



REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2023 at 9.30am in Room 4/5 Food Centre

Present	<p>Karol Bailey (independent) KB Malcolm Burns (independent) MB Marcus Clinton (principal) MC <i>(items 1- 17 inclusive)</i> Jane Cowell (independent) JC <i>(item 2 onwards)</i> Prof Gary Crowe (independent) GC <i>(item 2 onwards)</i> Evelyn Davies-Jones (independent) EDJ Andrew Fletcher (independent) AF Phil Gibbon (staff) <i>(items 1- 17 inclusive)</i> Peter Green (independent) PG Dr Elizabeth Harrison (independent) EH David Pearson (independent, Chair) DP Angela Potter (independent) AP Prof Eunice Simmons (independent) ES Liz Watts (staff) LW <i>(items 1- 17 inclusive)</i> Alice Warmisham (student) AW <i>(items 6 and 7)</i> Paul Weston (independent) PW</p>
Attending	<p>Graeme Lavery (vice principal, finance and resources) GL <i>(items 6 - 17 inclusive)</i> Paul Spearritt (vice principal, curriculum and quality) PS <i>(items 6 - 17 inclusive)</i> Sharon Yates (assistant principal) SY <i>(items 7 - inclusive)</i> Trudie McGuinness (assistant principal) TM <i>(item 2 - inclusive)</i> Louise Woodman (director of people and culture) LWoodman <i>(items 6 - 17 inclusive)</i> Peter Greenall (assistant principal and dean of HE) PGreenall <i>(items 7 – 17 inclusive)</i> Jackie Schillinger (company secretary) JS</p>
Observers:	<p>Rachel Robson, external reviewer Stone King LLP Dr Ron Hill, external reviewer Stone King LLP <i>(items 1-17 inclusive)</i></p>

PART A unless stated

item	Content
1.	Appointment of Chair Designate
1.1	JS reported that there were two nominations for the role, and both members had declared an interest in the agenda item and had withdrawn from the meeting for this item. She confirmed that the current chair had taken no part in the process, including the ballot. She requested and received confirmation in the meeting that members were happy for their votes to be counted as cast in the secret ballot. She confirmed the secret ballot outcome was that Jane Cowell was elected to the role of chair designate by a majority vote. All members expressed thanks to be recorded in relation to both extremely strong nominations, providing good assurance on the transition in board leadership planned for 2024.
1.2	RESOLVED: Jane Cowell is appointed to the role of Chair Designate effective from 1 August 2023 with transition to the role of Chair by 1 August 2024, unless earlier as agreed by the Board and for such term in the role of Chair of Governors to be agreed by the Board.

2.	Welcome and apologies for absence
2.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting including a warm welcome to the external governance reviewers Dr Ron Hill and Rachel Robson observing the meeting, Ron in person and Rachel via Teams. Apologies were received and accepted from members Prof Chris Gaskell, Alastair Taylor, Mike Gorton, Kalliopi Angelakopoulos 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 in relation to the agenda items in the meeting other than those referenced at agenda item one above.
4.	Minutes of the meetings held on 9 December 2022 and 26 January 2023
4.1	RESOLVED: The minutes of the meetings held on 9 December 2022 and 26 January 2023 received and confirmed as a correct record.
4.2	The rolling action log was reviewed for assurance that actions had been completed or were on track.
5.	Chair's Report
5.1	The Chair's report was received for information. He reported highlights from the term including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - annual one to one meetings with board members – an opportunity to discuss strengths and ways for improving governance arrangements and to thank colleagues for their continuing support. - The January governor strategy day - hearing from David Hughes from the AoC on external policy drivers and Lightcast on its LMI report for the college, followed by some excellent workshop discussions, enabling the board to consider how well the college meets skills needs. - The regular governor link visits that are taking place, following up on the theme of meeting skills needs at department level. Several governors attended a very successful partner and industry event on construction digital skills as well as governors attending a staff development day with curriculum managers on campus later in the month to focus on 'intent' in the curriculum and meeting skills needs. - Continuing the theme of governor engagement, the recent meeting with link governors and the farm steering committee, including the new farm manager and herdsman as well as farm and curriculum staff to support the quality of the student experience in agriculture. - External AoC and sector meetings attended, and a suggestion picked up on the increasing prevalence of Senior Independent Director (SID) roles in the sector. - The Annual Strategic Conversation with the ESFA and a representative from the FE Commissioner's team - a good opportunity to emphasise the significant challenges facing the college and whole sector in the current environment, in recruitment and retention of staff and setting robust budgets and financial plans for the next couple of years with increasing costs. - On behalf of the board, thanks the executive team and all staff for their continued dedication to maintaining the student experience during another challenging year.
5.2	RESOLVED: The Chair's Report is received for assurance on continued pro-active governance on strategic developments and college engagement.
6.	Principal's Report
6.1	The Principal presented his update report, and summarised the current priorities, which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruitment in FE and HE - Recruitment of Advanced Technical Trainers to service demand in apprenticeships - Preparation of students for exams - Support and development of new staff so that pressures are relieved and classroom pedagogy delivers an engaging learner centred experience - Support for all staff in managing behaviour - Business planning for 23/24 and an efficient curriculum plan - The work on salary modelling to support staff and prepare for agreed changes in 23/24 onwards - The roll out of T levels to maximise recruitment and de risk the switch for the college - Supporting the grade three areas to improve - Preparation of the accountability statement and skills measure mapping and evidence

8.3	RESOLVED: The Board takes assurance that the risks in relation to safeguarding including prevent and wellbeing of students and staff remain managed and resourced in a continuing challenging environment.
9.	<p data-bbox="245 239 464 268">Health and Safety</p> <p data-bbox="245 275 1471 659">9.1 The Vice Principal Finance and Resources (GL) presented the termly health and safety update report. He reported that the college has had an improving health and safety record this year, this has also been supported by assurance received from the internal audit team on the health and safety framework review and the health and safety processes for apprentices and work placements, providing assurance on these key areas. He referenced the report for the overview of current performance and full details of the three RIDDOR reportable incidents reported during the period. The Chair thanked GL for the positive assurance report. He requested and received assurance that the executive team consider the data reflects an accurate picture of the number of incidents and that a positive culture is continuing to develop, confirmed by SY in her experience with responsibility for apprenticeships. PG agreed that as a member of audit committee he was assured by the assurance from the work placement and apprenticeship reporting.</p> <p data-bbox="245 665 1471 724">9.2 RESOLVED: The Board takes assurance that the risks in relation to health and safety remain well managed and mitigated.</p>
10.	<p data-bbox="245 737 500 766">Strategic Monitoring</p> <p data-bbox="245 772 1471 1052">10.1 Curriculum Offer - Implementation of T Levels: A presentation was received on the implementation of T Levels in Construction and Business and the readiness for the next implementation phase. PG gave an update from the Quality and Standards Committee which included a forum with students on the T Levels, providing very good assurance of a high-quality experience for those students. GC queried whether the agriculture area was well set for the implementation and PS provided assurance that the college has the experience in Construction to help plan for this and is focusing on the practical element with the confidence that this area already is used to large programmes, and it should not be too much removed from the current position.</p> <p data-bbox="245 1058 1471 1230">10.2 Strategic Risk Review and Strategic KPI monitoring: MS presented his risk report for information and any feedback in the meeting. EH emphasised the impact of the staffing recruitment and retention risk was now being seen in capacity to deliver even where there is clear demand, such as in some areas of apprenticeships. The meeting acknowledged this is a message that is being highlighted via all the strategic policy avenues with ESFA and government and via the AoC currently as it is a sector wide issue.</p> <p data-bbox="245 1236 1471 1371">10.3 Audit Committee Report: Committee Chair GC provided his summary report, citing the assurances received on the internal audit reporting, the work planned to develop risk reporting and the fact that the committee is well sighted on the financial pressures and constraints associated with the current environment going into the next financial year.</p> <p data-bbox="245 1377 1471 1583">10.4 Finance and General Purposes Committee Report: Committee Chair EH provided her summary report, including closing the loop on the interest rate issue and the deep dive into the staff survey hot spots, to ensure that the Board can keep testing the temperature and culture in the college. She confirmed the meeting was well sighted on the context and considerations for the financial and budget strategy for next year and had recommended a deep dive for the whole Board at the upcoming strategy day in May. She confirmed the Committee had reviewed the Gender Pay Report and recommended approval.</p> <p data-bbox="245 1589 1471 1898">10.5 Quality and Standards Committee Report: Committee Vice Chair JC presented her summary report, citing the challenging staffing, wellbeing and student behaviour environment and context to quality of provision, student experience and outcomes; the positive assurance on quality of apprenticeships and more robust evidence of employer satisfaction from employer surveys, the positive direction of travel on improvements in agricultural engineering; the continuing challenging environment impacting on student experience in ALE; a closer look planned at support and training for teaching and learning staff (with many new staff); and good progress with the work of link governors with some excellent engagement and reporting. The link governor visit activity summary was received for information and assurance on continuing governor engagement.</p>

10.6	Higher Education Committee Report: Committee Vice Chair, GC provided his summary report. He emphasised that the Board needs to be sighted on the continued challenges and risk on student numbers in HE, despite the meeting being comfortable that everything reasonable is being done and it commends the huge amount of work done and the commitment of the UCR team. He stressed that there are many positives including the development of the curriculum offer and the encouraging recent student survey results that show improving student satisfaction in key areas aligned to the NSS. In summary he said that there is a lead in time for the changes to take effect in relation to student recruitment and the situation needs close monitoring, but the committee recommends holding nerve for the coming year. He gave assurance that the committee feels fully informed, with open and honest reporting and discussion taking place. He confirmed the tuition fee proposals had been considered and were supported.
10.7	Search and Governance Committee Report: Committee Chair DP confirmed there were no formal recommendations made at the meeting and the minutes provided give an overview of the matters covered, which included the consideration of a Senior Independent Governor role and the new draft AoC Code of Governance. He confirmed that re-appointment recommendations will be made to the summer term meeting.
10.8	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 Day.
11.	Part B item.
12.	Skills Measure – Review of Effectiveness
12.1	Strategy Day 26 January 2023 Report: The summary report of outcomes from the recent strategy day on the skills duty, LMI data and reviewing effectiveness was received for information.
12.2	Draft Accountability Statement: Informed by the strategy day input and feedback, the Principal, MC presented a first draft of the Accountability Statement. He noted that the LSIP is not yet published but the national priorities are clear. Members had received it in advance and had an opportunity to provide feedback. GC noted that the statement is an opportunity to demonstrate to stakeholders that the college has a good understanding of how it will deliver value and impact for stakeholders. EH recommended that the key aspects mentioned earlier in the meeting around animal sciences, applied life sciences, biodiversity, and green skills within the sustainability theme in the college’s strategy be clear to align most effectively with the national and LSIP priorities. PG received assurance that the statement aligns with the strategic plan and especially in relation to the next strategic planning phase about to commence. JC supported the approach in the draft statement of a broad core offer with a wider portfolio of specific skill offers wrapped around this, bringing in project-based delivery. It was agreed to take on board the feedback and any further feedback provided following the meeting, with the next iteration brought back to the May strategy day.
12.3	RESOLVED: The Board supports the approach and draft content evident in the draft accountability statement, has provided feedback and awaits the final draft for approval.
13.	Items for approval
13.1	RESOLVED: Following consideration of the report and the scrutiny of the report by the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the Gender Pay Gap Report is approved.
13.2	Higher Education Tuition Fees: PGreenall presented the fee proposals and GC confirmed these had been considered by the HE Committee, with support for the proposals. ES considered the international fee level slightly on the low side, and following discussion, it was agreed to raise this, with the exact amount to be agreed by the Chair, as Chair’s Action, to be reported at the next meeting. Otherwise, the tuition fees were approved.
13.3	RESOLVED: Higher Education Tuition Fees 2024-25 are approved, subject to a slight adjustment in international fees to be implemented by Chair’s Action and reported to the next meeting.
13.4	Part B item.
13.5	Part B item.

14.	Items for information
14.1	The College Seal Report was received for information.
15.	Any items for escalation to strategic risk register
15.1	RESOLVED: Strategic Risk in the Board Assurance Report was received, and the Board confirmed it was sighted on the principal strategic risks and mitigations in place.
16.	Any other business (notified to chair/clerk in advance)
16.1	There was no further business reported to the meeting. The Chair checked that all members had had the opportunity to contribute, and no further matters were raised.

The meeting closed at 1pm.

Confirmed as a correct record:

David Pearson, Chair

13 July 2023