

## Corporation Board

Wednesday 11 December 2024 17:00-19:00

University Centre Rotherham seminar room U115/116

<b>Membership:</b>	Janet Pryke (interim Chair); Jason Austin (CEO); Katie Asgari; Simon Ashton; Stephen Bulley; Margaret Cobb; Donna Clifford; Shirley Collier; Sally Gillborn; David Grimes; Paul Lomas; Debbie Marshall; Kay Mulcahy; Jack Pike; Fatima Sabir; Carol Stanfield; Ian Sutherland; Hayley Tingle; Louise Woodcock; Sohil Zokari
<b>Attendance:</b>	Tracey Mace-Akroyd (Deputy CEO); Phil Curtis (Executive Director Finance and Estates); Jane Hartog (Executive Director Marketing, HR and OD); Cath Mollart (Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Corporate Services); Cavanagh Kelly (external auditors) for item 8; Sarah Connerty (Director of Governance and minutes)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Tracey Mace-Akroyd (Deputy CEO); Fatima Sabir

	Item	Action
1	<b>Welcome, introductions and apologies</b> The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting. David Grimes, Shirley Collier and Donna Clifford joined the meeting online due to earlier commitments. Apologies were received from Tracey Mace-Akroyd and Fatima Sabir (bereavement). Ryan Falls, the external auditor from Cavanagh Kelly, joined the meeting for item 8 on and this was taken directly after the declarations of interest.	
2	<b>Declarations of interest</b> There were no declarations received.	
3	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2024</b> <b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on the 9 October 2024 as a true and accurate record. <b>Minutes of the extraordinary Board meeting held on 22 October 2024</b> <b>RESOLVED:</b> The Chair approved the minutes of the extraordinary Board meeting held on the 22 October 2024 as a true and accurate record. <b>Notes of the Board Strategy Day held on 22 October 2024</b> The Board noted the notes. <b>Written resolutions</b> The Board ratified the following written resolutions which have been approved since the last meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pay award for all staff – 2 December 2024</li><li>• Pay award for senior post holders – 2 December 2024</li></ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment of FE Associates as the search agency for the recruitment of Chair – 19 November 2024</li> </ul>	
4	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>The Director of Governance updated on actions as follows:</p> <p><b>Action 1</b> – an update on progress on the new strategic plan is on the agenda at item 10</p> <p><b>Action 2</b> – a tribute for Jenny Worsdale. The CEO and Principal reported that a student award reflecting Jenny’s values in supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds would be designed and awarded at the end of the year as a reminder of Jenny’s lifetime of work in education supporting young people and improving lives and as an RNN Group Board member and Chair</p> <p><b>Action 1</b> from the Finance and Resources Committee – the health and safety (H&amp;S) session on the 11 November was postponed due to a new interim lead for H&amp;S just starting in role. The Director of Governance reported that the Board had asked for assurance around H&amp;S compliance last year and the session was scheduled as part of the Board development programme for the year and will be rescheduled. The Finance and Resources Committee receives a standing update on H&amp;S as part of the Estates Report. The ED Finance and Estates reported that the new interim lead for H&amp;S is currently reviewing H&amp;S across the Group and no concerns have been raised. The review will be completed by the end of next week and an action plan will be drafted. The Health and Safety Policy will come to the next Finance and Resources Committee and Board in March 2025.</p> <p><b>Action 5</b> from the 25 March – an options paper on Dinnington is on the agenda at item 11.5.</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>ED Finance and Estates</p>
5	<p><b>Student Governors – open session</b></p> <p>Jack Pike reported that the Student Union is being set up at North Notts College. So far it has been difficult with little progress. Changes have been made and it is now looking good and getting to a point where the student voice can be heard and reported on.</p> <p>One governor asked if there is communication and joint working across the campuses with the Student Union and Jack confirmed that his work was focused on NNC and there was an apathy around trying to amalgamate. Jack noted that the Student Union at Rotherham is bigger and one idea would be to have them as the central Student Union and NNC and Dearne Valley College to work at a local level. <b>ACTION:</b> The ED Strategic Planning and Corporate Services suggested that governor comments are taken back to the Head of Student Services and Safeguarding for consideration and further work and support.</p> <p>Jack reported that he had attended the AoC’s Staff and Student Governor conference where there was a large number of workshops and sessions to attend.</p> <p>Jack reported that he had attended the Employer Awards alongside fellow governors and it was interesting to see how different companies work with the Group. The CEO and Principal noted that this was the first time the Employer Awards had taken place after the Student Award Ceremony and over 90 employers had attended and it was a good event.</p>	<p>CEO</p>

