEO raised that both staff governors also sit on the forum for staff voice. The Chair stated that her interpretation of inclusion is very much around statutory requirements and policy and that within the values section this means something different to that of pay awards and therefore work perhaps needs to be done to ensure this value is explained clearly. LL stated that the main value for staff is that they put students at the centre of everything that they do. Whilst it is felt that it is good to include staff the main feedback from staff voice is about the students being at the heart of everything we do.

Governors discussed this further and it was agreed that wording relating to students being central would remove ambiguity and that a strategic objective relating to staff pay awards in the futures should be considered. CW stated that by adding the word 'respect' to the value which discusses empowering staff may further assist with this. The ED: HR and Marketing stated that it was possible to add/move some of the highlighted areas regarding staff within the value titled one team. JP stated that she felt it was right to have staff included within the same statement as although the college is currently unable to pay higher salaries, staff are placed with students. JP went on to say that the matter relating to salaries is connected to the financial position of the college rather than the thoughts and wishes of the corporation. JP stated concern at removing the word staff, stating that it dilutes the value. AP gave thought around values she was aware of from other organisations about valuing the importance of staff as equal to that of the customer as without one you can't have the other. The Chair acknowledged the varying views and stated that in the current context it was important to keep staff within the value. The CEO confirmed that all comments would be considered and included in the next phase and that a financial KPI regarding staff pay would be positively received.

The CEO asked for feedback on the vision examples stating that it needs to be something short, snappy and memorable. Five examples were proposed and governors were reminded that this should be an aspirational statement which allow buy-in to the vision.

A discussion was had regarding the vision and perhaps linking into eco-systems and the college being central to that. Clarification was sought regarding the audience for the statement considering staff, students and stakeholders and in particular potential funders. It was agreed that in order to move forward governor comments would be taken away and possibly discussed again with staff voice. The proposed timescale states that this needs to be available in draft by the end of the year.

The CEO drew attention to the four strategic priorities highlighted within the presentation and stated that all key targets relate to these four themes. The CEO asked for comments and feedback as there is a desire to refine and redesign the targets in line with the current strategic priorities. The Chair acknowledged, as a member of the previous governing body who approved

the existing strategic priorities, that they needed updating and that they do not reflect the current direction of travel.

The CEO proposed four new strategic priorities which are: the quality of education; place in the community; growth; and financial integrity. Governors felt these were a true reflection of the college's plans and that that included the key themes arising from the strategy day.

Agreed: The revised strategic priority themes were agreed by governors.

The Chair stated that it may be necessary to get further governor support and involvement and that the strategy day in September was the first of many.

Action: Director of Governor to schedule a virtual strategy event at the end of November.

7 Committee Chairs Report – Audit 16th September 2020

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented her report giving an overview of the matters discussed at the meeting in September.

AGREED:

- a) The board agreed to note the content of the report and the full minutes of the meeting**

8 Risk Management Update

The ED: Finance gave an overview of the internal audit for risk management and the actions completed to date. So far training has been completed with governors and consideration has been given to risk appetite. Moving forward training will be delivered to the management teams on risk management. Positive feedback was received from the internal auditors regarding the changes which have been made to the risk register with a couple of recommendations to be factored in. By December, training will have been rolled out across the college along with registers. The Chair stated that is essential that this work links to the strategic plan, as the two elements need to work in harmony with one another. Further thought and clarification needs to be sought on how this will work in practice and the ED: Finance stated she will feedback on this once the process has been defined and agreed.

Action: ED: Finance to consider how the two areas of work can be linked to ensure effective scrutiny can be achieved.

The ED: Finance highlighted that it was raised at the audit committee the need to ensure risks raised within each of the subcommittee were effectively and efficiently fed back to the audit committee, so that they could be captured within the wider risk register. It was suggested that a log of risks would be recorded within each subcommittee. The Chair stated that communication between subcommittees had been raised in the governor one-to-one meetings and that there had been a suggestion of a Chairs' meeting to cover items such as this. It was agreed that this should be set up and scheduled alongside other meetings thus enabling conversation such as risk as well as offering support to newer Chairs in their role.

Action: Director of Governance to set up Chairs' meeting group.

9 Committee Chairs Report – Quality & Standards 30th September 2020

The Chair of the Quality & Standards Committee presented a report covering the highlights from the recent meeting in particular those in relation to risk around the curriculum areas stated.

TMA gave a brief update on Ofsted and their commencement of interim visits which are not to be confused with monitoring visits. Monitoring visits are thought to resume in the new year however there is concern as to how this will work with the current restrictions in place.

TMA updated governors on the current situation regarding the Bridge Court Centre and the request for an agreement in principal to enter into discussion regarding collaborative working with several universities. Several meetings have taken place in the past week and the University of Derby have expressed an interest in delivering progression courses at level 5 and 6 but consideration is been given to where this would be delivered from. Thought is currently being given to RNN delivering courses in construction and health at level 4, access to HE and digital courses at level 3. There is nothing confirmed at this stage but things are moving in the right direction.

Agreed:

- a) **To note the content of the chair's report and the full minutes of the meeting,**
- b) **To note the agreement in principal given by Q&S committee regarding collaborative working with Bassetlaw District Council to deliver training and education at Bridge Court**

10 Committee Chairs Report – Finance 29th September 2020

The Chair of the Finance committee referred to his report and highlighted the key points raised during the meeting. In particular he raised the need to understand the split of finances arising from the recent enrolments and the financial impact this will have and the need for a full reforecast of the income and expenditure and cashflow forecast arising from this.

The Chair explained the rationale behind the request for the extraordinary board meeting on 12th November, which will follow the additional finance committee scheduled to take place on 6th November. These additional meetings have been scheduled to meet the deadline set by the ESFA to receive the revised financial forecasts.

Agreed:

- **To note the content of the Chair's report and the detailed minutes of the meeting**
- **To note an extraordinary committee meeting to discuss the income & expenditure and cashflow forecast has been scheduled for 06.11.20**
- **To approve an extraordinary meeting request for a board meeting on 12th November, to receive the recommendations of the committee in relation to the reforecasts in advance of the ESFA's deadline of 20.11.20**
- **To note the committee approval to accept the valuation of £84k for The Hub**
- **To note the committee approval of the proposal received from Lidl in relation to renovating small section of land in return for additional land, legal fees and 20-30 apprenticeship places**
- **To approve the valuation of £735k for the buildings/area identified by RMBC to purchase**
- **To note the amendments made to subcontracts with Rotherham United and Serenity**
- **To approve that the remaining land at Dinnington can be formally placed on the market for sale in order to ensure no time is lost in fulfilling requirements needed should a change of use be requested in the event of not being sold.**

11 Safeguarding, Prevent Report and EDI (standing item)

TMA asked governors to consider the contents of the circulated report highlighting that safeguarding remains a priority. With regards to equality and inclusion the focus has been to review the attendance at the safeguarding and equality committee group which meets ordinarily

twice a year. A meeting is scheduled towards the end of the autumn term in order to analyse the data available following enrolment. TMA asked whether or not other governor(s) should also join the committee. The Chair stated that she is already a member and stated that VMc had expressed an interest during the one-to-one meeting. The Chair proposed that VMc should join this committee and this was seconded by NR and CW. The Chair also noted the significance of the work being completed towards safeguarding and well-being especially during these testing times.

Resolved: VMc to become a member of the Equality and Inclusion Committee.

12 Governance Items

Ratification of written resolutions

The Director of Governance requested formal ratification for the recent written resolutions as set out the governance report circulated which were:

9th September – Sale of Carlton Road. This was approved by the required number of governors and the board are now asked to formally ratify that decision.

21st September – Appointment of Ms. J. White to the Board. This was approved by the required number of governors and the board are now asked to formally ratify that decision.

28th September – Payment of dividend arising from the sale of Aston. This was approved by the required number of governors and the board are now asked to formally ratify that decision.

Resolved: The board gave formal ratification to those items approved via written resolution.

Governor Recruitment

The Director of Governance gave an update relating to governor recruitment. Several interviews have been conducted since the start of the academic year with the successful appointment of Jo White to the governing body. Work is currently being completed with Peridot and Inspiring FE Governance to identify other potential governors. Internal advertising is also currently underway to recruit to the two student vacancies on the board. Voting is due to take place in mid-October and it is hoped that the positions will be filled in time for the December board meeting.

The Chair added that Una Jennings has recently resigned due to a change in her current employment position. The Chair thanked Una for all her work to date and expressed her best wishes on behalf of the board in her new position.

13 Any other items of urgent business

None stated.

14 Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 12th November at 5.30pm (extraordinary meeting)
Wednesday 16th December at 5pm

The meeting closed at 6.55pm

Signed _____ Chair

Date _____