

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12 July 2018 at 9.30am
Room HE 4, Higher Education Centre, Reaseheath College**

- Present Karol Bailey (independent)
 Colin Baxter (independent)
 Malcolm Burns (independent)
 Sonia Belfield (independent)
 Meredydd David (principal)
 Prof Chris Gaskell (independent)
 Mike Gorton (independent, associate)
 Dr Ian Graham (independent)
 Jon Furber (independent)
 Dr Elizabeth Harrison (independent)
 Robert Icke (staff)
 Anne McKay (staff)
 Angela Potter (independent)
 Richard Ratcliffe (independent) (Chair)
 Alastair Taylor (independent)
 Eleanor Thomas (student)
 Professor Tim Wheeler (independent)
- Attending Marcus Clinton (principal designate)
 Dave Kynaston (vice principal)
 Graeme Lavery (chief finance officer and director of resources)
 Sarah Houghton (assistant principal)
 Paul Spearritt (assistant principal)
 Louise Woodman (HR director)
 Mark Birkitt (head of student services) *(items 1-4 only)*
 Nicola McCleave (health and wellbeing manager) *(items 1-4 only)*
 Jackie Schillinger (clerk)

PART A

item	Content
1.	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Charlie Woodcock, David Pearson, Luci Newell, Andrew Fletcher and Louise Young. The meeting was declared quorate.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>Members were reminded of their duties to declare any conflict of interest, financial or otherwise, relating to any item on the agenda. Members noted their interests on the declaration form and none</p>

	gave rise to any conflict in the meeting that required any member to withdraw or not take part in any discussion.
3.	Minutes
3.1	Part A of the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018 were reviewed and approved as a correct record, for signature by the Chair.
3.2	At item 4.2 of those minutes, the Principal confirmed that the Office for Students application has been accepted by the Office for Students and the outcome is expected towards the end of the summer.
4.	Safeguarding Update and Annual Safeguarding Report, including Prevent Action Plan
4.1	<p>All governors had received two pieces of Department for Education (DfE) Guidance for review in advance of the meeting: Part One Keeping Children Safe in Education, May 2018 for September 2018 implementation; and Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges, May 2018. Members confirmed that they had read the documents. In terms of Part One of the new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, it was noted that all College staff will need to confirm, once the guidance comes into force in September 2018 that they have read at least this part one of the guidance. The Vice Principal highlighted the key changes in the guidance from the existing 2016 guidance, much of which is helpful additional detail and examples. A couple of additions to note were the emerging safeguarding concern known as county lines and an increased emphasis on the legal requirement for staff to report concerns on female genital mutilation (FGM) to police and the potential disciplinary consequences of not doing so. Existing College safeguarding policy was considered to ensure that it remained compliant with the new guidance. Members supported the approach taken by the College that, whilst it makes clear that staff can directly refer concerns, the emphasis is rightly on a central referral approach through the safeguarding lead (or deputy) as the most effective method. In addition, the guidance on FGM makes it clear that staff can check any uncertainty or query regarding a concern with the lead and this aligns with College policy. In response to a question, it was confirmed that awareness training for students on FGM is covered within the BeReady programme and that the nature of this coverage will be reviewed in light of the strengthened guidance.</p> <p>ACTION: Review FGM content of BeReady programme to ensure comprehensive – Vice Principal/Assistant Principal</p>
4.2	<p>The Head of Student Services provided a development presentation for governors on county lines, which generated a question and discussion session. The session considered particular risk areas in the specific geography and college context and training for staff as well as close working with external agencies. Work to raise awareness with students in the BeReady programme was discussed and the need to raise this area of safeguarding as a priority also with HE students and the harder to reach block release students was recommended.</p> <p>ACTION: Enhance HE support to ensure county lines and FGM sufficiently covered and to prioritise these in safeguarding work with block release students – Vice Principal/Assistant Principal</p>
4.3	<p>The Vice Principal presented the Safeguarding Annual Report, including the College-wide Prevent Action Plan. In relation to the DfE guidance on sexual violence and harassment, the College context was again considered and the proactive approach taken to the issue was welcomed by members. This action included working closely with outside agencies, planning additional actions with the police and inviting in the independent lead of Cheshire East Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to look at what the College is doing. In addition, members were aware that the Executive have approved an increase to the safeguarding team's staffing budget and that the College is continuing to work on training, development and awareness with students, including the Student Association led projects on consent</p>