	<p>The Vice Chairs had met with the Student Governors last week to discuss the Board agenda and student voice. In the absence of Fatima Sabir Paul Lomas reported that Fatima is interested in setting up a women's sports mentor group to broaden out her skills and experience in fitness and boxing. <b>ACTION:</b> Fatima would welcome support from the sports curriculum and the Marketing Team to take this work forward and this will go back to the Head of Student Services and Safeguarding in the first instance to progress.</p>	CEO
6	<p><b>Safeguarding and Prevent and Equality Diversity and Inclusion Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement (FREDIE) update</b></p> <p>The Board took the report as read, noting that it had been presented by the Head of Safeguarding and Student Support and discussed at the Quality and Standards Committee last month. The CEO and Principal was delighted to announce that Sohil Zokari will take up the role of EDI governor (following Heather Barnett) and Simon Ashton will take up the newly combined role of Safeguarding and SEND link governor (following Jenny Worsdale and Heather Barnett)</p> <p>The Board passed on their thanks for taking up the roles.</p>	
7	<p><b>Risk</b></p> <p>The ED Finance and Estates reported that the 4risk system is now working and live and all data is included. The data is being cleansed and all the new features are operational. There are some users across the organisation using the new system and the ED Finance and Estates is getting prepared for a relaunch and training sessions in January 2025.</p> <p>The Chair noted that this feels like a huge challenge all round and it is frustrating for the teams to learn something new so quickly after the last roll out of training. It was agreed that the work of embedding risk management into the organisation was an important job last year and this remains in place.</p>	
8	<p><b>RNN Group Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024</b></p> <p>The ED Finance and Estates reported following the distribution of the recommended Financial Statements by the Audit and Risk and Finance and Resources Committee the Education, Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) had contacted the Group to confirm clawback around growth funding for 2023-4 which would potentially impact the accounts.</p> <p>There is a combination of three items that affected the accounts after the balance sheet was submitted to the auditors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apprenticeship income -return 14 to the ESFA identified apprenticeship income of £86,000 was not to be recognised during the 2023/24 year due to withdrawals. This is below the audit materiality to alter the accounts and had been unadjusted in the final draft previously circulated – an adjustment of £86,000 did not impact the Group's Financial Health Score of 180 points.</li> <li>2. Adult Education Budget - the final reconciliation of the AEB issued by the ESFA provided additional income of £2,000 above that recognised in the draft accounts. This is below the audit materiality to alter the</li> </ol>	

	<p>accounts and had been unadjusted in the final draft previously circulated – an adjustment of £2,000 did not impact the Group’s Financial Health Score</p> <p>3. In year exceptional growth income – on the 4 December 2024 the ESFA issued notification of a R414 reconciliation where growth funded numbers are reconciled back to the R04 data. This reconciliation indicates the equivalent of 15 funded places had withdrawn during the year. This equates to £98,000 to be clawed by the ESFA in January 2025. This is below the audit materiality to alter the accounts and was unknown to the Group at the point of circulating the accounts – an adjustment of £98,000 did not impact the Group’s Financial Health Score.</p> <p>The auditors considered the combination of the above adjustments totalling £182,000 on the Group’s financial health and has concluded that all of the above will need to be adjusted as the combination moved the Group to Requires Improvement financial health with 170 points (previously 180 points). Had the Group maintained Good financial health no adjustments would have been required as £182,000 is below the auditor threshold for materiality.</p> <p><b>Loan Reclassification</b></p> <p>The ED Finance and Estates explained that as a result of reclassification, the Group were unable resolve the longer-term position of its borrowing facilities into current and non-current liabilities at the financial year end.</p> <p>Since reclassification the Group has been prevented from securing commercial lending and must repay it’s Lloyds loan balloon payment of £2,095,000 on 5 January 2025. At the year end the whole of the loan was recognised as a current liability repayable within 12 months and used within the current ratio calculation. The impact is a 10-point reduction on the financial health score. It was noted that if the loan had been renegotiated prior to year end the of the majority of loan would have been a non-current liability repayable after 12 months providing 10 more points. The Group has just agreed terms on a loan facility with the DfE but no financial impact can be included within the year end accounts due to the timing.</p> <p>There have been some initial conversations with the ESFA impact of Office for National Statistics (ONS) reclassification and the ESFA will look at the case to moderate the accounts but this decision will take until February-March 2025. The accounts presented at today’s Board are as they should be.</p> <p>The table included in the papers shows the current year and next year are both are forecasted as Good financial health and demonstrates the Group’s strength during the year in improving its revenue position. EBITDA for the year of £1,863,000 was used in part to meet its obligations on interest and pension payments as well as investing in the asset improvements during the year. Unused EBITDA of £911,000 has resulted in improving the carrying revenue deficit of £4,193,000 to a deficit of £3,282,000. Operational surplus</p>	
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and EBITDA have improved on last year by £2,941,000 and £1,793,000 respectively. The ED Finance and Estates gave an update against the KPIs (see paper for full details).

One governor asked for clarification that it is the sum of the apprenticeship, AEB and growth funding withdrawals that has moved the Group into RI or the loan requiring repayment within the 12 months and if the ESFA reconsider the loan position would the Group still remain RI. The ED Finance and Estates explained that it is a combination of them all and a reconsideration of the loan position would put the Group back into Good.

The Board asked about the implications of RI for the Group and what the risks would be. The ED Finance and Estates confirmed that the ESFA don't have any restrictions in accessing funding, but this could change. The Office for Students (OfS) may review the status of the Group, and the accessing of funds from the Combined Authorities may be an issue. This is the key reason for requesting consideration from the ESFA.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee noted that she and the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee had met with the ED Finance and Estates prior to the meeting to get a better understanding of the current position.

