

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020 at 9.30am
Via MS Teams

- Present Karol Bailey (independent) KB
 Colin Baxter (independent) CB
 Malcolm Burns (independent) MB
 Marcus Clinton (principal) MC
 Jane Cowell (independent) JC (*items 1 – 14 inclusive*)
 Gary Crowe (independent) GC
 Andrew Fletcher (independent) AF
 Prof Chris Gaskell (independent) CG
 Mike Gorton (independent) MG
 Peter Green (independent) PG
 Dr Elizabeth Harrison (independent) EH
 Anne McKay (staff) AM (*items 1 – 18 inclusive*)
 David Pearson (independent, Chair) DP
 Angela Potter (independent) AP
 Prof Eunice Simmons (independent) ES (*items 1 – 18 inclusive*)
 Alastair Taylor (independent) AT
 Liz Watts (staff) LW (*items 1 – 18 inclusive*)
 Paul Weston (independent) PW
- Attending Graeme Lavery (vice principal, finance and resources) GL (*items 1-18 inclusive*)
 Matthew Gower (vice principal quality and curriculum) MGower (*items 1- 18 inclusive*)
 Peter Greenall (assistant principal and dean of HE) PGreenall
 Paul Spearritt (assistant principal) PS (*items 1-18 inclusive*)
 Louise Woodman (human resources director) LW (*items 1-18 inclusive*)
 Sharon Yates (assistant principal) SY (*items 1-18 inclusive*)
 Iain Clarke (assistant principal) IC (*items 1-18 inclusive*)
 Trudie McGuinness (assistant principal) TM (*items 1-18 inclusive*)
 Robert Sparkes (student life coordinator) RS (*item 7*)
 Jackie Schillinger (company secretary) JS

PART A unless stated

item	Content
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Jon Furber and Chelsey Rowntree. The meeting was quorate.

2. 2.1	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>The following interests were noted: MC, JC, PG as members of the college subsidiary board of directors; MC and ES as members of the University of Chester Council. AP and CG declared an interest in item 3.1 and took no part in the decision.</p>
3. 3.1	<p>Reappointment of members and appointment of committee members on recommendation by the Search and Governance Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The re-appointment of Angela Potter and Prof Chris Gaskell as members of the Board for a period of three years. ii. The following Committee appointments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mike Gorton on the Special Committee ○ Andrew Fletcher to join the Estates Development and Property Group ○ Paul Weston to join the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Estates Development and Property Group ○ Evelyn Davies Jones as co-opted external member of the Remuneration Committee and the Special Committee ○ Ian Britton from University of Chester appointed as the co-opted member of the Higher Education Committee.
4. 4.1	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020 and matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020 were approved as a correct record. The rolling action log was received and noted with actions completed or on track.</p>
5. 5.1	<p>Chair’s Report</p> <p>The Chair’s report was received for information, with thanks.</p>
6. 6.1 6.2	<p>Principal’s Report</p> <p>Discussion focused on assurance on work with employers to ensure apprentices can access the campus in a safe way and members welcomed the work carried out to ensure delivery on site recommenced for the autumn term and the progress made generally in all the circumstances. ES welcomed the collaborative work with University of Chester generally and in particular she noted the need to work closely to ensure the University Centre Reaseheath National Student Survey scores are higher in the next survey with close working now in place with the University’s Head of Quality Ian Britton appointed to the HE Committee and MC and PGreenall attending University senior management and deans meetings.</p> <p>The Principal’s Report was received for information, with thanks.</p>
7. 7.1 7.2	<p>Student Association Report</p> <p>Annual Report: RS, Student Life Co-ordinator presented the report. The Student Association Annual Report and Accounts were received for information and assurance, with thanks. DP on behalf of the Board thanked the Student Association for all their hard work and commitment to the college.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Student Association Constitution.</p>

<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)</p> <p>LW presented the report, highlighting the very positive feedback from the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the strategic approach to EDI going forwards. Members had considered the report in advance of the meeting and fully supported the EDI strategic direction and thanked LW for her presentation.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report.</p>
<p>9.</p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p>	<p>Safeguarding, Prevent and Wellbeing</p> <p>The Annual Safeguarding, Prevent and Wellbeing Report was received for information and assurance. DP welcomed the reporting and noted that it would be helpful to receive assurance from Cheshire East on its review of the policies, as they have requested sight of them. JC requested and received assurance on how the college is managing the risk of the online aspects of safeguarding and prevent and the usefulness of having this in the annual report going forwards. EH requested and received an update on wellbeing team staffing and how the peaks and troughs of service demands are managed. ES commented that the report was very clear and helpful and that she considered it might raise the question of whether the service can cope effectively with the peaks of demand given the staffing challenges and so the granularity of the evidence will be important to be able to show this. MGower provided assurance that the evidence is there in the weekly safeguarding and monthly wellbeing reports that are reviewed by the Executive Team. ES supported the focus on external reciprocity raised by DP and noted that close work with the University on the digital defence aspect would be very welcome as well as perhaps looking at working with feeder schools and Landex Colleges to ensure that the college is on the front foot with this. MGower referred to the excellent previous project with the University on sexual consent and he confirmed that he would welcome working on a peer project on online/digital safety.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Safeguarding and Prevent Policies: Young Person Safeguarding Policy; Safeguarding Adults Policy.</p>
<p>10.</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p>Health and Safety</p> <p>The Annual Health and Safety Report was received for information and assurance. The meeting welcomed the improvements in reporting near misses and unsafe acts coming through but noted that this still needs improvement in the subsidiary company to gain assurance on this aspect in the subsidiary. EH requested and received assurance on the report to the HSE from a staff member in relation to covid measures and LW confirmed this issue was related to an individual grievance, which is now resolved. CG highlighted the link between health and safety and health and wellbeing and GL confirmed that the college is working on achieving health monitoring across the college that is the first step in this wider link between health and safety and wellbeing. DP supported the linking of the suite of policies in these areas and he offered to be involved in this as the safeguarding lead governor.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Health and Safety Policy.</p>
<p>11.</p> <p>11.1</p>	<p>Strategic Plan Monitoring</p> <p>Strategic Objectives performance 2019-20 and KPIs 2020-21: MC presented the report for assurance and for approval of the KPIs for 2020-21. He explained that the proposed KPIs for 20/21 have been</p>

	<p>minorly updated since July 2020, however, the KPIs for quality are being reviewed to see whether they can be clarified and these will be discussed at a Quality and Standards Committee meeting in January and then through to the Board at its strategic meeting in late January. He noted that all the other KPIs are populated and are the standard KPIs driven by the signed off budget for 20/21 and as set out in the strategic plan.</p>
11.2	<p>In respect of the KPI performance for the last academic year, 19/20 he reported the following key points:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -KPI results have been reviewed at the various committees – FGP, Q&S and Audit -re Strategic Risk Register -KPIs are also utilised when reviewing the strategic risk register alongside a whole range of evidence when determining the RAG rating for the nine business critical risk areas. -Some results are blank as there was insufficient data due to the impact of Covid, although it should be noted in respect of staff utilisation and average group size we have work to do on the reporting systems for those two. -To a large extent all KPIs were impacted by Covid and an unusual set of data as a result. Hopefully, many of the KPIs can be reported as normal, or certainly more for 20/21. -The finance KPIs that were red were due to the impact of Covid and have been extensively reported and discussed. -The staffing failure to recruit is a sector wide issue and is unlikely to significantly improve until funding and pay issues are levelled up. -The Apprenticeship achievement rates are below where we would wish to see them but are in line with national standards as it has been a sector wide issue managing the transition to standards and End Point Assessments and these would now be expected to start to climb. - The achievement of the BE Ready passport is inconsistent across the college with some areas excelling and some not managing to embed this. This will be a focus for improvement in 2020-21. - The NSS scores were lower than target and this is a major focus for this year and will be helped by a more stable staff and leadership team who also benefit from an improved structure. - All other KPIs that could be reported with any meaningful data are Green.
11.3	<p>Strategic Objectives update 2020-21: MC provided an update presentation on 2020-21 strategic objectives, updated in the various areas of executive team strategic responsibility. Members were referred to the major outcome tracker in the strategic plan working document and welcomed the update showing good progress made so far this year on the strategic initiatives, given the challenging circumstances so far this year. DP welcomed the progress on college management team development. ES requested and received assurance that the college has planned to access capital bid opportunities.</p>
11.4	<p>Strategic Risk Review: MC presented the executive summary of the key strategic risks and risk movements following the executive in depth review of the risks in the autumn term. Members received the report for information and assurance.</p>
11.5	<p>RESOLVED: To confirm the Strategic Objectives and Key Performance Indicators for 2020-21</p>
12.	<p>Committee Reports items for escalation to the Board.</p>
12.1	<p>The following Committee Reports were received for information and assurance, with thanks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quality and Standards Committee ○ Higher Education Committee ○ Finance and General Purposes Committee ○ Audit Committee ○ Search and Governance Committee ○ Confidential Part B

