

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2021 at 9.30am
Via MS Teams

Present: Malcolm Burns (independent) MB
 Marcus Clinton (principal) MC
 Prof Gary Crowe (independent) GC
 Elizabeth Harrison (independent, chair) EH
 David Pearson (independent) DP (*items 1 – 4 inclusive*)
 Angela Potter (independent) AP
 Richard Ratcliffe (external, co-opted) RR
 Liz Watts (staff) LW
 Paul Weston (independent) PW (*item 4 onwards*)

In attendance: Graeme Lavery, VP finance and resources GL
 Peter Greenall, AP and dean of higher education PG (*item 5.2 only*)
 Louise Woodman, director of people and culture, LW
 Jackie Schillinger, company secretary, JS

PART A (unless stated)

Item	Content
1.	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
1.1	Apologies were received and accepted from Jon Furber and Andrew Fletcher. Paul Weston had given his apologies for joining the meeting a little late. Attendee Peter Greenall would be attending for his item on the agenda and attendee Matt Gower had sent his apologies. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.
1.2	The meeting was quorate.
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
2.1	MC's interest as a director of the subsidiary company was noted. No other interests were declared.
3.	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING
3.1	Part A and Confidential Part B of the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2020 were approved as a correct record.
3.2	Confidential Part B item.
3.3	Confidential Part B item.

<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p>HUMAN RESOURCES</p> <p>HR Update Report: LW presented her report including the key areas: Covid update; mass testing update with only one case of college transmission of Covid that was contained; assurance plans in place and the college team is now experienced in carrying out the testing; furlough update; HR system project update; HR data presentation (FTE, turnover, exit interviews, sickness, with progress now showing on work the team has been doing on long term sickness); Wellbeing update and PDR strategy plan update. Questions and discussion followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DP questioned whether there is a risk to delivery on restoration and recovery. LW provided assurance that the executive team has had discussions around this risk and the flexible working approach planned in the restoration phase should be able to manage this risk with return in a phased way and focused on individual circumstances. MC noted staff were much more accessible with the Teams remote working and this needed managing and the numbers of staff off self-isolating at times had made it a very challenging term for people. - GC noted that it looks positive on the exit side of things at the moment, and he would support the approach of making this aspect a conversation embedded in the leaving process. He gave his view that the wellbeing side could be looked at a little more in the survey with questions around how staff feel supported by their line managers. He suggested a deep dive to have a look at this in a bit more depth. LW explained the suite of support measures in place and agreed to bring this more detailed reporting to the next FGP meeting. GL supported this and noted that data can be provided from the weekly executive team reporting. - AP suggested it would be useful to see how many of the new starts then left the college within twelve months. LW confirmed that she can provide this information in the report in future, and noted that the numbers are not high but she is aware of a few in the hard to fill areas. <p>LW presented the updated staff survey results taken at the end of the term. MC provided an overview of how the college is responding to these survey results. EH suggested looking a little more closely at the split between those that are at opposite ends of the responses and the approach to teams discussing the negative areas or concerns together to drill down a bit more rather than trying to focus on an individual response. LW agreed and confirmed that this was the approach being taken.</p> <p>EH thanked LW for the comprehensive paper, received for information and assurance and confirmed the action for the overview of staff wellbeing to be looked at it more detail at the next meeting.</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p>STUDENT NUMBERS AND FUNDING REPORTS</p> <p>FE and Apprenticeships student data report: MC presented the overview of student recruitment and funding, updated to be as up to date as possible for the meeting and therefore provided just in advance of the meeting. As members had not had a chance to look at the report in any detail, MC went through the key points, RAG-rated across the different income streams. Assurance was provided from the data that the overall position is very strong, with significant growth in 16-18 student numbers and good assurance on apprenticeship data with more work to do on adult numbers. AP noted that she looks after twenty two colleges and this positive story on 16-18 growth is being seen across the sector, with the data on apprenticeships looking much more robust than the sector generally and the adult position looking good by comparison to the</p>

5.2	<p>sector. EH thanked AP for this very helpful benchmarking assurance. EH noted that the planned adult focus is to be welcomed as there should be significant opportunity in this area.</p> <p>HE student data report: PG provided an update on HE recruitment and retention and the steps in place to maximise this during the year and into next year, including progress on demand for top up programmes. Curriculum developments were also shared, including football programmes, coaching and injury and rehabilitation, linked to the FE football academy with Crewe Alex, landscape architecture, countryside management, zoo management, animal management refreshed offer and ensuring all programmes remain relevant and up to date. EH thanked PG for the comprehensive report, and the assurance provided in the report, especially on the curriculum developments that members, including those on HE Committee have been keen to see moving forward well. MC added that the government focus going forwards on level 4 and 5 technical programmes will suit the offer at Reaseheath very well and should help to build a strong recruitment trend as well as the work already underway. Members received the report with good assurance that significant work is ongoing and good progress is being made .</p>
6.	<p>FINANCIAL MONITORING</p> <p>6.1 Members had received Period 5 management accounts and the update to Period 6 was provided in advance of the meeting, for discussion in the meeting. GL presented the executive summary for period 6 and he noted the added commentary to explain the underlying story.</p> <p>6.2 GC saluted the quality of the budgeting and welcomed the proposed outturn now showing as a result of the student number growth received in year, so he considered it to be a positive result in difficult circumstances. He requested and received assurance that the work on contribution to central is continuing and will be reported through to the committee in due course. AP requested and received assurance that engagement with the bank is positive and productive in respect of any potential covenant breach this year due to covid impact. Following the in-year growth funding GL confirmed that it is unlikely now that covid impact will result in any covenant breach in any event, with an improving picture all round. EH noted that the contribution to central tool should be implemented carefully at department level so that staff engage with it and own it rather than see it as top down imposition on them. GL confirmed that it will be introduced as part of business planning, working with management staff and he offered to take the meeting through the business planning process at the next meeting, for information and assurance. Members welcomed this suggestion and thanked GL for the finance update providing positive assurance.</p> <p>6.3 Confidential Part B item.</p>
7.	<p>COLLEGE STRATEGIC RISK REVIEW</p> <p>7.1 Update Report and development of Board Assurance framework: MC presented the overview report and GL updated members on the work currently ongoing with RSM on the 4Risk system. Members welcomed the work on the risk system and the assurance received on management of strategic risk. EH queried what the impending re-start will look like and MC confirmed that it will be much the same as the autumn term with the majority of delivery face to face.</p> <p>7.2 Confidential Part B item.</p> <p>7.3 Confidential Part B item.</p>

<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no other business reported to the meeting.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>ITEMS TO ESCALATE TO THE RISK REGISTER/REPORT TO BOARD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee can provide strong assurance to the board on student numbers and funding for 2020-21 overall boosted by very strong FE 16-18 growth, with in year growth funding of £740k improving the outturn forecast significantly. • Management Accounts to P6 indicate an improving picture and the impact of covid on income has been mitigated to a large extent by strong FE growth. • Staffing reporting was reviewed and assurance given that the college is managing the risks around Covid impact very well, but the committee requested a deep dive into the wellbeing of staff at its next meeting to ensure full assurance that the college is doing all that it is able to in the circumstances to support staff and protect quality of delivery.
<p>10.</p> <p>10.1</p>	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 1 July 2021 at 9.30am, with an earlier Teams meeting to be arranged as needed.</p>

The meeting closed at 12.00pm

Confirmed as a correct record: 1 July 2021.