The focus had been on the learning and what can be taken out of this situation to ensure it doesn't happen again. Monitoring of reports in year and highlighting risks through the year at Exec and to the Committees will be done more rigorously, rather than leaving it to the ESFA to report at year end. The ED Finance and Estates confirmed that the ESFA had seen the changes in numbers from RO4 to RO6 and were aware much earlier those 15 learners had been withdrawn. One governor noted that the Group can't rely on the ESFA to tell us the picture at year end and we can monitor and build in contingencies at an earlier stage. The ED Finance and Estates confirmed this work is underway with the ED Strategic Planning and Corporate Services and her team and that is what will be done going forward. The Chair of Finance and Resources Committee noted that there is increased scrutiny on apprenticeships at the Committee and it is included as a standing item for the remainder of this year with the Director of Business Development and Apprenticeships attending meetings to report on the position with apprenticeships and the risks and opportunities.

One governor asked whether the risk was anticipated as it is the Exec and Board's responsibility to know what our risks are and she endorsed the approach being taken going forward.

#### **External Audit Report and Letter of Representation**

Ryan Falls, external auditor from Cavanagh Kelly noted that the Report had been presented to the Audit and Risk and Finance and Resources Committee and recommended for approval prior to the events of the last few days. The audit is unqualified and a true and fair review of the Group's position. The auditors are chasing the ESFA for their own reconciliations and awaiting a response. The key risks are revenue recognition and the late issue with the clawbacks. This is common across the sector with late adjustments which impacts on the auditors' opinion and financial health. There are no material issues to report and nothing to report on management override and controls,

	<p>staff costs and the ability of the Group to continue trading for 12 months, the ability to pay banking loans, regularity or the ability of the Group to comply with the Post 16 Code of Practice and Managing Public Money. There is one audit finding around fixed assets which is related to capital expenditure, this is a known risk by the Group and one that is in progress. All these contexts have been considered in the Annual Report and it is a strong and clean audit and the external auditor passed on his thanks to the ED Finance and Estates and his team for all their work and support to the audit team. The final step of the process is the final confirmation from the ESFA to close down the Financial Statements.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> The Chair noted that there are some grammatical comments to update and nothing of a material nature and that she has requested that a paragraph is included noting that it was a late notification from the ESFA to move the Group into RI.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the RNN Group Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the External Audit Report and Letter of Representation</p> <p><b>National Fluid Power Centre Directors Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024</b></p> <p>The Board considered the NFPC financial statements. The ED Finance and Estates confirmed that they had been signed off by the Directors on the 4 December 2024 and the Directors had agreed to repay a large part of their loan from the surplus in the current year.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the National Fluid Power Centre Directors Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024</p> <p><b>Rotherham Education Services Ltd Directors Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024</b></p> <p>The Board considered the RES Ltd financial statements. The ED Finance and Estates confirmed that they had been signed off by the Directors on 28 November 2024</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the Rotherham Education Services Ltd Directors Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024</p> <p><b>RNN Group Student Union Financial Statements for the period ended 31 July 2024</b></p> <p>The Board considered the SU financial statements.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the RNN Group Student Union Financial Statements for the period ended 31 July 2024</p> <p><b>Going Concern Report</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board considered the evidence to demonstrate that the Board is a going concern and agreed with this position noting the updates to RI following the recent events.</p> <p><b>Annual report of the Audit and Risk Committee</b></p>	<p>ED Finance and Estates</p>
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	<p>The Board noted the Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee.</p> <p>The Chair passed on thanks to the external auditor. [Ryan Falls departs: 17:25]</p>	
9	<p><b>Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2023-24</b></p> <p>The CEO and Principal noted that the SAR has been through a validation panel attended by members of the Quality and Standards Committee prior to being scrutinised by the Quality and Standards Committee.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> One governor sent through some questions around the consistency of data across Group documents and this is being checked and any inconsistencies will be updated with the correct figures.</p> <p>One governor noted that in November 2022 Ofsted graded the Group with Reasonable Progress for meeting local needs. The Group works with over 100 local employers and she asked what the justification is for moving to a Strong grade. The CEO and Principal explained that this had been looked at in detail at the validation panel and there is evidence of outstanding work with employers, a very strong contribution to our local regions and a lot more work has been done on providing a consistent approach across the Group. The Group was one of the first colleges under the new framework and during this period not many colleges were awarded a Strong contribution and the Group had fed back to Ofsted that they felt they were better than the grade awarded. The Deputy CEO has fed back that a lot more colleges are now being awarded a Strong grade for meeting local skills need.</p> <p>One governor noted that it is about working consistently across the three sites and working effectively as the workforce is now very streamlined. It was agreed the Employer Academy approach is about consistency and maintaining a standard.</p> <p>One governor asked if the Group are submitting the SAR and it was confirmed that although it is now a recommendation rather than a requirement it will be uploaded to the portal in January 2025. It was agreed that this sends a good signal to the Department on the openness and transparency of the Group.</p> <p>One governor noted that the SAR is not proposing awarding Outstanding and asked if there are sufficient areas of focus for improvements included. The CEO and Principal noted that there had been a very rigorous validation panel which had discussed all areas of the SAR in a lot of detail and had focused on the areas for improvement. There were detailed discussions about the Personal Development and Attitudes section. Adult provision is outstanding, and Apprenticeship achievement rates have improved by 12% and there is always further work to do. The Group is very clear on its areas of focus and there are the action plans from the Quality Improvement Plan which provide the granular details. One governor asked about the QIP and it was noted that the papers include a risk paper on the immediate areas of focus and the QIP, which is a much more detailed document, will be finalised following the sign off of the SAR. Underneath the QIP are detailed action plans on areas of focus for each area.</p> <p>The Staff Governor noted the Student Governors comments on the Student Union. The Staff Governor agreed with all the areas of the SAR and felt they are a true reflection of the current position of the Group. As a staff member it</p>	Exec

	<p>is the curriculum and the vocational staff rather than the personal development staff who focus on improvements through the curriculum. The Personal Development team lead on the support for the Student Union and this may be an area for further focus to support the Student Union presidents. The CEO and Principal noted the detailed discussion at the validation panel around awarding Outstanding for Personal Development and Behaviour and Attitudes. At the last inspection these were graded Good with Outstanding features. The panel felt the Group had moved on from this and were Outstanding. There is always further work to do and the concerns about the Student Union will be picked up very quickly and support put in place. One governor asked if the Student Union are working with the Personal Development team and the Student Governor confirmed they are. One governor asked if there was an external member on the SAR validation panel and it was noted that the Deputy Principal of Curriculum from Kirklees College who is an Ofsted inspector was the external panel member. The Chair asked if members of the Quality and Standards Committee who had contributed to the validation panel had any comments and the Vice Chair and interim Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee confirmed that the external panel member had raised some really good points and interrogated some of the judgements. The move to Outstanding in two areas was not taken lightly and there was a lot of discussion and scrutinising. Heather Barnett had been excellent at the panel providing feedback and challenge on every area of the SAR and had noted that it was already a very strong document which was improved by the contributions made at the validation panel. The Vice Chair explained that once the SAR is approved by the Board the five key areas of the QIP will be focused on and the aim is to make sure everything is where it needs to be. One governor noted that the focus on the 3 Is (intent, implementation and impact) is outstanding through the SAR and it is a nice SAR to read as a new governor. There is the important focus on English and maths and the challenges and improvements required and the grading for adults makes sense as well as the trajectory for Personal Development.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the Self-Assessment Report for 2023-4</p>	
10	<p><b>CEO and Principal report</b></p> <p>The CEO and Principal provided an overview of the external and internal landscape and Group matters since the last meeting. Key points included:</p> <p><b>External landscape.</b> At the last meeting the Board had been updated on the Industrial Strategy and the introduction of Skills England. A <b>Get Britain Working White paper</b> has now been introduced and there is some investment which is positive. Investment opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £115 million investment for a new “Connect to Work” supported employment programme</li> <li>• £45 million for 8 mayoral areas to test the new “Youth Guarantee” - ensure all 18–21-year-olds can access education, training or employment support</li> <li>• £40 million will be set aside to transform the Apprenticeship Levy into a Growth and Skills Levy</li> </ul>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£55 million to develop the new jobs and careers service - which merges the National Careers Service with job centres.</li> </ul> <p>The Group already does a lot of work with the job centres and has a lot of sector-based Employer Academies in place.</p> <p>The <b>Gatsby Benchmarks</b> have been updated to achieve even more impact for young people for the next decade. The Vice Principal Curriculum, Mark Ryan leads on this work and Shirley Collier is the link governor for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance.</p> <p><b>Internal landscape.</b> The Exec, Director of Governance and Student Governor attended the <b>Association of Colleges (AoC) conference</b> in November which was a good event with updates on the sector and colleges sharing their experiences and challenges.</p> <p><b>The Higher Education Ceremony</b> took place last month and the CEO and Principal thanked all the governors who attended. It was a really successful event this year and combined with the <b>Employer Awards</b>. This was successful and a lot of employers attended. Feedback has been really positive and employers would like to do it again.</p> <p>An <b>Apprenticeship event</b> in recognition of employers with RNN Group apprentices will take place at the end of February. <b>ACTION:</b> details will be shared when confirmed.</p> <p><b>Enrolment</b> Current enrolment is 3697 (+27 on the Curriculum Plan) with a funding allocation of 3263 (currently +434)</p> <p><b>Key aspects are:</b> 230 <b>T Level</b> (currently at 375) 3033 <b>Study Programme</b> (currently at 3322) <b>HE target</b> – 427 (currently at 241) <b>Apprenticeship target</b> – 500 new starts (currently at 1069 with carry through and 42 out of funded learners (oofs) which is a significant improvement. The CEO and Principal noted that there is a complicated calculation for growth funding. One governor noted the 55 <b>high needs</b> additional places and the importance of ensuring that they are funded because this is a big number over the original allocation. The ED Finance and Estates confirmed that the contract has just been received from Rotherham Borough Council and the Finance Team have picked this up to ensure funding is appropriate.</p> <p><b>Funding</b> <b>16-18 funding</b> £300m has been added to the 16-18 budget in 2025-6. English and maths will have 100 hours each extra with a 2.5% tolerance. Most learners come with E&amp;M needs and the Group will have to deliver the extra hours and resource before growth funding. Across the sector this is a challenge. <b>The rapid review of Level 3 qualifications</b> is underway.</p>	CEO/Dir of Gov
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	<p>There is no additional cash for <b>adults</b> and the Group will use the Adult Skills Funding from the two devolved areas for area of the curriculum.</p> <p>There will be £40m for <b>apprenticeships</b> support for foundation and short apprenticeships and information is awaited on the Growth and Skills Levy for 2026.</p> <p>The <b>HE fees</b> cap has increased by 3.1% (£9535 for a fulltime degree). The Group currently charges £6950.</p> <p>The <a href="#"><u>Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE)</u></a> has been delayed until 2027.</p> <p><b>Capital</b></p> <p>£950m has been allocated to the skills capital budget for 2025-6. It is expected that some of the funds will be for completion of projects and it will also fund capacity for the additional 16-19 places. Because of the demographics this may focus on the short term needs for extra space and temporary and flexible capital opportunities.</p> <p>There is £300m available for distribution to FE colleges for 12 months from April 2025, this is likely to be learning based for spending within two years. One governor asked if the additional funding for 16-19 capacity will be a competitive exercise. The details are awaited but it is likely to be around the capacity of a college and the feeding from local schools in FE.</p> <p><b>Withdrawals</b></p> <p>Enrolments stand at 3992 with 295 withdrawals, 7.4% against a sector average of 5-8%. The Group is retaining more learners than in the past. (10-11% early withdrawals over last couple of years)</p> <p>Post 42 days 1.2% withdrawal rate. The Group is retaining more of its learners due to the amount of hard work in this area including Marketing, open days, swap don't drop, an extended eight-week induction period and curriculum events to ensure learners are on the right course, are supported and have the opportunity to move to alternative courses.</p> <p><b>Current application data for 2025-6</b></p> <p>This is an early look at the data.</p> <p>Study programme numbers are up by 23 to 507 with the most increase being at Rotherham College. Adults, HE and part-time are too early to forecast because there is recruitment through the year.</p> <p>One governor asked demographics and it was confirmed that numbers are increasing until 2027-8.</p> <p>One governor noted that when looking at figures over the year it is useful to understand the data in terms of the proportion to 16-18s compared to last year. <b>ACTION:</b> The CEO and Principal noted that he was happy to share the data on pool and catchment going forward.</p> <p>One governor asked about the Higher Education (HE) figures. The CEO and Principal reported that the Group has a HE Strategy and Task Force which is looking at opportunities to reinvigorate HE. The quality of provision is very good, with a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Silver but there is a need to look at the offer because enrolments are low and there are some real</p>	CEO
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challenges with competition and trying to meet local needs in the provision being offered. External research was carried out last year to support this work. The region has a lot of competitors and Sheffield Hallam recently reduced their offer on a number of programmes and learners are choosing other universities locally. There are some big decisions about the direction of travel and the Group are looking at other colleges who are adapting their provision to attract learner numbers. One governor noted the opportunities at the Bridge Skills Hub at Worksop which was set up by Bassetlaw District Council to support the local HE offer. The Group pays to be part of this facility and offers provision but currently the Hub is not full. One governor asked if we are losing money and the ED Finance and Estates confirmed not but it is not providing income and some provision is being carried. The position is complex because most teachers teach across 16-18 programmes and Higher Education programmes and the Group can't allocate a budget code just for HE provision. One governor noted that there has been a big push on the Level 7 Leadership Programme and it was agreed this is going well but it has to be put out there to draw people in. The world's first Fusion Café has opened at the Bridge Skills Hub so there may be opportunities and publicity through this.

#### **Achievements**

Classroom based provision – 84.24% (prediction) Last year 83.49% (actual)

Apprenticeship – 63.92% (prediction) Last year 51.25% (actual)

HE – 74.59% (prediction) Last year 76.10% (actual)

The Board agreed that the Group is making progress in the right direction.

English and maths is recognised as an area where much more work is needed and there are a lot of challenges with resourcing it.

The CEO and Principal reported that an English and maths Task and Finish Group has been set up to lead on this work with two governors (Hayley Tingle (Chair) and Margaret Cobb (member)) joining the Group.

#### **Progress against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

The CEO and Principal noted that the KPIs had been recently added to the pack due to an update with the current financial events.

A lot of work has been done across the board, in particular around People and Place in the Community including: the KUDOS awards for staff, re accreditation of Investors in Diversity, Matrix accreditation, FREDIE values (fairness, respect, equality, diversity, inclusion and engagement), improving the health and wellbeing of staff, reduction in the levels of voluntary turnover of staff, communications with staff forums and feedback. At the recent round of CEO and Principal meetings with staff there has been excitement about the plans to roll out an improved Wi-Fi system and the news of the pay award being awarded before Christmas.

In Innovation and Growth a lot of work has taken place including: maintaining the status as a Google reference college, 1295 users being supported with digital access, Google Gemini for Education enabled, AI academy with 125 members, VR and digital hubs, plans for new Wi-Fi and CCTV

	<p><b>New Strategic Plan</b></p> <p>Following the Board strategy day in October the Exec and SLT have been working on key areas of work from the day. There has been a focus on what we do well, what we could do better, and rag rating.</p> <p>Some work on marginal gains and quick wins is underway including: fostering open communications, prioritising staff wellbeing, positive student engagement, ensuring a diverse and inclusive environment, and creating a positive college environment. Staff want better communications and a focus on the reasons why we do things and why decisions are being taken.</p> <p>SLT members are taking a lead on areas of work which is feeding into the strategic planning, alongside an analysis of the work done and thoughts raised at the Board strategy day and the future skills needs of our communities such as health and digital.</p> <p>Work will continue at pace with the next review and input by the Board at the Strategy afternoon on the 26 March 2025.</p> <p><b>WorldSkills UK Finals</b></p> <p>The Staff Governor reported that 94 learners had submitted an entry, 62 went through the regionals and 2 to the finals. It is a huge amount of work for the students and further work will take place around teaching and learning next year. Learners register in March, compete in April and May and do require support to come in during the summer.</p> <p>The learners did the Group proud and had a fantastic experience. The press release is being prepared at the moment and will be shared when released.</p> <p>The Chair noted the work the students had done at the AoC conference serving at the gala dinner and gaining valuable industry experience.</p> <p>The Board passed on their congratulations to Jaimee and Theo and all the students who had submitted an entry, to the team and to the Staff Governor, Katie Asgari, as the lead for WorldSkills for all the hard work involved.</p> <p><b>Launch of the new facilities</b></p> <p>The CEO and Principal warmly welcomed governors to attend the launch of the new facilities:</p> <p>Thursday 6 Feb 17.00-19.00– North Notts College</p> <p>Thursday 27 March 17.00-19.00 - Rotherham</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> One governor noted that it was difficult to see the slides online and asked for a copy to be circulated.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the CEO and Principal for the presentation.</p>	Dir of Gov
<b>Committee reports</b>		
11.1	<p><b>Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee Chair's report</b> of the meeting held on 27 November 2024</p> <p>The Chair of the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee for the meeting was Paul Lomas. The report was taken as read and the following key points raised:</p>	

	<p><b>1. Progress against the Governance Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>Progress is going well with a number of recommended actions and suggested enhancements from the External Governance review, compliance against the AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges, the risk actions and the policy framework in progress and/or completed. Progress is available to view in the SGR Committee pack.</p> <p><b>2. Governor Link Scheme</b></p> <p>The Chair reminded all link governors to share their visits with the Director of Governance to include on the governor engagement register. A verbal feedback item will be included as a standing item on the Board and Committee agendas going forward to share experiences and demonstrate the impact.