

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 November 2019 at 2.00pm
L3/L4 in the PLC, Reaseheath College

Present	<p>Karol Bailey (independent) KB Malcolm Burns (independent) MB Patrick Carter (student) PC (<i>items 1 – 10 inclusive</i>) Marcus Clinton (principal) MC (<i>items 1 – 15 inclusive</i>) Jane Cowell (independent) JC Prof Gary Crowe (independent) GC (<i>item 9 onwards</i>) Andrew Fletcher (independent) AF Francesca Francis (independent) FF Jon Furber (independent) JF Prof Chris Gaskell (independent) CG Mike Gorton (independent) MG Peter Green (independent) PG Dr Elizabeth Harrison (independent) EH Anne McKay (staff) AM (<i>items 1 – 15 inclusive</i>) David Pearson (independent, Chair) DP Angela Potter (independent) AP Alastair Taylor (independent) AT Liz Watts (staff) LW (<i>items 1 – 15 inclusive</i>) Prof Tim Wheeler (independent) TW (<i>item 1 – 11 inclusive</i>)</p>
Attending	<p>Peter Greenall (assistant principal, dean of HE) PGreenall (<i>items 1 – 14 inclusive</i>) Matthew Gower (assistant principal) MGower (<i>items 1 – 14 inclusive</i>) Sarah Houghton (assistant principal) SH (<i>items 1 – 14 inclusive</i>) Graeme Lavery (chief finance officer and director of resources) GL (<i>items 1 – 14 inclusive</i>) Dave Kynaston (vice principal) DPK (<i>items 1 – 14 inclusive</i>) Paul Spearritt (assistant principal) PS (<i>items 1 – 14 inclusive</i>) Louise Woodman (HR director) LW Sharon Yates (assistant principal) SY (<i>items 1 – 14 inclusive</i>) Jackie Schillinger (clerk) JS</p>

PART A unless indicated – 2.00pm

Item	Content
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Colin Baxter, Charlie Woodcock and Charlotte Brunt. Gary Crowe had indicated that he would be a little late for the meeting.
1.2	The meeting was quorate and remained quorate throughout.

<p>2.</p> <p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p>Register of Corporation Members' Interests and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Governors reviewed, confirmed (with a couple of changes yet to be incorporated) and approved their interests in the register of Corporation Members Interests. There were no interests declared as giving rise to a conflict of interest in relation to the agenda items for the meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Governors' declaration of interests on the Register of Corporation Members' Interests are reviewed, confirmed and approved.</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>Appointment of Student Governors</p> <p>RESOLVED: In accordance with the Instrument and Articles of Government, the appointments of Charlotte Brunt as HE student governor and Patrick Carter as FE student governor for the 2019-20 academic year are approved.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2019</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2019 were approved as a correct record of the meeting, with one typographical error corrected, and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>The rolling action log was reviewed, and the clerk confirmed that the actions were either complete or on the agenda for the December board meeting and confirmed that she would update the log accordingly and remove all completed actions.</p> <p>JC requested an update on FE student numbers and MC confirmed that the college has seen an increase of about 130 16-18 FE students this year. JC felt that whilst this is not above the additional in year funding growth number, it may be worth a request as it is very strong growth. FF requested an update on HE student numbers and PGreenall confirmed that 'new recruit' numbers were solid but that not as many students progressed as expected, which has impacted on overall numbers. MC noted that the finance update later in the meeting would provide an overview of the financial position and that the forthcoming December Board meeting provided a good opportunity to focus on finance.</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>Minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 10 October 2019</p> <p>The Chair reported on the recent search and Governance Committee meeting and the minutes were received for information, assurance and recommended approvals.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the appointment of Prof Gary Crowe to the HE Committee at its forthcoming meeting.</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>Annual Declarations of Eligibility and Acceptance of Code of Conduct</p> <p>RESOLVED: To confirm members' commitment to the completion of the annual declarations of eligibility (completed individually) and to operating in line with the governor code of conduct.</p>
<p>7.</p> <p>7.1</p>	<p>Annual Review of Instrument and Articles, Scheme of Delegation and Standing Orders</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Reaseheath College Board Constitution for 2019-20, with the minor changes agreed as set out on page one of the constitution.</p>