4.4	<p>and alcohol awareness. In terms of benchmarking these safeguarding incidents, it was confirmed that the College is not unusual in the sector by any means and that the Board can take assurance in the engagement with key external agencies and the significant levels of resourcing committed to this key area of College services. The Board requested sight of a College-wide strategy and action plan on tackling the issues of sexual violence and harassment between students, based on the new DfE guidance and that this be reported to the Board in the autumn term.</p> <p>ACTION: College strategy on tackling sexual violence and harassment between students reported to Board autumn term 2018-19 – Vice Principal/Assistant Principal.</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing Manager presented an update report on the work of her team, the key issues and areas of risk for young people and the work that she and her team are doing regionally and nationally in the sector. Members welcomed the huge amount of work being done by the College in this rapidly increasing area of safeguarding work and fully supported the application for an AoC Beacon Award. Members noted the increased resourcing over the past couple of years to create a specific wellbeing team, which was fully supported by the Board as an essential part of services to support students. Members heard about the positive impact that the wellbeing team’s work has had on students and staff and they asked for some examples and testimonials to be circulated by email outside the meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: Circulate testimonials re impact of the team and its work outside the meeting - Clerk</p>
5.	<p>Student Focus</p> <p>The student governor provided a brief update on the Student Association Projects at year end. She confirmed that she was really pleased with how staff members are keen to work with the students as links on the various projects and that these relationships for each project had been further developed this term. As she would be leaving the College, she confirmed that responsibility for the projects had been established for next year and the Student Association would be taking all projects forwards. Members thanked the student governor for all her work as a student governor and member of the Student Association, including her work on the projects, which were having real impact, and wished her all the very best for the future.</p>
6. 6.1 6.2.	<p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>The Principal presented his Report, including an update on the strategic alliance with the University of Chester, which he had also presented to the University of Chester Council meeting. Collaboration now and in the pipeline was considered and members agreed that the continuing development of the relationship with the University of Chester has brought great opportunities and benefits for both institutions. In terms of Reaseheath itself, his report covered education policy updates, academic performance in further education, higher education and apprenticeships, as well as financial performance, capital projects and staffing. The link governor for English and maths added her congratulations to that team for the progress made this year and all members welcomed the introduction of the cross-college English and maths staff awards this year, intended to raise its profile further and recognise its importance. On staffing matters, a member questioned the progress on iTrent functionality and it was confirmed that it had remained a problem this year, with the decision now taken to re-build the system.</p> <p>The Principal presented the final monitoring report on the Strategic Action Plan for 2017/18. Full commentary was provided in report on progress against the key areas to take forward in relation to each of the objectives and the KPIs for each objective were RAG rated in the report. Governors were asked to note the good solid progress made in delivering the 2017/18 strategic plan and KPIs. The context, detail and planned actions against those areas RAG rated Amber was explained in more detail.</p>

6.3	<p>Questions from members followed, which requested more detail on the re-focusing of the employer academies approach and the improvement of support for HE students to progress their maths and English skills. Members received the strategic plan update report, welcoming the good performance in the vast majority of areas this year.</p> <p>The Principal presented the final draft Strategic Plan for 2018/19 following consultation with stakeholders. Governors considered the plan in this final draft form, following their consideration of the draft at their meetings on 22 March and 24 May 2018. Governors welcomed the final form of the plan and approved it for publication. The Principal expressed his view that it is certainly worth the College investing in a supply of hard copies of both the strategic plan consultation document and the final strategic plan document, in order to send out to stakeholders, as it is a very impressive document.</p>
6.4.	<p>RESOLVED: To approve the College Strategic Plan for 2018/19 for publication.</p>
7.	<p>Minutes and Chair’s Report Search and Governance Committee</p> <p>7.1 The meeting received the Committee Chair’s report and the unconfirmed minutes for information and decision on recommendations.</p> <p>7.2 On review of the recommendations in the Chair’s Report, the Board RESOLVED to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The re-appointment of members David Pearson, Malcolm Burns, Colin Baxter and Anne McKay for a term of three years from 1 August 2018 2. The appointment of Francesca Francis as an independent member for a term of three years from 1 August 2018 3. The appointment of Jane Cowell as an independent associate member for a term of 1 year from 1 August 2018 4. The refreshed University of Chester Council governance arrangements and the associated amendment to the Strategic Alliance Agreement 5. The recommended Committee membership for 2018-19 6. The recommended Link Governor Arrangements for 2018-19 7. The recommended mentor arrangements 8. The Search and Governance Committee Terms of Reference for 2018/19
8.	<p>Minutes and Chair’s Report Finance and General Purposes Committee</p> <p>8.1 The meeting received the Committee Chair’s report (this time presented by Richard Ratcliffe, as he had chaired the committee meeting on this occasion) and the unconfirmed minutes, for information and decision on recommendations. He reported that the Committee received and discussed reporting indicating a good assurance level on the areas within the Committee’s delegated authority, including the key area of student numbers and income for 2018-19 and consideration of the draft budget for 2018-19. He also highlighted the in depth discussion on health and safety, with direct access to the College’s Health and Safety Manager, providing a good indication on where the College is and work still to be done. The Chair’s report also welcomed the reduction in the severity of the risk relating to staff recruitment and retention as a result of the management actions taken this year, although noting that staff recruitment and retention, especially in certain areas, remains a challenge.</p> <p>8.2 On review of the recommendations in the Chair’s Report, the Board RESOLVED to approve the Committee’s Terms of Reference for 2018-19.</p>

