

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF NEW COLLEGE NOTTINGHAM CORPORATION  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 MAY 2011 AT 5.30PM**

**PRESENT:**

David Nelson – Chair	✓
Geoff Hall – Principal	✓
Anne Adams	Apologies
Phoebe Benta	✓
Richard Brackenbury	Apologies
Delroy Brown	✓
Lucy Dadge	Apologies
Susan Clague	✓
Nigel Hallam	✓
Karen Harrison	✓
Marianne Howarth	Apologies
James Lacey	✓
Thulani Molife	✓
Alastair Leverton	✓
Ralph Tonge	✓
Mike Willis	✓

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Julie Ashton	Deputy Principal
Andrew Hartley	Vice Principal Finance and Resources
Margaret Allen	Vice Principal Skills
Maria Semak	Director of Corporate and External Affairs
Claire Kay	Corporation Secretary
Amarjit Basi	Principal, Walsall College
Dan Campbell	Student

Prior to the meeting members received a presentation on the Wolf Report and the Government's response published the previous week. A briefing paper was provided under agenda item 16.

Consideration of items of business was based on reports prepared by College management and the Corporation Secretary which were circulated with the agenda to all members of the Corporation in advance of the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Amarjit Basi to the meeting as part of the handover activities over the coming months. It was considered helpful for Amarjit to be present at the meeting to start to gain a closer understanding of the organisation. Also in attendance was Dan Campbell, the elected Student Union Vice President for 2011/12. Dan was welcomed to the meeting and members supported the opportunity for the incoming Student Governor to observe a meeting alongside the current Student Governors before taking up the position next academic year.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from the members listed above. The apologies were accepted by the Board.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS**

No interests were declared in relation to the agenda items.

**3. MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2011**

The minutes from the meeting of the 23 March 2011 were reviewed by the Board. The Board passed the following resolution:

**The Board approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2011, and approve the public minute for publication.**

4. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 7 APRIL 2011**

The confidential minutes from the special meeting of the 7 April 2011 were reviewed by the Board. The Board passed the following resolution:

**The Board approve the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2011.**

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

Item 4: The membership of the Search Committee would be discussed at the next meeting of Chair and Vice Chairs and reported to the Board.

Item 6: The HR Reference Group had been created and meets for the first time on 26 May. The membership of the group would be Delroy Brown, Sue Clague, Mike Willis and from the Executive Team, Julie Ashton and Jo Boulton. The Group would report to the Board at its next meeting.

Item 8: A date had now been agreed for the Equality & Diversity governor training in June and the details will be circulated to all members as soon as possible.

The Chair updated members on the handover activities that had started with Amarjit Basi and confirmed the agreed start date for the new Principal as 5<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

6. **PRINCIPAL'S OVERVIEW**

The paper brought together the strategic issues for consideration at the meeting. The Principal outlined the continued developments in the sector following the Government's response to the Wolf Report and the awaited White Paper on Higher Education. The Chair outlined the objective of the meeting which was to draw together the recent changes in policy and funding and consider the likely future challenges in order to create a clear strategy moving forward.

7. **CURRICULUM PLAN 2011-14**

The Deputy Principal outlined the work which had been achieved within the College in re-designing the curriculum to meet the changing demands of learners and funding. Members noted:

- The fall in 16-18 numbers was predominantly at level 2 which was a highly competitive market in the City.
- Although overall funding had fallen the percentage of 16-18 learners was increasing and the percentage of adult participation was decreasing.
- The demographic data showed a further fall in 16-18 year olds in the short term which would inform planning and risk.
- The late announcement on Foundation Learning fee remission improved the financial position and provided some security for 2011/12 in providing community education. In addition the availability of transition funding was considered helpful.

Members welcomed the increased involvement of large local employers in developing curriculum to meet employer needs and considered this an area of critical importance to be developed further for the future. The importance of minimum class sizes in overall organisational efficiency was supported, with staff utilisation seen as a key performance indicator.

Members discussed the sources of market intelligence used to plan the future curriculum and noted that although there was management presence at local 14-19 forums collaborative curriculum planning was an area that deserved further attention.

Members supported the priorities presented in the report but considered further work was required to define **ncn**'s unique offer and 'signature' in the provision of education and skills in the City. The current balance of provision met **ncn**'s vision of a community based provider but **ncn** needed to be clearer in promoting its role in developing the workforce of the future and the capacity of learners to gain skills for employment and personal progression.

