



REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD

Minutes of the meeting and strategic development session 3 June 2025 at 9.30am – 3pm
UCR2, University Centre Reaseheath

Present	<p>Ashley Austin (independent)</p> <p>Eli Broadhurst (student) (<i>items 1-3</i>)</p> <p>Claire Blanchard (independent)</p> <p>Jan Chillery (independent)</p> <p>Marcus Clinton (principal)</p> <p>Jane Cowell (independent) (Chair)</p> <p>Gary Crowe (independent)</p> <p>Phil Gibbon (staff)</p> <p>Mike Gorton (independent)</p> <p>Peter Green (independent)</p> <p>Elizabeth Harrison (independent)</p> <p>Summer Lakin (student union president)</p> <p>Eunice Simmons (independent) (<i>item 3 onwards</i>)</p> <p>Paul Weston (independent) (<i>items 1 – 4</i>)</p>
Attending	<p>Martin Mellor (co-opted committee member)</p> <p>Iain Clarke (assistant principal, land-based and sustainability) (<i>item 4 onwards</i>)</p> <p>Ben Hunt (head of property) (<i>item 4</i>)</p> <p>Graeme Lavery (vice principal, finance and resources) (<i>item 4</i>)</p> <p>Paul Spearritt (vice principal, curriculum and quality)</p> <p>Sharon Yates (assistant principal, business hub and apprenticeships)</p> <p>Jackie Schillinger (head of governance)</p>

PART A unless stated

Item	Content
1.	The Chair welcomed all to the session. Apologies were received and accepted from board members Angela Potter and Sean Houlston. Co-opted committee member Jane Artess also gave apologies. There were no declarations made in relation to the meeting.
2.	<p>College and Policy Environment Overview was presented by the principal (provided for reference at the end of the minutes). Key areas of discussion were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relentlessly focus on and drive the four E strategy. • Need to deliver the Reaseheath Way improvements and drive the plan forwards with the expanded Curriculum development capacity and increased system development and integration capacity. • Expanded capacity to work with schools is key, and this has already seen impact with the increase in school taster days engagement with approximately 700 students taking part this year, above the target of 200, with congratulations to the team for making this happen. • Save Invest Grow efficiencies with clear message to staff, a small number of redundancies resulting from business planning and curriculum efficiencies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government strategy and devolution brings focus on construction industry skills needs and funding opportunities. • Influence is key in the current environment to ensure green skills/agrifood and land-based sector features in skills funding strategies, with the college leadership well placed including in relation to the Cheshire and Warrington colleges devolution group; Principals and Chairs group; Landex board; AoC 2030 group member with link to DfE; national finance group; Schools Career Hub; Rural Strategy Group.
3.	<p>Ofsted Improvement Plan Progress Visit - Sharing practice from Salford City College: Ashley Austin shared practice and experience from Salford City College's quality improvement journey and its successful Ofsted progress inspection visit earlier in the year. The presentation provided very useful insight and some points to take away for the executive team and governors, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a meeting with governors and governors will need to know how things have improved and what the impact has been – what are governors seeing in reporting and on the ground via learning walks and staff and student panel discussions. • Ensure know those areas for improvement from the inspection in detail and the quality improvement plan, what has been done and what the impact has been. The inspectors focused on those areas where the most progress had been flagged to them and revisited those teaching and learning areas they had visited in the main inspection. • Feedback was a key area for the inspection team in the Salford progress visit. Inspectors saw this working in practice, with use of creative ways of recording feedback in practical sessions such as using iPads and bodycams which increased how students were engaging with the feedback and was more suitable in these areas than written feedback.
4.	<p>Sustainability and Estates</p> <p>Estates: The vice principal finance and resources presented a list of priority projects, with a focus on resolving the ring main issue which was a limiting factor on further significant development of the estate. The key project that the Board supported was the development of student social study space by re-development of the Lord Wooley centre, a major project requiring a financial strategy combining college funds and government capital funding. Members expressed concern that the ring main remained as issue and discussion followed on the complex nature of the issue and potential ways forwards. It was agreed a governor with expertise in this area could support in helping the team to access the right quality external professional advice to take this forward. The Board requested the executive team to bring forward a strategic estates plan that could be properly scrutinised, tested and challenged by the Estates development and Property Group before coming forward to the Board, as the current information presented was not sufficiently strategic.</p> <p>Sustainability Strategy: Assistant principal Iain Clarke presented a development session to support governor understanding of where the college currently is in the context of the FE climate action roadmap. He explained that Reaseheath College developed its Sustainability Strategy in 2021, aligning it with the 2019–2024 Strategic Plan. The strategy was formulated by the newly established Sustainability Committee, which meets regularly throughout the academic year to review progress. This committee comprises staff from</p>

	<p>various departments, both support and curriculum, and includes governance representation to ensure oversight. The Sustainability Strategy is built around five core priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Energy, Water, Waste and Resources, Recycling 2. Community and Stakeholders 3. Curriculum Embedding and Green Skills Development 4. Sustainable Innovation and Advancement 5. Biodiversity and Environmental Land Management <p>The college has committed to the Association of Colleges (AoC) Climate Action Roadmap, joining numerous colleges and universities across the UK. This roadmap categorises institutions under three core themes—Emerging, Established, and Leading—and further breaks down activities into the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership and Governance 2. Teaching, Learning and Research 3. Estates and Operations 4. Partnerships and Engagement 5. Data Collection and Reporting <p>Review of the presentation summarised that Reaseheath's performance against these themes presents a mixed picture—while some areas show strong progress, others require further improvement.</p> <p>It is important to note that financial constraints influence certain aspects of the roadmap. Carbon audit was discussed and the reason that the college had not commissioned a full audit was the cost, and the actions the college had taken including via the Institute of Technology and in parts of its operations were discussed. In summary, the Board accepted that this was a strategic decision based on cost benefit and needed to be carefully considered.</p>
5.	<p>RESOLVED: Estates Development and Property Group to follow up on the action to review a strategic estates plan brought forward by the executive and to consider the various options and costs for a carbon audit, bringing its recommendations forward to finance and General purposes committee and the Board.</p>
6.	<p>Developing the Reaseheath College Agri-Food Strategy: Iain Clarke set out the approach and direction of travel in developing a new agri-food strategy as part of the overarching sustainability agenda. In discussion, the following key points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The devolution agenda and partner/collaboration agenda will be key. Challenge was made to engage the leading players to own this with the college and develop this centre in the region. The college has several potential partners it is exploring, and it was agreed that a key large national employer would help in showing demand to work through the curriculum development with the qualification body. • A governor noted that there is a consultation on sustainability for the joint committee for the devolved administration, which is focused more on net zero currently and it is a key agenda to influence towards food security. The principal also noted that the Rural Strategy Group is bringing this together to feed into devolution. He also noted the collaborative potential to work more closely in future with Myerscough and on this strategy, with a more joined up offer. • Question and challenge were made on the viability of the overarching strategy with so many strands it may be difficult to 'tell the story' without a more coherent

	strategy aligned to the 4Es. However, another view was that the use of an emergent strategy can be very effective in such as changing environment and the need to be agile and responsive to change. In this way, having a coherent direction of travel and having the connections with all the key players is likely to be an effective approach.
7.	RESOLVED: The Board welcomed an initial consideration of direction of travel on sustainability and agri-food strategies, recommending that the college continues to influence key stakeholders and builds a coherent direction of travel that is agile and that can be understood in the context of the 4Es of the strategic plan and the accountability statement.
8.	<p>RESOLVED: In relation to the College Board Duty to Review how well the college meets skills needs, the Board of Governors have conducted a review of the college's approach, determining how well the curriculum meets local, regional, and national skills needs. The Board has carried out its review through oversight, challenge, and discussion with internal and external stakeholders via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused scrutiny and review of meeting skills needs in its Curriculum Skills and Stakeholders Committee, reporting to the Board on a termly basis. • Regular Board strategic review sessions to consider the curriculum offer in the context of local, regional, and national skills priorities and labour market intelligence. • Setting and monitoring progress against agreed Skills Measure Key Performance Indicators. • Board level strategic collaboration with key local and regional partners for example the Institute of Technology and the University of Chester, as well as more widely with Land Based colleges. • Board involvement in the college self-assessment and external validation process and tracking progress against the college quality improvement plan. • Review of learner and employer survey feedback and key performance data including destinations • Governor engagement via college link visits to triangulate data reported and considered in meetings as well as deep dives into key areas such as high needs and SEND provision, quality of teaching and learning, sustainability and agrifood curriculum development. <p>The Board of Governors concludes that the college has made good progress in meeting local, regional, and national skills needs priorities in the Accountability Statement 2024-25 and will continue its focus on the priorities set out in the Accountability Statement 2025-26.</p>
9.	<p>RESOLVED: Accountability Statement Objectives proposed for 2025-2026 are approved as:</p> <p>1. In line with our curriculum intent, continue to deliver an inclusive curriculum offer to address Government priorities, remove barriers to progression, and develop essential work readiness skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression routes at all levels • Transition support • Career Ready curriculum

	<p>2. Develop a more extensive adult skills offer, with a specific focus on addressing industry skills gaps and green skills, whilst also supporting local needs and the devolution process in Cheshire and Warrington.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Boot Camps • Community maths and English building on Multiply programme • Construction skills (also 16-18) <p>3. Carry out a High-Needs review, working closely with key partners to address local needs, implementing all necessary changes to maximise outcomes and increase opportunity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of Foundation curriculum and pathways especially at level one • Improve IAG to ensure learners are on the correct level <p>4. Promote the development of higher-level skills, with an emphasis on science related content, through the use of HTQ's along with higher-level apprenticeships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New HTQ provision • L7 provision • Higher Level apprenticeships <p>5. Develop Agri-Food provision to meet, and influence, key national strategies that align to our specialism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Agri-Food strategy • Agri-Food additional quals ahead of larger curriculum development <p>6. Develop a strategy to increase the College's green skills offer, specifically focusing on the expected growth brought about by the net zero transition.</p> <p>7. Develop a MOU with Myerscough College to develop a cohesive NW Land Based offer to better service learners and our employers whilst also strengthening specialist staffing capacity, professional development and quality enhancement. Explanation and conscious endorsement of MOU approach with Myerscough.</p>
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The meeting closed at 3pm.

The session was followed by a tour of the latest investment/capital and resource into the Campus: 3pm – 4.30pm.

Approved as a correct record 18 July 2025

Jane Cowell, OBE (Chair)