<p>9.</p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p> <p>9.5</p> <p>9.6</p>	<p>Annual Budget 2018/19</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer and Director of Resources (CFO) presented for approval the College Annual Budget for 2018/19 and the financial plan and assumptions, including consideration of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) financial plan checklist, provided in the meeting. The Board considered performance against the financial objectives and KPIs and noted the ESFA ‘satisfactory’ financial health rating for 2018-19 due to the peak borrowing in the capital project financial strategy and the reasons for the College’s own self-assessment as ‘good’ for that same year. Members noted the continuing strong EBITDA percentage as an indicator of good underlying financial health, which has remained strong and consistent over many years and is higher than the sector average and in line with the land-based sector. Members considered and were assured on the ESFA financial health rating aspect of the financial objectives and took assurance that the College meets all the other financial objectives and all bank covenants throughout the ten year forecast.</p> <p>Discussion then focused on testing the income assumptions as well as areas of increased cost to ensure the Executive team are confident that the assumptions are solid and the budget prudent. Members highlighted that the increase in income in this budget is greater than they had seen in previous budgets in recent years and so they wanted particular assurance on the assumptions behind the predicted increase. The different income lines and assumptions were considered in more detail, with the higher education income line the only one considered at any risk due to the huge uncertainties in the sector that have affected other providers significantly, whilst the College has so far bucked the trend. The worst case scenario on the quantum of this risk was considered. It was questioned and confirmed that other pipeline income had not been included at this stage, but could provide further growth this coming year. Headroom on expenditure was also considered and it was confirmed that the budget was based on a full staffing establishment. Discussion focused on the staffing establishment and the work done to ensure accuracy, whilst acknowledging that there is always likely to be some headroom due to the time taken to fill vacancies. Following the questioning and discussion, members were assured that the income and expenditure assumptions in the budget were justified and they were satisfied that the budget for 2018-19 and accompanying financial plan could be approved.</p> <p>Members considered the Management Accounts for period 10 and took assurance on the solid underlying performance of the business.</p> <p>Members discussed the annual staff pay award for 2018/19, which would be subject to the Board’s consideration of the AoC recommended award, yet to be published, and subject always to College budgeted targets being met.</p> <p>Following discussion and on review of the recommendations, the Board RESOLVED to approve the College annual budget for 2018/19 and financial plan and to await more information on the AoC recommended staff pay award in order to consider further and make a decision on the award at the Board meeting on 8 November 2018, with any pay award backdated to 1 October 2018.</p> <p>It was also noted that, in line with the financial strategy for the capital projects, the College would be drawing down an additional £2m to its current £7m of revolving credit facility before the 2017-18 year end and that the Board’s authority to draw down the remaining balance of the revolving credit was now requested, following on from the previous authorities provided in December 2016.</p>
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9.7	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>i. Further to the Reaseheath College Board resolutions 6.4 on 27 October 2016 and 16.5 on 8 December 2016, the Reaseheath College Board approves the draw down of the final balance of the revolving £13.5m credit facility with Santander required to deliver the remainder of the capital build programme on the terms of the facility set out in the financing proposal from Santander, and to authorise the Principal and the Chief Finance Officer and Director of Resources to enter into the contract with Santander by signing a Facility Letter on behalf of the Corporation.</p> <p>ii. Approve the removal from the Reaseheath College bank mandate of Thomas Emmet Meredydd David and the addition to the bank mandate of Marcus Clinton, with effect from 1 August 2018 and approval of the required actions to implement the resolution.</p>
<p>10.</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p> <p>10.3</p>	<p>Minutes and Chair’s Report Quality and Standards Committee</p> <p>The meeting received the Committee Chair’s report and the unconfirmed minutes for information and decision on recommendations. The Committee Vice Chair presented the report in the absence of the Committee Chair. He confirmed that the Committee had considered the effectiveness of the quality strategy and had received detailed reporting in key areas. In particular, the report provided assurance to the Board that the Committee had reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The curriculum and qualification strategies in detail, with assurance that the College is managing implementation and risk well and with thanks to be passed to the two curriculum Assistant Principals for their work on this key area • Performance measures, which are looking strong overall and the action plan on an area of concern on minimum levels of performance • The positive direction evidenced by the Quality Improvement Plan updates • The increasing complexity in safeguarding issues and the actions taken by the College • The quality monitoring reports, which provide good overall assurance • The College Guidelines on Physical Restraint, with the recommendation for approval and for the guidelines to be passed to the LSCB for their consideration/comment • The risk register review and the areas of focus on health and safety • The self-assessment of the Committee and the recommendation of its updated Terms of Reference for approval. <p>The report also highlighted a number of actions that had been agreed in the meeting including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close monitoring of levels of performance in relation to 19+ provision and the small amount of academic and applied general provision to ensure improvement continues • The addition of attendance improvement data to the English and maths Quality Improvement Plan for reporting next year • The addition of information about exclusions from residences and college, as well as more specific reporting on Prevent in the Safeguarding report • A review of the Committee business cycle to enable deep dives into certain areas whilst allowing time to deal with regular key issues. <p>On review of the recommendations in the Chair’s Report, the Board RESOLVED to approve the Committee’s Terms of Reference for 2018-19 and the Staff Guidelines: Physical Restraint.</p>