**8. ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY**

Members found the content of the report helpful in improving their understanding of the nature of the current estate. The paper highlighted the extent of the excess capacity across the College's estate and the possible options available to the Board for rationalising this position.

Members considered decisions over the estate to be inextricably linked to the determination of a clearer vision for the future but agreed that disposal of some excess property was required now to improve efficiency, save running costs and generate funds for further investment in the estate.

Members agreed the need for a longer term strategy to be considered following key decisions around clarity of vision for the future.

**9. INITIAL FINANCIAL PLAN**

The report outlined the initial assumptions being used to develop the 2011/12 budget. Members noted the funding allocations and the pay and non pay expenditure. The impact of the changes in funding had yet to be fully included in the planning process but the initial underlying position was indicating a reduced surplus for 2011/12 as compared to 2010/11 but a surplus was still considered achievable.

The risks inherent in the planning assumptions included the impact of the changes in remission funding and the competitive nature of 16-18 enrolments. Whilst the existence of transitional support for fee remission was welcomed, appropriate mitigating action was required in year to minimise the risk of the new operating environment.

Members considered it important to receive detailed information on the longer term 3 year forecast at the July meeting especially in relation to cashflow and investment strategies. This would help place any proposed final budget in a proper context. Consideration was needed to calculate the "investment gap" to allow appropriate long term planning and investment decisions. It was recognised that aspirational targets for income generation and operating surpluses may be required to fund the investment gap and these should be considered when developing the final budget.

The report and assumptions were noted. Members welcomed the detailed analysis that had been undertaken which provided a good basis for considering the final 2011/12 budget taking into account the points noted above.

**10. STAFFING UPDATE**

Members noted the update and the minimum efficiency targets. A full report would be reviewed at the meeting in July.

**11. FEES POLICY 2011/12**

Members considered the revised paper a helpful advancement on the last paper presented to the Board in January. The flexible approach to fee setting was welcomed and members noted the basis on which pricing decisions were to be made. Members welcomed the work undertaken by Heads of Faculty to understand their market position and ensure the price sensitivity of courses. The impact of the revised approach would need to be monitored and more detail provided to members in the final budget as to how the fees assumptions from the policy translated into fees collected. The Board passed the following resolution:

**The Board approve the Fees Policy for 2011/12**

**12. FE IN NOTTINGHAM**

Members hoped that a decision on the proposed merger of South Nottingham and Castle College would be announced soon. However the Board was clear that **ncn's** focus should remain on driving forward improvements in the education, learning and skills provision in

the City. In this respect **ncn** would seek to be collaborative and constructive in its dealings with all stakeholders, regardless of the outcome.

The Chair encouraged a final discussion on all the strategic issues covered. Members thanked the curriculum management team for the positive development of the provision for next year and for the insight provided into the impact of the significant policy and funding changes. It was recognised that there were real opportunities ahead and an important role for **ncn** to play in helping to shape Nottingham's future. Members requested further work to be undertaken on the investment strategy to inform a longer term view of estates and for options to be presented urgently on reducing the College's estate. Over the next 3 -6 months the Board agreed to continue the work on developing a clearer vision for the future and defining and promoting **ncn**'s important contribution to education, learning and skills in the City.

**13. IMPROVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK**

Members considered the performance as at March in relation to all the key performance indicators and noted the comments outlined in the report.

**14. STRATEGIC RISK MONITORING AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

The report was noted by the Board and the further work undertaken by the Audit Committee. Members considered that discussions during the meeting had not identified any additional risks but the risk rating of safeguarding could be reviewed in light of the assurance levels achieved through the mitigating controls in this area.

**15. CONFIDENTIALITY OF BUSINESS**

No confidential minute was prepared during the meeting although the papers marked confidential would remain so due to commercial sensitivity.

**16. BRIEFING ON THE WOLF REPORT**

Members noted the contents of the report and governors were provided with the Government's response to Wolf for information.

**17. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR MARCH 2011**

Members noted the report.

**18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting was on Wednesday 22 June 2011. The Chair proposed that the original plan for a June and July meeting may not be necessary and it would be more beneficial to move the June business to July. Members agreed that one meeting in July, slightly longer in duration, was preferable to two meetings in 6 weeks. It was agreed to cancel the June meeting.

The next meeting would be Wednesday 13 July at High Pavement College.

Members noted it was Pheobe Benta's last meeting as a Student Governor due to her success in gaining employment. On behalf of the Corporation the Chair thanked Phoebe for her considerable contribution during the year and wished her every success for the future.

The Chair closed the meeting at 19:45.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_