8.	Annual Governance Cycle of Business and Draft Forward Plan 2019-20
8.1	RESOLVED: To approve the Reaseheath College Board Governance Cycle of Business and Draft Forward Plan 2019-20.
9.	<p>OFS Compliance with regulatory deadlines: reminder for governing bodies</p> <p>9.1 The board received the letter from the Office for Students (OFS) addressed to the Chair, entitled compliance with regulatory deadlines: reminder for governing bodies. The Assistant Principal and Dean of Higher Education (the Dean) explained that the letter related to the payment by the college of the QAA fee payment, which had been two days outside the payment deadline. The Dean explained the reasons that the deadline was missed, due to the QAA invoice being slightly delayed in the finance system. The steps that have been taken to prevent a recurrence were explained, including that key UCR contact information is being checked and reiterated to the OFS to ensure this has been picked up across OFS systems and that UCR has taken steps to embed the tracking processes needed to ensure compliance with the strict deadlines that are now in place.</p> <p>9.2 Governors then discussed the matter. Assurance was requested and received from the Principal, Chief Finance Officer and the Dean that OFS related communications are being tracked through college systems and actions implemented without delay, with all the relevant support teams reminded of the importance of swift action at all times. Assurance was requested and received from the Dean that the reminder letter from the OFS was not expected to trigger any further consequences for UCR as actions are in place to prevent a recurrence. Governors noted the importance of evidencing strong management and governance arrangements in all dealings with the OFS.</p> <p>9.3 Following the discussion, it was confirmed that the regulatory risk of non-compliance with OFS regulatory requirements and deadlines is contained within the internal audit cycle in relation to regulatory returns and is on the board level strategic risk register and will be monitored on a termly basis by the board. Governors confirmed that a response to the OFS should be made by the Chair and they also recommended that a receipt/acknowledgement of the letter from the Chair to the Director of Competition and Registration be obtained from the OFS.</p>
10.	<p>Items for approval/ratification</p> <p>Members provided some helpful feedback on corrections, consistency of wording and final wording tweaks and, with these incorporated, made the following approvals.</p> <p>10.1 RESOLVED: To approve the College Group Strategic Plan 2019-24</p> <p>10.2 RESOLVED: To approve the cost of living staff pay award strategy, including the proposed Christmas closedown arrangements.</p> <p>10.3 RESOLVED: To ratify the Study Tours and Educational Visits Policy</p> <p>10.4 RESOLVED: To ratify the Business Continuity and Critical Incident Policy</p> <p>10.5 RESOLVED: To approve the Governor Conflicts of Interest Policy</p> <p>10.6 RESOLVED: To approve the Arrangements for Obtaining the Views of Students and Staff</p>

10.7	RESOLVED: To approve the Policy on Reimbursement of Governor Expenses
10.8	RESOLVED: To approve the Senior Post Holder Disciplinary Policy
10.9	RESOLVED: To approve the Senior Post Holder Grievance Policy
10.10	RESOLVED: To approve the Grievances Against Senior Post Holders Policy
11.	<p data-bbox="256 718 1482 772">Governor Workshop: College FE and Apprenticeship performance 2018-19</p> <p data-bbox="256 772 1482 850">11.1 The Assistant Principal, Quality and Learner Services, MGower presented an overview of college performance in the context of the expectations in the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF), based on the college draft Self-Assessment Report (SAR), provided to members in advance of the session. This included key headline data, benchmark data against national averages (and land-based sector averages) key strengths and weaknesses and equality and diversity data in terms of closing any achievement gaps. The session also covered the quality improvement plan for 2019-20. The session was intended as a development session to ensure that all governors gained an understanding of headline college performance, strengths and weaknesses and key improvement areas for 2019-20. Key headline information provided included:</p> <p data-bbox="256 850 1482 892">Strengths:</p> <ul data-bbox="305 892 1482 1323" style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-18 provision is above National Averages and in the top 30% of specialist colleges (which includes land-based) • Level 2 provision (which is the college’s largest provision) is very strong, especially in progress measure data and the college is in the top 10% of land-based colleges in this provision • High needs provision data is very strong and high needs students achieve to a higher degree than the general student population • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data for at risk groups shows no achievement gaps • English and maths provision are very positive. It is tracking above National Averages and the 4-9 grade data is tracking on National Averages, with 4-9 grade data above National Averages for land-based provision. Progress measures in English and maths are positive, which is very positive data. <p data-bbox="256 1323 1482 1365">Areas for improvement:</p> <ul data-bbox="305 1365 1482 1606" style="list-style-type: none"> • 19+ adult provision is below National Averages but has shown a continued improvement over the last 3 years, with a focus on further improvement in 2019-20 • Apprenticeship data is not so strong, although it is on National Averages, but with a declining trend, and this has been validated as a ‘requires improvement’ area • Level 3 Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) qualifications and short non-regulated qualifications are a focus for improvement in 2019-20 <p data-bbox="256 1606 1482 1837">11.2 Governors worked in groups, based on the data and information provided, to consider the EIF grading boundaries, the evidence provided in the SAR, how the college compares against the sector and EIF grading in relation to Quality of Education, Behaviours and Management, Personal Development and Leadership and Management. The Principal provided an overview of the college’s intent for consideration in the group work.</p> <p data-bbox="256 1837 1482 1917">11.3 In the meeting discussion that followed the group work, questions and challenge from governors included:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AT and AM questioned how much progress has been made with curriculum staff to ensure they fully understand and can evidence the intent of their programmes. MGower and MC confirmed that quality monitoring work and CPD focus includes intent and this work will ensure that intent is central to curriculum staff thinking; • JC queried if the college has a clear strand on knowledge retrieval. MGower confirmed that the college has focused on knowledge retrieval in its CPD, with a lot of work with staff on techniques to maximise knowledge retention. JC noted that it would be useful to recognise the work in schools and draw on this and PS confirmed the view that much of this secondary school work has been utilised in the EIF; • In relation to Quality of Education, the governor group asked how well managers have embedded checking and tracking progress within the pedagogy. MC confirmed he felt the college was well on the way with this but, being self-critical, there is still work to be done; • In relation to Behaviours and Attitudes, governors asked how consistent the ‘Reaseheath Family’ model is across the college. MC confirmed that there are pockets of exceptional practice and overall this is very strong, with the area self-assessed as a grade 1, which was supported in the recent external validation. He noted that the governor Quality and Standards Committee would have further input into this grading decision at its meeting on 18 November. A question was posed about the extent to which the college is developing students to exist in the challenging environment outside of college as very important, in addition to providing a very inclusive environment at college. MC thanked governors for this challenge, and he confirmed that he considered this area as a real strength but it will be important to be very confident about evidencing it and ensuring there is a focus on the development of self-reflective learning for resilience and self-reliance; • In relation to Personal Development, the group discussion acknowledged this area was very strong, however, governors highlighted the need to ensure that this personal development is strong across all areas and in the work placement environment as well as in college. They also asked about the level of evidence for this ethos across college. SH noted that much of this can be evidenced in the Student Association (SA) activity across college and co-ordination and relationships between the college and the SA; • MGower made the point that the college should be able to evidence intent and implementation very well and that the impact of the work done on behaviours and attitudes and personal development may not be seen immediately and until the students have moved on from college. He felt that this is acknowledged in the EIF. TW noted that it will be important to provide inspectors with access to alumni to evidence impact and MGower agreed, with much positive evidence of impact such as the agriculture student from last year’s cohort who has recently won the 2019 Farmers Weekly Young Farmer of the Year award; • In relation to leadership and management, the governor group recommended that the aspect of safeguarding leadership be made more prominent in the self-assessment report around leadership and management and noted that this had been discussed in the recent external validation event.
11.4	<p>MGower thanked governors for their input and feedback. He requested that governors familiarise themselves with the self-assessment report and position statements for their link areas in particular so that they can have conversations with managers around intent, implementation and impact on their link visits this year.</p>
12.	<p>Any other business (reported to chair/clerk in advance)</p>
12.1	<p><u>Part B confidential</u></p>

12.2	<p>The Principal, MC provided an update on the financial position following the executive’s deep dive session on 8 November. He noted the overall position is on budget, but this said, there is work to do to deliver on this. He explained the income pressures, being most significantly the downwards pressure on HE income with also downwards pressure on the high needs income target and the food commercial income target. He explained that the college is having to increase costs to support growth in year which will not be paid until next year and that the transport costs are above budget. However, to balance these pressures, accommodation income is significantly up against budget this year and pay costs are significantly below budget, providing a substantial saving in pay costs. He noted that a number of positives have not yet been factored in and in summary he felt confident that the college could come in virtually back to budget by year end. DP thanked MC for the update and noted that the financial position would be scrutinised at the forthcoming Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting and the December board meeting.</p>
12.3	<p>With the prior approval of the Chair, MC and DPK presented an item of any other business for the approval for a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funded project involving robotic milking on the farm. Members were aware of the project bid and had received the paper by email in advance of the meeting. GL provided details on the requirements and the college’s responsibilities in terms of actions and costs. He explained that there is no cost to the college other than the ongoing costs of maintenance of the project once developed and this has been included in the bid amount. He provided assurance that the college was confident that it could meet these ongoing responsibilities. DPK confirmed that the project is fully aligned with the farm strategy and business plan that is the subject of discussion at the forthcoming board meeting. JF asked how robotic milking will work within the farm structure. Governor members of the farm steering committee, MG, AF, CG and KB confirmed it fits very well into the farm strategy. MG asked about the phasing of the project payments and GL confirmed that this is being planned with the college bank to ensure that cash flow is well managed throughout the project period. GC welcomed the successful bid, saying that it is a considerable achievement as it aligns well with the farm strategy and is virtually 100% fully funded. EH noted some details in the offer letter needed to be corrected before signature and gained assurance that the college’s document retention process fulfilled the offer’s requirements. Following the discussion, members were assured that entering into the LEP offer agreement and implementing the robotic milking project on the farm were fully aligned with college strategy and in the best interests of the college and its students.</p>
12.4	<p>RESOLVED: To approve entering into the LEP Agreement for the robotic milking project on the terms set out in the LEP offer letter and to authorise the Principal to sign the LEP offer letter and return to the LEP by 30 November 2019.</p>
13.	<p>ITEMS ESCALATED TO THE STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER</p>
13.1	<p>The Chair referenced the discussion on the subsidiary company and the expectation that there will be a deep dive in the spring term, at the March 2020 board meeting to consider the risks in relation to the subsidiary company.</p>
14.	<p>Date of next meeting The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 11 December at 2.00pm.</p>
15.	<p>Governors only (LW remains) PART B CONFIDENTIAL</p>
16.	<p>Independent Governors only (LW remains) PART B CONFIDENTIAL</p>

The meeting closed at 5.30pm

Signed:

Dated: