



REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD

BOARD MEETING

**Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 at 9.30am
Room 4/5 Food Centre**

Present	<p>Karol Bailey (independent) KB Malcolm Burns (independent) MB Marcus Clinton (principal) MC <i>(items 1- 14 inclusive)</i> Jane Cowell (independent) JC Evelyn Davies-Jones (independent) EDJ Prof Chris Gaskell (independent) CG Phil Gibbon (staff) <i>(items 1- 14 inclusive)</i> Mike Gorton (independent) MG Peter Green (independent) PG Dr Elizabeth Harrison (independent) EH David Pearson (independent, Chair) DP Alastair Taylor (independent) AT Paul Weston (independent) PW</p>
Attending	<p>Graeme Lavery (vice principal, finance and resources) GL <i>(items 1- 14 inclusive)</i> Paul Spearritt (vice principal, curriculum and quality) PS <i>(items 1- 14 inclusive)</i> Sharon Yates (assistant principal) SY <i>(items 1- 14 inclusive)</i> Louise Woodman (director of people and culture) LWoodman <i>(items 1- 14 inclusive)</i> Peter Greenall (assistant principal and dean of HE) PGreenall <i>(items 1- 14 inclusive)</i> Iain Clarke (assistant principal) IC <i>(items 1- 14 inclusive)</i> Simon Bishop (engineering manager) <i>(items 1- 9 inclusive)</i> Jackie Schillinger (head of governance) JS</p>

PART A unless stated

item	Content
1.	Meeting Skills Needs Case Study: Bus and Coach Engineering Academy, Simon Bishop, Engineering Manager. A case study on the Reaseheath Engineering Apprenticeship Academy model of industry engagement with First Bus provided an example of how the college works with employers to develop curriculum and to meet skills needs, with evidence of Intent Implementation and Impact. The model has led to a mature, symbiotic partnership with the employer, demonstrating best practice that is now being replicated and developed in other areas such as construction plant and rail.
2.	Welcome and apologies for absence
2.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from members Gary Crowe, Andrew Fletcher, Angela Potter, Eunice Simmons, Liz Watts, Kalliopi Angelakopoulos, Alice Warmisham and Andrew Woodhead,
2.2	The meeting was quorate and remained quorate throughout.
3.	Declarations of interest
3.1	There were no declarations of interest made to the meeting other than in relation to the recommended appointments at agenda item 9.6.

<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2023 and matters arising</p> <p>RESOLVED: The minutes of the meetings held on 23 March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.</p> <p>The rolling action log was reviewed for assurance that actions had been completed or were on track.</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>Chair's Report</p> <p>The Chair reported highlights from the term including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The opportunity to engage in some inspirational events including the family festival in May and the student awards ceremonies held on Thursday 29th June and Friday 30th June. These were superb and inspiring, with over 400 people attending each one and the VIP speakers were all ex-students of the college sharing their insights into how Reaseheath has launched their careers. - The board development session on Thursday 25th May, where we were joined by external speakers including a training update on Prevent. We also learnt more about the SEN and EHCP provision at college and the college and board responsibilities for SEN provision, including the role of the SEN lead governor. These days provide a great opportunity to pause, reflect and strengthen assurances. - The link visit with the Safeguarding Team to review arrangements following the management changes, with strong morale and successful recruitment to vacancies. Thanks to the team for their open and transparent engagement with me as link governor and for all they do to keep our students safe. A more detailed report is presented with today's board papers. - Discussion with our Chair designate Jane Cowell over recent weeks has been helpful to agree transitional arrangements between now and Jane taking on the role next year. Jane will be leading on several important initiatives over the forthcoming months including our response to the recent external governance review, refresh of the college strategy and an assessment of the capability and capacity of board membership to facilitate the recruitment of new board members to fill the vacancies of those whose terms are coming to an end. <p>RESOLVED: The Chair's Report is received for assurance on continued pro-active governance on strategic developments and college engagement.</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>Principal's Report</p> <p>The Principal presented his report on the college overall position, and summarised the current priorities, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The challenges as we manage a difficult environment on several fronts, including student recruitment and student support needs, cost increases on several fronts and the challenge to recruit staff, which has an inevitable impact on front line services and on realising income streams available. - The budget for 22/23 will be achieved, largely due to staff recruitment challenges leading to staff savings. The work continues across many strategies to recruit and retain staff, including improvements on salary scales and terms and conditions. - Apprenticeship provision continues to perform well and above national rates. There has been improvement in the grade three area engineering with more stability through good staff appointments and structure in full time agricultural engineering. Academy of Land and Environment has had a challenging year, however staff appointments into the farm and academic team mean much improved staffing capacity and with improving planning, structure, and communication there should be steps in the right direction next year. Overall, the challenging picture with students and staffing has caused a dip in retention and we await to see how much impact improving exam results will have on overall achievement. - The key actions are to stabilise staffing, train new staff into teaching and the launch of the Reaseheath Reset which will be a substantive cross college focus on five key areas. This should help staff simplify, clarify and comply and bring a consistency of approach across college on management of behaviour, attendance, progress building and evidencing. More effective use of the tuition fund to support the vital early intervention will also have a positive impact. - Good progress continues to be made on shaping the estate for tomorrow's curriculum as well as improvements in specialist equipment and technology available to students and employers.

6.2	<p>- The proposed deficit budget for 23/24 to maintain stability and continue to invest in the recovery with a return to surplus in years 2 and 3 of the financial plan.</p> <p>Questions and discussion followed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current rising costs could impact on the tender cost for the Institute of Technology build - Signs from the school sector of better results and this should come through the system, though it is lagged for FE and so the context will be important to articulate in terms of this year's results. - Student wellbeing needs are not expected to level off and the college is well set up for early intervention and better use of tuition fund, with a more established progress team expected to have a positive impact in 2023-24. - Pulse 3 student survey results show a lower satisfaction score for residential students, which is unusual and is being analysed currently. - Full support for the Research re-set approach for 2023-24. - Capital project considerations including the student social learning space plans in the short and medium term, with access to the Department for Education loan facility in due course.
6.3	<p>RESOLVED: The Principal's report is received for information providing a good understanding of the overall college position.</p>
7.	<p>Safeguarding, Prevent and Wellbeing Report</p> <p>7.1 Vice Principal PS, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) presented the termly update on safeguarding, prevent and wellbeing matters. He provided assurance that the new team is in place and is further resourced with the addition of a safeguarding manager role. Strong evidence from the student pulse survey of 98.5% feeling safe at college was shared, with assurance that any comments are picked up by the safeguarding team. He outlined the safeguarding and prevent training for the DSL team, all staff, and governors, which included a prevent training session specifically for governors by the DfE north west prevent coordinator. He explained a self-audit questionnaire is being used to pinpoint and further direct training and guides. KCSIE 2023 has been reviewed and enhancements made to process and procedure because of the latest guidance, including enhanced online filtering and monitoring and student attendance monitoring, more planned activity around prevent, and the run hide tell procedure. This included a new lock down system being considered and CPOMs system refinement now it is fully in use. Data on wellbeing was shared and the high need was noted but the team is resourced and coping with demand, with more use of external agency referrals and regular supervision in place. The Chair provided triangulation of this reporting from his recent link visit. He supported the uptake of supervision being embedded into the culture and the continuation of close working with Cheshire East and explained that he with JC and MG were meeting with the safeguarding staff to consider the safeguarding risks for the coming year. Questions and discussion followed, with the key areas being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A focus on combating misogyny is important. -Experience of lockdown drills was shared from experience in schools and preparing students, including SEN students and how this will translate to out centres. -Drilling down into the percentage differences in different courses and a review of reporting in a curriculum area, and assurance was given on points raised, investigated and resolved and no cultural issues/themes had been found. <i>Action log</i>. -Assurance on filtering and monitoring systems and that the college continually reviews effectiveness. <p>7.2 RESOLVED: The Board takes assurance that the risks in relation to safeguarding including prevent and wellbeing of students and staff remain effectively managed and resourced in a continuing challenging environment.</p> <p>7.3 RESOLVED: The Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression is approved.</p> <p>7.4 RESOLVED: The College Security Policy is approved, with confirmation of any changes to procedures at the appropriate time. <i>Action log</i></p> <p>7.5 RESOLVED: The Prevent Risk Register is received for assurance.</p>

<p>8.</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p>Health and Safety Report</p> <p>The Vice Principal Finance and Resources provided the termly health and safety report, giving an update on performance against the key controls. He reported a continuing improving picture on health and safety incidents, as well as good progress on reporting and systems developments. He confirmed that the cross-college Health and Safety Committee met in June and the link governor attended and met with the executive lead and health and safety manager. The link governor provided feedback from his two recent visits to the college to look at health and safety matters and he raised no concerns. He confirmed that he had arranged for some walk arounds in practical teaching areas for the autumn term. The link governor feedback summary was provided for information.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Board receives the report for assurance on continued effective control of the strategic risk of a failure to provide for the health and safety of learners, staff, and visitors.</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>9.7</p> <p>9.8</p> <p>9.9</p> <p>9.10</p>	<p>Strategic Monitoring</p> <p><u>Strategic Objectives Monitoring Report:</u> The Principal presented the strategic progress monitoring report for any questions. Questions were raised on progress on the adult offer and the reasons for the red rag rated areas. The Principal explained the progress made on the adult offer, with the offer now more defined and articulated and he expected better momentum on this next year. He confirmed that the common factor underlying areas with less progress had been staffing capacity, with the progress now being made on capacity in many areas, but still with challenges in some areas, though he expected to be in a better position going forwards with the strategic actions in place to support recruitment and retention of staff.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Strategic risk to the achievement and progress of the strategic plan continues to be managed and mitigated, with clear risk areas identified via committee reporting for further review at the board strategy days.</p> <p><u>Audit Committee Report:</u> EDJ on behalf of the committee chair reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations for approval in relation to external and internal audit strategy, risk management annual reporting, regularity self-assessment reporting and annual reappointment of auditors, which were all accepted by the board. - Continuing good working relationships with the audit teams, with clarification on the expectation of proactive good practice/developmental input from the internal audit team when they are reporting on the audits undertaken. - Staffing recruitment and retention pressure in the finance team poses a risk to a timely and efficient external audit process this year, but temporary resourcing is being brought in and the external audit team will work closely with the VP Finance and Resources to minimise impacts. - Good progress is evident in the development of a comprehensive external assurance source overview and positive assurance on regularity with no irregularities reported in the period. - The executive team is fully engaged with the MPM developments and is well placed to ensure compliance in a timely way. It is well placed to meet its SEN responsibilities with governance structures in place for 2023-24 to ensure appropriate oversight. -Oversight of the implementation of internal audit recommendations and the further development of risk management reporting is a key focus for the committee in 2023-24. <p>RESOLVED: The External Audit Draft Strategy Memorandum and Engagement Letter is approved.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Regularity Self-Assessment Report is approved for signature by the Accounting Officer and the Chair.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Internal Audit Strategy and Plan 2023-24 is approved.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Risk Management Policy and the Annual Risk Management Report is approved.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Audit Committee Terms of Reference are approved.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The annual re-appointment of external auditors, Mazars and internal auditors, RSM is approved.</p> <p><u>Finance and General Purposes Committee Report:</u> EH as committee chair reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Terms of Reference and the tuition fee and bursaries policies for approval.

	<p>-The proposed budget approach for 2023-24 is intended to manage strategic risk to financial health effectively, with the committee noting that the college remains exposed to interest rate fluctuation. An additional meeting via Teams was held on 6 July to review the draft budget based on the latest income assumptions, with the recommendations from this Teams meeting considered fully in agenda item 10, below.</p> <p>-Strategic risk on resourcing capital projects to support college strategy will be under increased pressure next year, which will be monitored by the committee.</p> <p>-Strategic risk on staffing capacity remains, with the HR team restructure intended to manage the recent turnover in the HR team but will take some time to embed. Staffing capacity issues are still impacting capacity to deliver to demand.</p> <p>-The committee takes assurance from the reporting that it understands the student number/income issues, and where the college currently is. It is assured on the reasons for the drop in retention and the actions in place to address this. It highlights the capacity to deliver as a barrier to apprenticeship income and the good work to partner with industry on this, with continued lobbying to government policymakers.</p> <p>-The committee supports a one-off payment of £500 as part of the college voucher scheme and communication of the staff pay scales changes and cost of living award at the staff development day, which was approved by the board via written resolution to enable this announcement to be made to staff.</p> <p>9.11 RESOLVED: The Finance and General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference are approved.</p> <p>9.12 RESOLVED: The FE Tuition Fees, Tuition Fee and Bursary Policies are approved.</p> <p>9.13 RESOLVED: To record the written resolution dated 23 June 2023 which approved the staff voucher payment of £500, the cost of living pay award and the salary scale remodelling work, which increases the top end of the scale to improve staff recruitment and retention by enabling greater salary progression.</p> <p>9.14 <u>Quality and Standards Committee Report:</u> AT as committee chair reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The link governor report summary shows good progress with the work of link governors with some excellent engagement and reporting, which informs the work of the board. - Assurance that the executive has identified the emerging risk on student retention and attendance and has planned actions in place to address the risk to student outcomes, with these mitigations reported to and monitored by the committee. - Assurance that the executive is focused on the quality of provision in the Academy of Land and Environment (ALE) to address the risk to student outcomes and quality of provision with progress made on recruitment of staff but with continued focus needed to secure a stable platform for 2023-24 which will be closely monitored by the committee. - As an indicator of student experience, complaints reporting will continue to be monitored with the expectation of a positive direction of travel in 2023-24 with the student charter relaunch and re-set. - Assurance on the positive direction of travel on improvements in agricultural engineering, with these improvements consolidated from the last meeting and the risk to student outcomes and experience now reduced in this area. - Assurance that the work on meeting skills needs via industry and stakeholder engagement is coming to fruition, relationships are maturing, and industry are looking at skills solutions in partnership with the college, with the focus now being on achieving consistency across all areas of curriculum. - Assurance on oversight of SEN provision by the committee with the SEN lead governor to join the committee and report on SEN matters in line with a clear role description, with an expectation on management to provide clear reporting to the committee on EHCP and SEN students to ensure performance is visible at all levels. - Assurance on good progress against the College Quality Improvement Plan and support for the focus on register and attendance compliance procedures for the start of the academic year. - Recommendations in relation to the committee Terms of Reference, Compliments and Complaints Policy and FE and Apprenticeships Admissions Policy, which were all accepted.
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9.15	RESOLVED: The Quality and Standards Committee Terms of Reference are approved.
9.16	RESOLVED: The Compliments and Complaints Policy is approved.
9.17	RESOLVED: The FE and Apprenticeship Admissions Policy is approved.
9.18	<p><u>Higher Education Committee Report:</u> Committee chair CG reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The committee takes assurance from the reporting in the meeting, with student satisfaction expected to be improved on last year, but with the amber risk rating remaining appropriate due to awaiting NSS results and to the need to increase student recruitment. The risk on student recruitment remains and the committee continues to support holding steady as the offer is there and curriculum developments are very strong. - The next stage of strategy development needs to ensure HE recruitment is on the front foot as part of the overall college strategic plan and the committee offers its support to the executive team in developing this recruitment strategy into the new academic year. - A review of key policies recommended no substantive changes and committee Terms of Reference with clarification of the responsibility to report into the audit committee and board on areas of strategic risk.
9.19	RESOLVED: The UCR Complaints Policy is approved.
9.20	RESOLVED: The UCR Admissions Policy is approved.
9.21	RESOLVED: The Committee Terms of Reference are approved.
9.22	<u>Search and Governance Committee Report:</u> Committee chair DP reported the recommended approvals on re-appointment and roles, which were all accepted by the board.
9.23	RESOLVED: Re-appointment of Professor Eunice Simmons as a member of the board for a period of 3 years.
9.24	RESOLVED: Appointment of Karol Bailey as an associate member of the board for a period of 1 year with a portfolio of SEN lead governor and EDI lead governor, with Karol joining the Quality and Standards Committee to ensure SEN and EDI aspects link into curriculum and quality at a governance level.
9.25	RESOLVED: Appointment of Alastair Taylor as an associate member of the board for a period of 1 year with a portfolio of Health and Safety lead governor and membership of the Quality and Standards Committee to allow for recruitment of new membership with required skills during the 2023-24 academic year.
9.26	RESOLVED: The board will consider the role of Senior Independent Governor in line with the wider governance development plan as part of the external governance review response.
9.27	RESOLVED: Jane Cowell as chair designate is appointed as a member of the Search and Governance Committee.
9.28	RESOLVED: Jane Cowell to Chair the Quality and Standards Committee in 2023-24, with a Vice Chair to be appointed by the committee in its autumn term meeting.
9.29	RESOLVED: Other aspects of membership recruitment and succession planning to await full consideration of the external governance review by the board and the ensuing governance development plan.
9.30	RESOLVED: The meeting calendar and cycle of business for 2023-24 is approved.
9.31	RESOLVED: The Student Association name change to Student Union is approved.
9.32	External Governance Review: JC as chair designate and JS as head of governance reported on the outcome of the external review of governance, with the full report and a summary provided to all members in advance of the meeting. Members welcomed the report outcome that provided positive assurance on the effectiveness of governance, as structured under the headings: Capability; Culture; Strategy and Planning; and Structures and Processes. They noted that it provided some useful suggestions for further improvement, including some suggestions around documentation, processes, and practices. Members considered that some of these could be implemented usefully and quickly, with some others needing a bit more discussion and an agreed way forwards on ways of working. All agreed that the chair designate and the Search and Governance Committee should lead on taking the governance development plan forwards, informed by this review. It was agreed that the governor

	development day on 15 September 2023 should include a presentation of the report by the external reviewer followed by a separate session for governors with a facilitated discussion to agree the governance development plan for the coming year and beyond.
9.33	RESOLVED: The summary of the external review of governance outcome is approved for publication.
10.	Financial Strategy
10.1	Part B item.
10.2	Part B item
10.3	RESOLVED: The Annual Budget for 2023-24 and the associated Education and Skills Agency submission are approved, including provision for a 3% cost of living staff pay award, subject to performance against budget targets.
11.	Items for approval
11.1	Annual Accountability Statement: The Principal MC presented the final draft statement for approval. He reported that several strategy sessions had been held with the board in building up the priorities and the plan and the college had held regular industry networking events, commissioned its own LMI using the SDF funding and identified multiple sources of LMI to ensure priorities align. He added that there will be a good opportunity in the autumn to align the accountability statement with the new strategic plan and be able to show ever stronger linkage and clarity between the college's strategic plan, intent, curriculum design and the accountability statement, informed by both internal and external stakeholders. The board endorsed the identified priorities for Reaseheath of: reforms to L3 qualifications in T Levels; reforms to increase Lifelong Learning; the national drive to Net Zero and a sustainable future, including key sectors such as Food, Agriculture and Environment; the need to develop employability skills as well as the technical skills which employers have consistently identified as a core requirement; and the need to improve Higher Level Skills through Higher Technical Qualifications and Degree Apprenticeships.
11.2	RESOLVED: The Annual Accountability Statement is approved for submission to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
12.	Items for information
12.1	The Department for Education Annual Strategic Conversation Letter was received for information.
12.2	The confirmed UCR International Tuition Fees 2024-25 were received for information following the approved Chair's action at the previous board meeting.
13.	Any items for escalation to strategic risk register
13.1	There were no other items to escalate to the strategic risk register not already covered in the meeting. DP checked that everyone had had the chance to raise any issues that they wished to during the meeting. No further matters were raised.
14.	Any other business (notified to chair/clerk in advance)
14.1	The dates of the next meetings on the approved calendar of meetings were noted. DP would ensure that there be an opportunity in the autumn term to formally acknowledge and thank AT and KB as they change their roles on the board from members to associate members for the 2023-24 year.

The meeting closed at 12.55pm.

Confirmed as a correct record:

Jane Cowell, Chair Designate

17 November 2023