</p> <p>One governor asked if he would report into the Audit and Risk Committee on his link visits and the Director of Governance explained that key oversight areas such as EDI would be shared at the full Board to give all governors the opportunity to hear updates. The Curriculum Planning link governor asked all governors to share with her any areas they would like to know more about or areas to investigate. The link governor for Marketing asked if there is any process to follow in terms of link visits. The Director of Governance explained that link governors had shared their thoughts on the link governor process last year through a survey and the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee and the Chair of the Board had considered the feedback and put together a revised link governor scheme which was shared with the Board at its October 2024 meeting. Link governors are now set up for key areas of Board oversight (Safeguarding and SEND, EDI, Health and Safety, Environment and Sustainability) and student facing areas (Apprenticeships, Adult Education and Contracts, Curriculum Planning, Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance, English and Maths, Higher Skills and HE). Business support link governor areas (Audit Business, Estates, IT, MIS, Finance, Marketing, HR) will now be an opportunity for Exec and SLT to utilise the support and expertise of governors as and when required. The Director of Governance reported that this will be put in place for the remainder of 2024-5 and reviewed by the Committee in September 2025 to see if it is of benefit to governors and managers. The aim is to put in place a process that is useful to both parties and can show impact. Details of the updated scheme and link governors/experts were circulated to the Board this morning.</p> <p>The SGR Committee passed on their thanks to Sohil Zokari for taking on the role as EDI governor to carry on the good work from Heather Barnett, Simon Ashton for taking on the Safeguarding and SEND link role taking over from Heather Barnett and Jenny Worsdale, Margaret Cobb for taking over the apprenticeship link role from Jenny Worsdale, and Hayley Tingle and Margaret Cobb for joining the English and Maths Task and Finish Group.</p> <p>[After note: Louise Woodcock and Shirley Collier confirmed after the meeting that they would be happy to support on the HE/high skills work].</p> <p><b>Board membership</b></p> <p>The Board considered a suggestion from the Vice Chair around bringing a HE student governor onto the Board. It was agreed that it is important to hear</p>	
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	<p>the student voice from all of the colleges and opportunities for this were important for the Board to get a student's views of their experiences. One governor noted it is important to consider the size of the Board to ensure meaningful discussions and to remember that the Student Governors are there as students for the overall student body and not representing a particular group of students. Currently the Student Governors are based at North Notts College and Dearne Valley College. The appointment process is managed by the Student Services team alongside the elections for Student President and Student Council roles. It was agreed it would be beneficial to have a HE student on the HE Strategy and Focus Group as this is such an important area of work for the Group. The process for the appointment of two Student Governors annually will be maintained.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> The Director of Governance to work with Student Services to appoint a HE Student to the HE Strategy and Focus Group for 2024-5</p> <p><b>Committee membership</b> The Chair noted that thoughts from governors on moving to different committees will be considered in further detail by the Committee when the new Chair is in role. There is one recommendation for a new Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved Donna Clifford as the new Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee</p> <p><b>Chair recruitment</b> The process for the recruitment of a new Chair is in progress with the selection panel appointed, FEA as the recruitment agency, and the advert due to go live in the next few days. Shortlisting is scheduled for the 11 February 2025 and interviews on the 4 March 2025.</p> <p><b>Senior Post Holder (SPH) Remuneration Annual Report</b> The Board noted the SPH Remuneration Annual Report.</p> <p><b>Disciplinary Policy for Senior Post Holders</b> <b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the Disciplinary Policy for Senior Post Holders</p> <p><b>Grievance Policy for Senior Post Holders</b> <b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the Grievance Policy for Senior Post Holders</p>	<p>Dir of Gov</p> <p>Dir of Gov</p>
11.2	<p><b>Audit and Risk Committee Chair's report</b> of the meeting held on 21 November 2024 (joint with the Finance and Resources Committee for the Annual Report and Financial Statements)</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee took the report as read. The Committee had considered Cavanagh Kelly delivering the Group's external audit services for a further year. The auditors have been in role for three years and the contract allows for two further extensions of a year. The Committee and the Finance Team considered the performance of the auditors in the summer term and agreed that they are delivering a good service and recommended to approve an additional year.</p>	

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the appointment of Cavanagh Kelly as the RNN Group's external auditors for a further year.</p> <p>All other items recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee are covered under item 8.</p>	
11.3	<p><b>Capital Projects Steering Group</b> minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2024 and project manager's report</p> <p>The Chair of the CPSG took the report as read. The next meeting of the Group is February 2025 when the evaluation report on the capital works will be received including user feedback of the new facilities.</p> <p>The Exec is waiting for announcements on future funding for capital and this will inform whether the Group continues or capital matters are covered under the Finance and Resources Committee remit.</p> <p>The ED Finance and Estates confirmed that the majority of works will be completed by Christmas and there will be fewer contractors onsite in January 2025.</p> <p>The Chair noted that the Project Manager, Ian Sackree, has done an amazing job managing the capital works and reporting into the CPSG and Board and should be thanked at the next meeting. The CEO and Principal agreed and noted that the Group thanks Ian Sackree at each meeting and he has just drafted a testimonial for Ian.</p>	
11.4	<p><b>Quality and Standard Committee Chair's report</b> of the meeting held on 19 November 2024 including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-Assessment Report 2023-4</li> <li>2. Risk Report</li> </ol> <p>The Chair of Quality and Standards Committee took the report as read. The SAR has been covered under item 9 and the Quality Improvement Plan will be finalised following the SAR approval by the Board and will come to the next round of meetings. Included in the papers is the Risk Report which details the key areas of focus for the Group in this period.</p> <p>The Board noted the report and had no further questions.</p>	
11.5	<p><b>Finance and Resources Committee Committee Chair's report</b> of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 including the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Excess Land and Buildings Report and Dinnington position paper</b></li> </ol> <p>The ED Finance and Estates noted that he had included a summary paper on excess lands and disposals for new governors and as an update.</p> <p><b>Langold</b> - The local authority (LA) is keen to secure a new lease on the same repairing peppercorn terms as the prior lease so that they can make longer term plans to service the early years' needs in the local community. The ED Finance and Estates confirmed that this would be of no cost to the Group.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the Langold centre and one governor asked if there is assurance that the buildings would be kept in good order and maintained. The ED Finance and Estates noted that this has been the case to date and it will have to be addressed year on year. [confidential item] One governor asked if break clauses would be included in the new contract and the ED Finance and Estates confirmed that this would be something to consider to ensure that if the contract was no longer viable either party could get out before the full term.</p>	

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved drafting a lease on Langold for a further period, including reviewing costs and including a break clause</p> <p><b>Kiveton</b> – There is approximately 10 acres remaining from the sale of the 24 acres sold January 2023. An option to review the sale of the remaining 10 acres is to be considered in 2030.</p> <p><b>Dinnington</b> – Work has been taking place on what can be done with the site. In 2019 all provision stopped and part of the site was sold. There is no appetite from the Group or the LA to maintain an educational provision there. Leaving the site empty is a risk and a fire hazard and there will be costs of maintaining the site. The other option is disposal and the ED Finance and Estates has been working with external partners on this option. A high-level summary of what the site could look like was considered (see paper and appendices for full details). One governor asked if post reclassification there are restrictions around using the funds secured by capital sales and the ED Finance and Estates confirmed that capital receipts would be ringfenced for reinvestment in future capital reinvestment (including land, buildings, IT, vehicles) and the capital receipt would come back to the Group. Under the current loan arrangement with Lloyds there is a charge on the property but the new DfE loan does not contain any charges against Group property. This may be a policy change in the future.</p> <p>One governor asked if the intention is to sell the remaining land and buildings as one transaction and this was confirmed.</p> <p>One governor asked if there is any intelligence to indicate that there would be a buyer for the site and it was confirmed there are a number of interested parties.</p> <p>One governor asked if there would be a reputational impact of selling the site. It is an area for future building and a need for more housing in the area which may have both support and concerns for the local community.</p> <p>One governor asked about the Group’s responsibilities around social and environmental considerations for the site.</p> <p>The ED Finance and Estates noted that it is not just about what the sale would add to the organisation in terms of the capital receipts and the future impact on the local community is a priority. There are social values built in with the local community, construction and labour and opportunities for students.</p> <p>The ED Finance and Estates noted that both these aspects are inherent in the planning and sales.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the sale of the Dinnington land and buildings on the open market and for the ED Finance and Estates to take forward discussions with external providers around progressing this position</p> <p><b>2. Finance Report and October 2024 Management Accounts</b> The Board considered the Finance Report and October 2024 management accounts.</p> <p><b>Policies:</b></p> <p><b>3. Procurement Policy</b> <b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the Procurement Policy</p>	
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	<p><b>4. Support for Continuing Studies</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The Board approved the Support for Continuing Studies Policy</p>	
12	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p><b>Reclassification Loan Facility Agreement</b></p> <p>The ED Finance and Estates reported on the loan position with Lloyds and the Department for Education (DfE) financing option which has been agreed with the relevant solicitors. Eversheds had been contracted to draft the Board resolutions and these were received shortly before the meeting and included in the Board packs.</p> <p>The ED Finance and Estates provided an overview of the loan facility as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DfE loan facility is for seven years, with the same capital repayments, but less interest, than the Lloyds loan facility. It has no covenants and unlike the Lloyds loan it has no charges against Group property. The loan meets the requirements of Managing Public Money</li> <li>• The final stage of the process are the mechanics between Lloyds and the DfE around transfer of the loan and this will be arranged by the respective solicitors following agreement by the Board to enter into the DfE loan</li> <li>• Eversheds have provided a draft resolution and an Officers Certificate to the Secretary of State for Education (the lender) which is required.</li> </ul> <p>The ED Finance and Estates verbally reported on the content of the draft minutes from Eversheds as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The approval, execution and delivery of the Facility Agreement would not be a breach of the powers delegated to the governors in accordance with the Group's Instrument, Articles of Government and Standing Orders;</li> <li>b. That the Facility Agreement would promote the success of the Group for the benefit of its members as a whole;</li> <li>c. That the Group can perform its obligations under the Facility Agreement;</li> <li>d. That any two signatories (Chair, CEO and Principal, ED Finance and Estates) are authorised to sign, countersign, execute, deliver and/or return to the Lender (as appropriate) the Facility Agreement and Officer Certificate (incorporating any such amendments, variations or modifications as such Authorised Signatory may (in his absolute discretion) think fit on behalf of the Group.</li> </ol> <p>The Board confirmed that they had no direct or indirect interests in the proposed transactions. The Chair proposed that governors have the opportunity to read the documents outside of the meeting to ensure they are comfortable with the wording. The Chair noted that the loan had to be arranged in the final year of repayment and due to the sectors' reclassification, the Group cannot go out for further bank funding. The loan will help with the Group's Financial Health rating in the future.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> The Board agreed in principle with the reclassification of the loan to the DfE and the conditions, confirmed there were no declarations of interest</p>	

	on the item, and agreed that the approval should be circulated by written resolution to allow time to read the relevant documents. It was agreed that the written resolution would have a deadline of Monday 17 December 2024	Dir of Gov/All
13	<p><b>Date of next meetings:</b>  Wednesday 26 March 2025 - UCR  Wednesday 25 June 2025 - DVC  All meetings start at 17:00</p> <p><b>Strategy event</b>  Wednesday 26 March 2025– 13.00-17.00 strategy half day – UCR (lunch available from 12.15)</p> <p><b>All Board meetings are in person.</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for all their hard work over the last two terms, in particular the Exec and the Committees for covering such a large amount of Board business, and the Vice Chairs for stepping up and taking on Jenny’s roles. The Chair thanked the new governors for getting so fully involved at an early stage of their tenures and noted how pleased the Board are to welcome them and are looking forward to working together.</p> <p>Next year the Board will be welcoming a new Chair to the Board with interviews scheduled for the 4 March 2025 and the recruitment pack currently being finalised by FEA. <b>ACTION:</b> The Chair asked that governors share the advert with their networks when it is live. The Board will be working with the Exec on the new strategic plan, starting the English and Maths task and finish group and working on our higher skills programmes and the University Centre through the HE Strategy and Focus Group.</p> <p>The Chair wished everyone a restful break over Christmas.</p>	All

**Meeting closed: 18:58**