12.2	In relation to the committee reports, the meeting noted that the Quality and Standards Committee would be reviewing the quality related KPIs at a meeting in the new year and the HE Committee would focus on NSS and recruitment in particular and its chair CG welcomed the appointment of Ian Britton and the support of the VC. The meeting also noted that the Finance and General Purposes Committee would be holding a Part B meeting in relation to college land before Christmas and this would be reported back in due course.
13.	2019-20 Year End Financial Statements
13.1	The Audit Committee Annual Report was received for assurance from the Audit Committee Chair, CB. The report included the annual internal audit opinion from internal auditors, RSM. The Audit Committee reported its opinion that the Corporation has adequate and effective assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the institution and the body and the safeguarding of their assets. Members received the Audit Committee Annual Report for assurance in advance of consideration of approval of the college financial statements.
13.2	The Financial Statements Auditor Completion Report was received for assurance from the external auditor Mazars LLP. The VP Finance and Resources, GL presented the report providing an unqualified opinion, without modification, that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the college's affairs as at 31 July 2020 and that they have been properly prepared. In addition, the Finance Statements Auditor Completion Report stated that its regularity audit confirmed that nothing has come to the auditor's attention that in all material respects the income and expenditure has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities that govern them. These external audit assurances were received by the meeting in advance of consideration of approval of the college financial statements. It was noted for assurance that the report had been scrutinised at the joint audit and finance and general purposes committee meeting, with the external auditor in attendance.
13.3	GL highlighted that the Financial Statements Auditor Completion Report brings to the attention of the Board the Group letter of support for the subsidiary company that is required for the year end statutory accounts. GL shared the proposed letter and he gave assurance that this is a belt and braces going concern issue that has been put in place across the sector. The meeting considered the letter and were content to approve it.
13.4	The draft Audited Financial Statements for period ending 31 July 2020 and Management Representation Letter were received and presented by the Vice Principal, Finance and Resources. The Financial and General Purposes Chair's report confirmed committee scrutiny of the draft financial statements and recommendation for approval. The meeting received detail on the LGPS pension scheme impacts, reserves and the strong cash position at year end. PW noted the 2 year perspective on net reserves and GL confirmed the impacts in the past 2 years were related to revaluation of LGPS pension fund which is a sector issue and outside the control of the College. AP confirmed the sector wide LGPS pension issue is sector wide and may have further impacts next year and the impacts could take a while to recover. On consideration of the consolidated financial statements and in the context of the assurances received from auditors and the audit committee, the meeting approved the statements, as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
13.5	RESOLVED: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="289 1875 1471 1936">i. Financial Statements for the year to 31 July 2020 are approved and the Chair and the Principal are authorised to sign the statements

13.6	<p>ii. The terms of the management representation letter are approved</p> <p>iii. The letter of support from the College to the College subsidiary company DART Limited, is approved.</p> <p>Confidential Part B item.</p>
<p>14.</p> <p>14.1</p>	<p>2020-21 Financial reporting</p> <p>Management accounts and cash flow: Period 3 management accounts and cash flow reporting was received for information, including covid impacts, mitigations and actions. It was noted that the strategic day in January would include an update on finances in year. ES noted that the Board needs to be sighted on student number assumptions in Higher Education going forwards in the planning as the recruitment system is changing and there is a level of uncertainty.</p>
<p>15.</p> <p>15.1</p> <p>15.2</p>	<p>Items for approval</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the College Self-Assessment Report</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Higher Education Strategy</p>
<p>16.</p> <p>16.1</p>	<p>Any other business (notified to chair/co sec in advance)</p> <p>The Principal invited members to the online Christmas event that includes the staff awards and thanked the governors for all their support and commitment over the year. The Chair reiterated thanks to everyone for their support and contributions and in particular thanked ES for her valuable contributions since joining the governing body at the start of the academic year. The Chair and the Principal wished all a merry Christmas.</p>
<p>17.</p> <p>17.1</p>	<p>Any items for escalation to strategic risk register</p> <p>There were no items to escalate to the risk register, that were not already covered on the register.</p>
<p>18.</p> <p>18.1</p>	<p>Date of next meetings:</p> <p>The date of the next meetings were confirmed as Governor strategy day: 28 January 2021; Board meeting 25 March 2021 at 9.30am</p>

The meeting closed at 12.45pm

Approved as a correct record 25 March 2021.