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| Meeting/Committee | Corporation Board |
| Date of meeting | 17 th October 2022 at 5pm |

1 Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence

Attendees:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Jenny Worsdale | Meeting Chair |
| Heather Barnett | |
| Jason Austin | Principal/CEO |
| Monika Rodzos | |
| Shirley Collier | |
| Stephen Bulley | |
| Margaret Cobb | |
| Sharron Blackburn | |
| Donna Clifford | |
| Carol Stanfield | |
| Katie Curtis | |
| Veronica De Bruce McCoy | |
| Wade Makey | |

In attendance:

| | |
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| Maxine Bagshaw | Director of Governance |
| Phil Curtis | Executive Director of Finance |
| Jayne Hartog | Executive Director of Marketing OD and HR |
| Tracey Mace-Akroyd | Deputy Principal/CEO |
| Cath Mollart | Head of Corporate Services |

Apologies for absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Asgari and Janet Pryke.

2 Declarations of interest

The meeting Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. No specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 30th July 2022

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 30th July 2022.

There were no matters arising.

4 Action progress report

Board were happy to note the content of the updates provided.

In relation to line 2, the Deputy CEO provided an update and confirmed that within the EDI Policy and action plan the aim is to change the wording to 'we will'. She confirmed that objectives for the year have been set. Board were advised that the Equality Action Plan is a scheduled agenda item for the EDI committee group who next meet in November 2022.

5 CEO's report

CEO provided an update on a number of aspects.

1) KPI Strategic Indicators – 2022 in year update

CEO drew boards attention to the detailed written report and invited questions and comments in relation to the progress reported. Key matters highlighted and discussed were:

- In relation to financial integrity, the group has RAG rated where it believes it currently is.
- In relation to 5B(i) Environmental Management - one member of the board asked why this is RAG rated as amber. She indicated that it is not clear why it is amber as nothing is flagged as exceptional and questioned what it would take to move this to green. Governors asked what the gaps are that need to be addressed that make it amber. CEO advised that this was something discussed by the executive recently and it is believed that there is still a way to go in terms of setting net zero targets and that this contributes to an amber rather than green rating. Also, in relation to skills to support green jobs, the group is working toward this for all curriculum areas in 2022/23 but staff have not yet completed an audit to give assurance. Sustainability committee has been established and is in the early stages of development and therefore group cannot, with confidence, say it has achieved targets yet. Executive are proposing a cautious approach to the RAG rating at this stage. In terms of the curriculum, he advised that some areas have done more than others and that a focus needs to be on getting everyone to the same point. Challenge from one member of the board was that it is hard to see from the information provided whether this is an amber but moving towards green or an amber moving towards red and she asked whether staff could give some consideration as to how this might be reported visually.
- Financial Integrity – targets are SMART and are RAG rated appropriately
- Innovation and growth – college continues on a developmental journey
- People and Place monitoring – one governor questioned why recruitment and retention is RAG rated as green and they questioned the confidence level in relation to this. One governor noted that leavers within the first six months seems to be a declining percentage but numerically it is higher. Board were advised that there had been an error on the document circulated and that this should in fact be RAG rated as amber not green. Governors noted that, whilst the percentage has decreased it is only marginal and therefore an area still to carefully monitor. CEO confirmed that the college is making significant strides forward in terms of recruitment and that this continues to be a focus.

- Quality of Education – challenge from one governor was that there is too much granularity and too much data provided and that this then doesn't allow a sense of perspective to be gained. This should be contrasted with another governor who found the format of the KPI presentation to be really clear.

Challenge from the board was to clearly articulate whether the groups performance, in terms of educational outcomes, is behind prior year and the national. Deputy Principal indicated that, in relation to classroom based learning, the group is not behind either the prior year position or national and that the only area of decline is in relation to apprenticeships. Overall outcomes are in the 80's which is plus 3.77% on the prior year. In relation to 16-18 outcomes, these are in the 70's and will be below the national rate however the current national rate represents the pre-covid position. Data is +1.3% on the prior year. Adult outcomes are over 91% which is +2% on prior year and in fact is above the stretch target set. Challenge from one governor was for report writers just to provide the broad headline data so that governors can more easily understand. It was confirmed that for classroom based learning, 16-18 and 19+ overall are up on the prior year. Deputy CEO indicated that the sector does not currently know what the national rates will be when next updated.

Challenge from one governor was that it appears to be the case that 25% of 16-18 year olds are not achieving against targets set. It was explained that these are stretch targets and were ambitious.

One governor asked for an update in relation to English and Maths and noted that data in the previous report did not include everything in 2022/23. It was explained that that report was prepared only with summer results and not the November resits. Assurance was given that when the R14 return is submitted then the group will know the whole picture.

When considering the data provided in relation to higher outcomes, governors asked whether there is a lag and, when will the items listed in section 3 show an impact. Staff advised that the start of the 2021/22 year, because of covid, did have an impact and that student choice to take GCSEs has had an impact on high grades. There are still students who are concluding practical assessments. Staff acknowledged that they may have underestimated the exam preparation needed to support learners as there is evidence of a lot of panic during the exam process itself. Staff advised that, whilst there will be a lag in terms of showing impact, the group is in a much stronger position albeit acknowledging that exams have been problematic and that this needs to be addressed.

Governors asked whether Ofsted will utilise this data at inspection. Deputy CEO indicated that this is not yet known and will not be known until the inspection planning call. She expressed the view that what inspectors find in the deep dives and the learner progress seen is likely to be more important.

One governor asked when the 2021/22 SAR will be available. Deputy CEO advised that there is a scrutiny meeting planned for 17th November and then Quality and Standards committee on 1st December. She confirmed that the SAR is currently in draft form and it will say that, the group is improving in relation to classroom based learning and that it will identify English and Maths and apprenticeship provision as still requiring improvement but that improvements have been made. Challenge from the board was that governors need a better understanding as early as possible and they asked whether position statements could be shared. Deputy CEO advised that the QIP is updated on a monthly basis

and is very much a live document within the organisation. Challenge from one governor was that, as the board knows that the level 2 and level 3 position has declined, it is important to be able to stand behind whatever the data says and have conversations with inspectors that have integrity. Deputy CEO indicated that it is important to await the final data which is when a full analysis can be undertaken.

In relation to exam preparation, governors asked whether staff have been trained to support on this. Deputy CEO indicated that not enough has been done and indicated that systems have now been changed to avoid the possibility of repeated learner failure.

CEO advised that the yearend KPIs would be reviewed at the next meeting and proposals put forward for 2022/23 (CEO, December 2022).

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

2) Update Presentation

CEO explained an intention to update on a number of key areas, including:

- Enrolments
- Efficiencies
- PIMS update
- CEFS
- Stakeholder engagement
- Ofsted

A, Enrolment data

- What is provided shows both learner numbers and the monetary values associated with these
- EFA position is 2707 against an allocation of 2884. This is better than previously reported to the subcommittees, however there are potentially some additional withdrawals to come off the system. Planned number is 2984.
- In relation to AEB, the group will continue to enrol throughout the year
- The adult learner loan position is down against plan
- HE numbers are down against plan, however this doesn't seem to be uncommon within the FE sector
- Full cost numbers are above target, however the target set was relatively small and there are opportunities to do more.
- In relation to apprenticeship provision, the group is not too far away from the target set and if it could increase capacity then there is the ability to deliver more and grow.

Board discussed the financial implications of the enrolment data and there were a number of observations and questions. It was agreed that discussions would be recorded on a confidential basis.

In relation to the potential transfer of students from Life Skills, board asked whether the group has capacity to deliver in construction. CEO indicated that staff would need to be brought over to support. Board were advised that for the first time the group has a full complement of staff in engineering and construction which is a real positive. Challenge from one governor was that the ESFA should be under pressure to place these 16-18 year olds, which should present an opportunity, however due diligence needs to be carefully carried out.

Challenge from one governor was that there appears to be some significant gaps in terms of the actuals versus the plan and they asked what needs to be done to address. CEO confirmed that there will need to be consideration of a number of aspects, part of which will be cost improvement, and to be able to accurately assess this there needs to be consideration of what is a reoccurring cost versus what are one offs. All contracts are currently being reviewed via an external resource which should help to identify savings. CEO advised that there are a number of actions being taken.

B, PIMS update – key matters highlighted were:

- FEC support continues
- Further support has been arranged around apprenticeships from Jo Pretty/FEC Advisor
- Further work has been taken forward with Andrew Tiley and Phil Curtis on the management accounts format. Feedback from the finance committee is also needed.
- Meetings have been arranged with Peridot to support governor recruitment, this is funded through the DfE/FEC
- CEFS – Jo Pretty will be leading on curriculum efficiencies and accountability support for the group. An initial meeting was arranged to look at the approach and timescales. Deputy CEO and Executive Director Finance will lead on this for the group.
- Group can identify an NFLE partner for curriculum efficiencies and it is hoped that this will be provided through the ESFA
- Progress against the PIMS action plan is reviewed at each meeting

Board were then provided with an introduction to CEFS (Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Stability). Key matters highlighted were:

- This is a good opportunity for the college
- For the CEFS pilot, the Department for Education will offer colleges support from specialists within the FE Commissioner team and peer to peer support, including from our NLFE's and NLG's. Support will be tailored to individual needs and planned in agreement with the college.
- To achieve this, the curriculum efficiency and financial sustainability pilots aim to:
 - Utilise existing/trusted FEC and NLFE expertise to review, challenge, advise colleges
 - Join up FEC/NLFE and college expertise to achieve improved efficiencies
 - Share best practice
 - Create a coordinated, jointly agreed suggested action plan
 - Engaging periodic FEC/NLFE follow up sessions to capture successes and lessons learned
 - Provide practical support and guidance to the sector to encourage continuous improvement
- Suggested areas of coverage include the list below, with the top two being priorities for the group:
 - Curriculum strategy
 - Staff utilisation
 - Non curriculum costs
 - Contribution analysis
 - USP's for apprenticeships
 - Internal progression and conversion rates
 - Pre census retention

Board then received an update on stakeholder engagement and key matters highlighted were:

- Letter sent to South Yorkshire Colleges Partnership Principals and Chairs inviting all to meet to review collaboration initiatives and opportunities
- Forwarding comments from RNN Group governors, ELT and SLT to LSIP Chair to inform LSIP progress.
- Implementing actions from current LSIP action plan that RNN can influence
- Meeting with the Federation of Small Businesses in D2N2 who are the LSIP lead
- Cost of living – monthly meetings with Rotherham Together Partnership
- Collaborative Skills Injector Fund application with SYCP and SHU
- Collaborative agreements – SYCP and SHU for HTQ's – organisations are still going through the process in relation to this
- Curriculum vision planning day is 23rd November 2022

CEO provided a final update in relation to Ofsted and confirmed that the group has not received notification yet. Expectation is 5 or 6 days notice from the skills inspectors with notification being on a Monday or a Tuesday for the following week.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

6 Employer Engagement Strategy

The Deputy CEO provided an update and explained that this is now evolving in to a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and action plan. She described it as an early draft for feedback and identified the need to add in staff as stakeholders to the document. She confirmed that today is an opportunity for questions and feedback. It uses the AOC good governance template with some bespoke additions i.e. a number of different areas pulled together. Challenge from one governor was that the document feels as if it has come from different sources and therefore more work may be needed in some areas to ensure cohesion. Governors questioned whether the visual matrix links to what we know Ofsted will look at i.e. employer engagement groups. It was agreed that staff would look at the matrix diagram again and it was confirmed that any more detailed comments from governors would be provided by email (**Governors, October/November 2022**).

Challenge from the board was to be clear in terms of the role of governors under the section headed 'core principles'. One governor noted that there were a lot of actions and they asked that clarity be provided in terms of where they will be monitored and reported, either by committees or the full board. It was agreed that a section would be added providing clarity in relation to this (**Deputy CEO, December 2022**).

AGREED to note the content of the update provided.

7 Update on Internal Data Sampling

The Executive Director Finance drew boards attention to his written report and confirmed that staff have been undertaking sampling in a number of areas as previously advised. In relation to OFS, he confirmed that their online checking tool has been used and 11 errors were found across 5 learners. He provided assurance that all errors have been corrected and that OFS have confirmed that they are happy that there are no more errors on the current data set. Board were given assurance that all errors identified by the OFS have now been addressed and, in terms of the more

current data, the group is more confident regarding the processes and procedures in place.

Challenge from one governor was that, sampling only tells the organisation the extent of the issue and does not give assurance that all data is clean and accurate.

Executive Director Finance indicated that, for OFS all data has been checked. In relation to apprenticeship provision sampling is taking place, however this is on the basis of a rolling programme over the year so that all data will eventually be checked.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

8 Audit and Risk

The committee Chair presented his summary note and also the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 15th September 2022. He confirmed that there were three key items that he wished to discuss today, these are:

- AEB
- OFS audit
- Policies and procedures

1) AEB – key matters highlighted were:

- R12 data shows a £1.8 million shortfall
- Provisional R14 data shows that the shortfall has reduced to £1.68 million
- £120k has been recovered through achievements
- Going forward there will be a greater focus on:
 - Better reporting and tracking
 - First data return at RO3
 - Non planned activity is a priority, with strategies being developed to achieve the activity

Challenge from the board was to really work hard to pinpoint where the group is underachieving and will not hit the budget. Staff advised that generally it is D2N2 where there is underperformance with SYMCA being more stable.

- 2) OFS audit outcomes and data management issues – it was acknowledged that this was discussed as part of the earlier agenda item in response to concerns.
- 3) The need to maintain and adhere to up to date policies and procedures – staff recognised that improvements could be made in this area and confirmed that staff are taking steps to ensure that a central register is up to date.

An observation from the board was that risks in relation to 16-18 learners were a concern given the financial implications for next year and all agreed that urgent action needed to be taken.

AGREED: to

- a) Note the content of the audit and risk committee meeting minutes
- b) Note the content of the strategic risk register for 2022/23
- c) Note the content of the external audit plan for 22/23
- d) Note the content of the OFS audit and action plan agreed
- e) Note the content of the AEB risk register

9 Quality and Standards

The Committee Chair drew the boards attention to her summary note and the detailed minutes of the meeting which took place on 10th October 2022. She indicated that discussions had taken place on a number of key areas, including:

- Student numbers
- Conversion rates
- Internal progression/return to learning
- There was a good discussion around marketing
- Inspire programme is a real success story which has supported the mental health and wellbeing for those learners at risk of underperforming and who also have behavioural issues. Improvements were reported for all learners involved in the programme.

Board were advised that a separate marketing discussion session is to be arranged for all governors and that this will either be the 1st or 7th November 2022 between 5 and 6 pm online.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the meeting minutes
- b) Note the content of the yearend QIP 2021/22
- c) Note the content of the data dashboard report
- d) Note the content of the safeguarding, prevent and EDI report

10 Safeguarding for All Policy – updated September 2022

The Director of Governance introduced this item and reminded that it had been circulated by email for feedback and comment. She confirmed that all changes have been made in line with suggestions and that the purpose today is to formally approve.

AGREED: to approve the Safeguarding for All Policy updated in September 2022 as presented.

11 Finance and Resources

In the absence of the committee Chair, the Executive Director Finance drew the boards attention to the summary note and also the detailed minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2022. Key matters for discussion include:

- Student numbers versus budget – which was discussed earlier in the meeting
- AEB shortfall
- Kiveton Sale – which is scheduled for confidential discussion later on the agenda

Board when considering the AEB paper, noted the underperformance on Level 3 in SYMCA and they asked whether this is to do with meeting labour market needs. They asked whether local competitors and/or collaborators are in a similar position or is the group losing out. Board were advised that in SYMCA it is a common concern and therefore a collaborative working party has been established. Expectation is to see the outcomes over the next couple of weeks. Group is also strategically working with SYMCA regarding longer term planning and not just year to year. Staff are looking at progression routes in the round, including both in to and out of Level 3.

One governor asked when the 2022/23 budget will be reviewed. Executive Director Finance indicated that it will be in the next report to Finance and Resources committee in November and then to the board in December (ED Finance, November & December 2022).

A challenge from one governor was that income is just one aspect that needs to be considered and that the board has to agree how to 'cut its cloth'. It was confirmed that information will be ready for the workshop planned on 21st November at 4-6pm. There is an open invitation to all independent governors to participate, as discussion goes beyond the original remit of pay and reward. It was confirmed that the intention is to look at the 2022/23 budget as a whole.

Board asked for an update on the development of the contracts register. Executive Director Finance confirmed that an external company has been commissioned to create and also to identify efficiencies and savings.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the committee meeting minutes
- b) Note the content of the July 2022 management accounts
- c) Note the content of the AEB report
- d) Approve the Subcontracting Strategy 2022/23 as presented
- e) Note the content of the Health and Safety annual report for 2021/22

12 Search and Governance

The meeting Chair drew governors' attention to the summary note and also the detailed minutes of the meeting which took place on 4th October 2022. Three topics to consider at this meeting include:

- Recruitment of new governors
- Moving corporation board meetings to a more strategic focus
- Planning for an external board review

Director of Governance was able to provide an update on governor recruitment and the timeline proposed by Peridot, who are supporting on the identification of two governors. This work is funded by the DfE. Shortlisting and interview panels have been established and it is envisaged that individuals with skills/experience in HR/Organisational Development and meeting local skills needs will be identified ready for appointment recommendation to the December meeting. She also advised that an interview had recently taken place with an individual identified to fill the skills gap in relation to finances. She was pleased to confirm the recommendation that Debbie Marshall be appointed as a governor and member of the Finance and Resources committee. Governors' attention was drawn to her CV circulated.

AGREED:

- a) to appoint Debbie Marshall as an independent Governor from 17th October 2022 to 17th October 2026
- b) to approve the appointment of Debbie Marshall as a Finance and Resources committee member.

In relation to the content and format of corporation board meetings, the proposal from the Chair following her one to ones with governors, is to establish a small working group who will meet with executive report writers to review a number of aspects and agree a way forward. Governors were invited to inform the Director of Governance if they would be willing and available to join the working group.

In relation to the external board review which has to be conducted every 3 years, it was noted that the planning timescales are for 2023 and the intention is to discuss options at the January 2023 strategy review day.

AGREED:

- a) to note the content of the meeting minutes provided
- b) note the content of the verbal update given at the meeting
- c) approve the updated 2022/23 committee membership list as presented.

13 Governance items

The Director of Governance drew boards attention to her detailed written report. Board were happy to formally ratify the written resolutions as set out.

AGREED: to formally ratify

- 1) increased subcontracting allocation for 2022/23 to Rotherham United Community Sports Trust
- 2) appointment of the interim Executive Director: Strategic Planning and Corporate Services

It was confirmed that the preferred date for the marketing strategy Q&A session is 1st November 2022 at 5pm on google.

Director of Governance drew boards attention to the information provided regarding periodic reference requests from governors, either serving or historic. Board were happy with the content of proposed references and asked that they be provided in the Chairs name rather than the CEO. Board asked that the Director of Governance undertake a quick check regarding any potential liability issues with the Director of HR, Marketing and OD.

14 AOB

There were no items of additional business.

15 Date and time of next meeting

This was confirmed as Monday 12th December 2022 at 5pm.

16 Confidential items

It was agreed that confidential items would be recorded on a separate basis.

(Student and staff governors left the meeting at 6.35pm)

Meeting closed at 7.05pm.

Signed _____ Chair

Date _____