<p>11.</p> <p>11.1</p> <p>11.2</p>	<p>Minutes and Chair's Report Higher Education Committee</p> <p>The meeting received the Committee Chair's report and the unconfirmed minutes for information and decision on recommendations. The report provided assurance on the areas within the Committee's delegated authority, with the following key areas highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office for Students application is complete, with the outcome expected later in the summer • Student numbers are still looking strong but have reduced due to the unsuccessful Veterinary nursing validation and a recent slow down on conversions, however they are still looking in line with last year's numbers and strong compared to the sector • The Student Pulse survey and the dip in satisfaction with teaching and learning, with the improvement action plan to be reported to the Committee in the summer. • The academic risk review and highlighting on the risk register of the concern on student satisfaction with teaching and learning, to ensure improvement action is monitored at Committee and Board level. • The recommended approval of the Terms of Reference for 2018-19 and to ensure that the Committee receives specific HE safeguarding reporting in future. <p>On review of the recommendations in the Chair's Report, the Board RESOLVED to approve the Committee's Terms of Reference for 2018-19.</p>
<p>12.</p> <p>12.1</p> <p>12.2</p>	<p>Minutes and Chair's Report Audit Committee</p> <p>The meeting received the Committee Chair's report and the unconfirmed minutes for information and decision on recommendations. The Committee Chair confirmed that the Committee had considered the areas of activity within its remit and had received good assurance on the majority of areas reported to its meeting. He drew the Board's attention to the two internal audit reports with 'partial assurance' outcomes - Post 1 May 2017 Apprenticeships Framework Review and the Internal Verification Framework Review. He referred members to the minutes for the further detail on these areas and the follow up actions that would be closely monitored by the Committee. Members considered the internal audit service plan for 2018-19 and discussed the increase in the number of days for risk based audits and the corresponding increase in cost. The Audit Committee Chair confirmed that the Committee had considered this in detail and were happy with the coverage and that the amount of audit activity planned is needed, subject to a check outside of the meeting by the management team and internal auditors that the plan is as lean as it can be. The CFO noted that since the plan had been drawn up, the College had received notification that it had been randomly selected for an ESFA Assurance review at the end of August. This would mean that the mock funding audit planned for 2018-19 would not now be required and could potentially reduce some of the audit activity, although this would depend on the outcome of the ESFA audit. Following this discussion the Board was assured that the internal audit plan for next year was justified.</p> <p>On review of the recommendations in the Chair's Report, the Board RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the annual appointment of RSM as the College's internal auditors for 2018/19 academic year 2. Approve the annual appointment of Mazars LLP for the 2018/19 financial statements audit 3. Approve the External Audit Strategy Memorandum and the draft letter of engagement. 4. Approve the Internal Audit Strategy and Internal Audit Plan for 2018/19 5. Approve the Annual Risk Management Report 6. Approve the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire Report and authorise the Chair and the Principal to sign the Report. 7. Approve the Committee Terms of Reference for 2018/19

13.	<p>Appointment of Chair for the year 1 August 2018 – 31 July 2019</p> <p>RESOLVED: David Pearson is appointed to the role of Chair for the year 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019.</p>
14.	<p>Appointment of Vice Chair/s for the year 1 August 2018 – 31 July 2019.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Dr Elizabeth Harrison and Richard Ratcliffe are appointed to the roles of Vice Chairs for the year 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019.</p>
15.	<p>Annual Declaration of Interests</p> <p>15.1 Members confirmed their interests as indicated on the current Register of Interests circulated by the Clerk in advance of the meeting, with any updates or amendments provided to the Clerk to ensure that the Register of Interests is up to date. Members noted that any changes to their interests should be notified to the Clerk during the year.</p> <p>15.2 RESOLVED: To record the annual declaration of the interests of members and to approve the updated Register of Interests, kept by the Clerk.</p>
16.	<p>The following items were received for information:</p> <p>Governor link visit feedback reports College Seal Report</p>
17.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There was no further business reported under Part A.</p>
18.	<p>Date of next meetings</p> <p>The dates of the next meetings were confirmed as 8 November 2018 and 13 December 2018.</p>

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

A PART B meeting followed.

Signed:

Dated: