



REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2023 at 9.30am
Committee Room and Via Video Conferencing

Present	Karol Bailey (independent) KB <i>via video conferencing</i> Malcolm Burns (independent) MB Marcus Clinton (principal) MC Jane Cowell (independent) JC Casey Crispin (student) CC Evelyn Davies-Jones (independent) EDJ Andrew Fletcher (independent) AF <i>via video conferencing</i> Prof Chris Gaskell (independent) CG <i>via video conferencing</i> Mike Gorton (independent) MG Peter Green (independent) PG Alex Hickey (student) AH <i>(items 1 – 3 inclusive)</i> David Pearson (independent) DP, Chair Angela Potter (independent) AP Alastair Taylor (associate) AT Liz Watts (staff) LW Paul Weston (independent) PW <i>via video conferencing (items 1 – 4 inclusive)</i> Isabella Yates (student) IY
Attending	Graeme Lavery (vice principal, finance and resources) GL Paul Spearritt (vice principal, curriculum and quality) PS <i>(items 1 – 4 inclusive)</i> Louise Woodman (director of people and culture) LW <i>(items 1 – 4 inclusive)</i> Peter Greenall (assistant principal and dean of HE) <i>via video conferencing</i> John Kendal (assistant principal) JK <i>via video conferencing</i> Sharon Yates (assistant principal) SY <i>via video conferencing</i> Iain Clarke (assistant principal) IC <i>via video conferencing</i> Jackie Schillinger (head of governance) JS

PART A unless stated

item	Content
1.	Opening items
1.1	Apologies were received and accepted from Prof Gary Crowe, Prof Eunice Simmons, Dr Elizabeth Harrison, and Phil Gibbon. The meeting was quorate and remained quorate throughout.
1.2	No declarations of interest were made to the meeting.
2.	Determining and developing educational character – vision, mission and values
2.1	Student Union Annual Report: Student governors IY, CC and AH presented a report on the SU activities in the 2022-23 year and in the autumn term 2023-24 as well as aims and plans for the rest of the 2023-24 year. The SU aims for the year included enhancing the student voice including by working more closely with the student council, increasing numbers involved in student life activities, supporting, and expanding student clubs and societies and raising money for the RAG charity the British Heart Foundation. Progress so far was considered and welcomed, especially the increase in day students participating in student life activities. The SU finance report and Constitution were also presented for

	approval. Members thanked the student governors for the report, commenting that it had really helped them to understand the excellent work that is going on. They considered the recommended approvals and were content to approve the formal documentation.
2.2	RESOLVED: The Student Union Finance Report and the Student Union Constitution are approved.
2.3	Safeguarding, Prevent and Wellbeing Annual Report: Vice Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead PS presented the annual report. He reported good confidence in the college's ability to effectively safeguard students, due to recent enhancement of the safeguarding structures, additional capacity, improved reporting, and investment in specialist resources. He noted the continuing complexity and environment in which safeguarding is being managed and that student need continues to increase. He noted that the assurance audit commissioned from the Cheshire East safeguarding team has been confirmed as taking place in February 2024, which should provide further third-party assurance. He provided assurance that the executive team consider the risk is well managed and mitigated within the current context. The Young Person Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Adults Policy were provided for approval following review and updating line with the September 2023 Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.
2.4	RESOLVED: Good assurance is taken from the annual report on the continued management of the college's safeguarding and prevent responsibilities and wellbeing support, and the Young Person Safeguarding Policy and the Safeguarding Adults Policy are approved.
2.5	Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report: Director of People and Culture LWoodman presented the annual EDI report, which provided performance against EDI objectives, the proposed EDI action plan for 2023-24 and a summary of college demographic data. The Finance and General Purposes Committee had reviewed the report and the proposed action plan and recommended the same for approval. LWoodman explained the progress made against objectives, including finding the right partner to work with on the cultural audit, which was now complete and has informed the EDI Action Plan. She confirmed that the EDI policy had been reviewed and no substantive changes recommended at this time as it remains fit for purpose. Members welcomed the assurance received and progress evidenced in the report and were content to approve the annual report and policy.
2.6	RESOLVED: The Annual Equality Diversity and Inclusion Report, Action Plan for 2023-24 and Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy are approved.
2.7	Health and Safety Annual Report: The Vice Principal Finance and Resources, GL presented the report provided by the Health and Safety Manager. He noted the purpose of the report was to provide a full review and assessment of the college's health and safety performance for the academic year 2022-2023 as well as a term one update, to enable to board to take assurance that risk is being managed effectively. The college's Health and Safety statistics for 2022-23 year continued to present an improving picture. GL noted the board had received a copy of the health and safety lead governor link visit with the report made to the board on 17 November 2023. Members acknowledged the amber risk rating due to the additional actions agreed in response to the incident report at the 17 November meeting. They received assurance in the meeting that these actions were currently being carried out and once complete should provide assurance to return to the green risk rating. In response to governor questions, GL confirmed that the external audit requested by governors was being scoped in January and when complete would add an additional third-party assurance to the college actions already complete and underway. In terms of presentation of the report, governors requested a more board level assurance style be developed. <i>ACTION: Develop assurance style board level report.</i> Having considered the reporting and the Health and Safety Policy, governors were content to approve the report and recommended approval.
2.8	RESOLVED: The Health and Safety Annual Report is received, and the Health and Safety Policy is approved.
3.	Setting and Communicating the college strategy and goals – strategic plan and annual operating plan
3.1	Chair's Report: The Chair reported that the handover arrangements to the Chair Designate had been progressing well and confirmed that he would step down as Chair on the 31 March 2024 after the March board meeting. He also confirmed the handover of the role of safeguarding lead governor would take

	<p>place at the end of March, with Mike Gorton taking on the role. The report provided a summary of the Chair's college and sector activities over the term. He also expressed the board's thanks and appreciation to Alastair Taylor and Karol Bailey who stepped down as full board members at the start of the academic year, taking on associate roles for the year instead to provide specific expertise and advice on several areas. He thanked all the staff and the Student Union for all their energy and commitment and wished all a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.</p>
3.2	RESOLVED: The Chair's Report is received for assurance on continued pro-active governance on strategic developments and college engagement.
3.3	Principal's Report: The Principal's report and strategic risk overview was received for information and any questions or feedback from members. MC's executive summary set out the current and emerging issues for the college. In discussion and questioning, it was confirmed that improving the consistency of high-quality teaching learning and assessment and student outcomes across the college as well as student recruitment were the key priorities for 2023-2024, with scrutiny on quality by the Quality and Standards Committee with an additional Teams meeting to monitor progress in the diary for the end of January, followed by the scheduled meeting in March. On student recruitment and income, it was confirmed that the retention issue was a factor and some legacy of this will impact, however, improved retention in the current year will have a positive overall impact and open day numbers/applications so far this year look strong.
3.4	RESOLVED: The Principal's report is received for information providing a good understanding of the overall college position.
3.5	Strategic Annual Operating Plan, Strategic Objectives and KPIs: The Principal presented the final strategic report following the report to the summer board meeting, with the full KPI outcomes now included. The reporting included the major objectives for 2023-24 and proposed KPI for 2023-24 for approval. He confirmed that the proposed KPI had been considered at the relevant committees before being recommended to the board for approval.
3.6	RESOLVED: The annual strategic objectives and KPI for 2023-2024 are approved.
3.7	Curriculum Planning Update: Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality, PS provided an update on activities associated with curriculum planning and efficiency, following the presentation of the Annual Accountability Statement in July and the Curriculum Intent report presented in the January strategy day. Members welcomed the update providing good assurance on progress to meet the college's responsibilities in meeting skills needs and its priorities set out in the Accountability Statement.
3.8	RESOLVED: The Vice Principal's report on the curriculum plan is received as good assurance that the college is progressing well against the 2023-24 Accountability Statement key priorities.
4.	Exercising effective control to ensure that funds and assets are protected, your organisation remains solvent and legal obligations are met
4.1	RESOLVED: The Audit Committee Annual Report, including the External Audit Completion Report and the Internal Audit Annual Opinion is received as strong assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the corporation's assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, solvency, and the safeguarding of assets.
4.2	RESOLVED: The Finance and General Purposes Committee Chair's Report is received as strong assurance from the external audit on a clean audit of the financial statements, strong financial management and robust management accounts reporting evidenced by the bridge report comparing management accounts to statutory accounts and with no concerns on performance against the annual financial objectives. The appointment of Liz Harrison as Chair and Angela Potter as Vice Chair of the committee for the 2023-24 academic year is approved.
4.3	Annual Financial Statements and ESFA Finance Record Year End Reporting: GL presented the year end reporting. It was confirmed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Audit Committee considered the year end reporting at the meetings on 30 November 2023. The Chair and Vice Chair of the board confirmed that they were present when the Audit Completion Report was presented by

<p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p> <p>4.7</p> <p>4.8</p> <p>4.9</p>	<p>external auditor Mazars LLP at the joint meeting and provided assurance to the governing body that Mazars LLP reported a clean audit and strong assurance on the financial statements. Following consideration of the Audit Committee Annual Report, the Internal Audit Service Annual Opinion and the External Audit Completion Report, the meeting was content to approve the financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2023 for signature and the submission of the ESFA Finance Record.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Financial Statements for the year to 31 July 2023 are approved and the Chair and the Principal are authorised to sign the statements and the College to submit the ESFA Financial Return, and the terms of the management representation letter are approved.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee to approve the Financial Objectives for 2023-24 is accepted and the Financial Objectives are approved.</p> <p>Part B item.</p> <p>Part B item.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Authority is granted to the Principal and Vice Principal Finance and Resources to sign the building contracts for and on behalf of the college to enable the building works on the Institute of Technology capital build to commence, the contracts being with Construction Linx Ltd and John Harding and Son Ltd.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Approval of the strategic priority project for the college as the development of the Lord Wooley Centre with a financial strategy being developed by the senior team which will be presented for review and approval.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Holding executive leaders to account for educational performance and quality and the performance of staff</p>
<p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p>Quality and Standards Committee Chair's Report: The committee chair, JC presented the report, and the unconfirmed minutes were provided for information. She reported the recommendations and assurances to the board including the recommended approval of the College Self-Assessment Report, following the college self-assessment process and external validation process reports, with an overall effectiveness of requires improvement, including: <i>The quality of education requires improvement; Behaviour and attitudes are good; Personal Development is good; Leadership and Management requires improvement; Education study programmes for young people require improvement; Adult programmes require improvement; Provision for learners with high needs is good; The quality of apprenticeship provision is good; The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs; Safeguarding is effective.</i> She added that the committee and the board, at its November meeting, had very carefully reviewed and assessed the justification for these self-assessment judgements and whilst it is not a reflection on the energy and commitment of college leaders, staffing capacity issues have had an impact in areas of the college over the past year and that improvements are needed. She provided assurance from the committee meeting that improvement actions are in place and reporting on in year progress across performance indicators was received and scrutinised. She assured the board that the committee will track progress closely against indicators and will hold an additional meeting on Teams in the early Spring term to check on these in year indicators. In addition, positive signs are that the first phase of the Reaseheath Re-set update is showing early signs of progress with very positive Pulse One student survey results and improved attendance data. Progress coaches have had a positive impact, but more work is needed to ensure this is college wide and sustained. Landex have conducted a peer review, which validates the positive progress being made with the Reaseheath Reset and across several curriculum areas. Members took assurance from the report and supported its recommendations, with the formal approval of the Self-Assessment Report made in agenda item 6.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Approval of the appointment of Karol Bailey, Isabella Yates (FE) and Alex Hickey (Apps) to the committee and the appointment of Jane Cowell as Chair of the committee and Mike Gorton as Vice Chair of the committee for the 2023-24 academic year.</p> <p>Higher Education Committee Chair's Report: The committee chair, CG presented the report, and the unconfirmed minutes were provided for information. He reported the recommendations and assurances to the board. The committee reviewed the student recruitment picture which remains</p>

5.4	<p>challenging. One recurring area of scrutiny was internal progression, and this is a priority action in the UCR quality improvement plan for 2023-24. CG reported the committee view that whilst curriculum development continues to be strong, the future of the offer is a key strategic decision within the context of the development of higher and degree apprenticeships. The new overall college and UCR strategy needs a clear pathway to develop the higher education offer in a way that can deliver growth. He provided assurance from the reporting received on the significant improvement in NSS results for 2022-23 with thanks to the UCR team for all their work in achieving this. He also highlighted the outcome of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) review resulted in a Bronze award overall with elements of Silver. Whilst this moves UCR from Silver overall to Bronze until the next review, it remains solid assurance on a good level of quality. The latest much improved national student survey results (NSS) had not been released at the time of the review and this would have strengthened the submission further. He reported a potential student satisfaction challenge this year in relation to overall environment including the catering services. The committee had also urged management to focus on the quality of its communication to students in terms of enhancing how it feeds back to them from the outcome of student voice surveys, ensuring that a stronger message on 'you said, we did' is received by students. The meeting welcomed the committee's scrutiny and recommendations which were supported and approved.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Approval of the appointment of Casey Crispin to the committee and the appointment of Prof Chris Gaskell as Chair and Prof Gary Crowe as Vice Chair of the committee for the 2023-24 academic year.</p>
6.	Consent Agenda
6.1	RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2023 are approved as a correct record.
6.2	RESOLVED: The Reaseheath College Self-Assessment Report 2022-2023 is approved.
6.3	RESOLVED: The Remuneration Committee Annual Statement is approved.
6.4	RESOLVED: The University Centre Reaseheath Self-Evaluation Document is approved.
6.5	RESOLVED: The following governance policies are approved: Reaseheath College Board Constitution; Reaseheath College Board Code of Conduct; Reaseheath College Board Conflicts of Interest Policy.
7-9	Closing items and governance
7.	Any items for escalation to strategic risk register: Members considered the risk exposure in relation to the agenda items covered in the meeting to be appropriate with no new/emerging risks to be added to the risk register.
8.	Any other business (notified to chair/clerk in advance): There was no other business reported to the meeting.
9.	<p>Impact Evaluation against Core Function Accountabilities: The discussion captured the following key points that members considered would have impact from this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of hybrid meetings supports maximum attendance and is supported provided that confidentiality requirements are taken into account and secured in relation to online attendees. • Ensuring the executive exercises effective control to meet legal obligations: third party assurance to confirm management assurance on health and safety controls being fully effective and work of the estates group has increased level of oversight in this area. • Holding executive leaders to account for educational performance: Setting performance targets as well as agreeing with management clear staging posts and key risk indicators that Quality and Standards Committee can track in year to ensure progress is being made. Q&S Committee extra meeting in early Spring term to assess this.

The meeting closed at 12.30pm

Approved as a correct record 28 March 2024

David Pearson (Chair)