

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2025 at 1.30pm
Via MS Teams

Present: Jane Cowell, independent, chair
 Marcus Clinton, principal
 Mike Gorton, independent
 Elizabeth Harrison, independent

In attendance: Jackie Schillinger, company secretary and head of governance

Part A unless stated.

Item	Content
1.	Apologies and Declarations
1.1	Apologies were received and accepted from Angela Potter.
1.2	The chair declared an interest in relation to a committee member and left the meeting for part of item 3.3
1.3	The meeting was quorate and remained quorate throughout.
2.	Meeting Minutes
2.1	RESOLVED: Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.
2.2	On matters arising it was reported that the current staff governor (support staff) will step down at the end of her term following the March board meeting. This role was recruited to for a new staff governor, but there may be the need to go out again for this role, but the position will be known shortly. If this is needed, the recommendation would be to invite the other nominated staff members to put themselves forward again if they wish to and request any other nominations, with the usual process followed if there is more than one nomination received. If this occurs, the governing body has one staff member continuing in post and so remains in line with the constitution whilst this process if carried out.
3.	Membership and Succession Planning
3.1	<p>The head of governance presented the membership and succession planning report with current membership table, committee structure and succession planning summary. s provided as an appendix. Matters needing attention were:</p> <p>Several existing renewals to be considered by the board</p> <p>Recent succession planning appointments had been made including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sean Houlston (stakeholder engagement/comms/construction industry) • Jared Erskine (IT/digital transformation/students services and safeguarding/agriculture), Ashley Austin (quality assurance and improvement FE) • Claire Blanchard (quality assurance and improvement HE) • Jan Chillery (legal/business sector/community engagement) <p>Co-opted committee appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Artess (HE) • Martin Mellor (Estates group and FGP)

	<p>Based on the succession planning summary and skills audit information, the following specific areas of skills and experience require consideration in the shorter – medium term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources/organisational development • Apprenticeships • Accountancy • Marketing <p>In addition, due to the context of the Ofsted report and improvements ongoing, further FE quality expertise such as recent Ofsted inspector experience potentially as co-opted on the committee would be useful</p> <p>Further employer voice co-opted roles on the curriculum skills and stakeholders committee would be useful as it develops.</p> <p>An expression of interest received for a full governor role was considered as part of the overall succession planning, but in the context of the skills audit this is not an immediate need and therefore the committee agreed to respond accordingly with thanks.</p> <p>HE Committee member Jane Artess has met with the head of governance and expressed an interest on becoming a governor for the next academic year to continue her input into the HE Committee and also to continue her expertise on careers information advice and guidance and HE curriculum development on the new curriculum skills and stakeholders committee.</p>
3.2	<p>RESOLVED: The Board needs to decide directly if it wishes to renew the membership terms of the existing governors, with the chair and vice chair terms being membership terms rather than full terms in the current roles. Decision to be made by the Board as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Cowell and Mike Gorton, a further term of 3 years from 1 August 2025, as undertaking senior roles on the board. • Elizabeth Harrison a further term of 2 years from 1 August 2025 as embedding the new role of senior independent governor.
3.3	<p>RESOLVED: Recommendation for approval: Current co-opted committee member to take on a full governor role from 1 August 2025 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Artess for one year with membership of the curriculum skills and stakeholders committee and the HE committee.
3.4	<p>RESOLVED: Recommendation for approval: Current co-opted committee member to take on a full governor role from 1 August 2025 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Mellor for three years with membership of the finance and general purposes committee and the estates and property development working group.
3.5	<p>RESOLVED: Based on the succession planning summary and skills audit information, the following specific areas of skills and experience require consideration in the shorter – medium term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources/organisational development • Agrifood/sustainability • FE quality
4.	Governance Development Plan
4.1	<p>The head of governance summarised the progress against the agreed development plan as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession plan progress with skills gap areas filled

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New governors have reported positively in their one to ones with the head of governance that they are getting to know their roles, the college and being supported by relevant training and development and governor mentors. • Increased engagement in college is evident by numbers attending events, such as apprenticeship awards, staff conference and meeting with college managers. This should impact visibility and accessibility to staff students and key stakeholders to ensure the board is seen as an integral part of the team working together to secure improvements.
4.2	<p>The head of governance provided a summary of governor induction, development and training, with the governor induction pack provided with the papers for reference. In summary the training provided and available in 2024-25 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive programme of online training to support both new governors and those who are more experienced. This ETF training programme is provided to all governors to follow if they wish. • Relevant training opportunities are flagged to governors throughout the year, including for example, the AoC audit committee masterclass, leading a committee online workshop, T levels conference for the T level lead. • In- house training and development on Annual Safeguarding Training including Safer Recruitment and Prevent- September 2024 • Understanding college academic performance in FE and apprenticeships, the skills measure, the Ofsted inspection and areas for improvement – November 2024 • Teaching Learning and Assessment – the Reaseheath Way, quality assurance and improvement – January 2025 • Ongoing induction sessions for new members including ‘the curriculum offer’ and ‘understanding college financial objectives/KPIs’. <p>The in-house training planned is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer governor work with Myerscough College – A visit to Myerscough in September 2025 TBA • Estates and Sustainability Strategy – June 2025 • Cheshire East Safeguarding Training (2 hours face to face) TBA – November 2025 annual training session. • Risk Appetite Session – July 2025 • ISOH health and safety training for the H&S lead governors April 2025 – Peter Green and Alastair Taylor attending.
4.3	<p>RESOLVED: The committee noted the good progress on activities and recommended that the focus of the end of year report be an evaluation of impact against the plan and closing the loop from the activity with some further detail on levels of engagement with stakeholders and mandatory/optional training.</p>
5.	Governance Reporting and Documentation
5.1	<p>Board Constitution for recommended approval: The head of governance reported that the constitution and scheme of delegation were recommended with no changes this year required. The standing orders had been updated to reflect the addition of the curriculum skills and stakeholders committee at standing order 11.1. The constitution document is found on GovernorHub in the Governor Handbook folder. The constitution document</p>

	needs to be recommended for approval to the board in the March meeting. She reported that there is still work to do on aligning the committee terms of reference to the 4 Es.
5.2	RESOLVED: The committee recommended approval of the constitution and scheme of delegation.
5.3	<p>Governance policy suite for review: The head of governance reported that the suite of policies is based on the Eversheds schedule of required or advised governance policies and these are reviewed based on the recommended content. They were presented to the committee for review and recommended approval to the board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor Code of Conduct (no substantive changes – change to reflect ESFA change to Department for Education) • Governor Conflict of Interest Policy (no changes) • Policy on reimbursements of governor expenses (no changes) • Procedure for complaints against the corporation (change to reflect ESFA change to Department for Education) • Procedure for obtaining independent legal advice (no changes) • Attendance at Corporation Meetings (updated to clarify expected attendance of non-members at the committees and also to remove a specific reference to members of the public being able to attend, following a review of sector practice) • Governor Training and Development Policy (updated to reflect the use of GovernorHub, new induction programme/induction pack and governor handbook and reference to ETF training). • Governor Recruitment and Succession Planning Policy (no changes) <p>All these policies were provided on GovernorHub in the Governor Handbook folder.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED: Recommended approval of the following governance policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor Code of Conduct Governor • Conflict of Interest Policy • Policy on reimbursements of governor expenses • Procedure for complaints against the corporation • Procedure for obtaining independent legal advice • Attendance at Corporation Meetings • Governor Training and Development Policy • Governor Recruitment and Succession Planning Policy
6.	Risk Report to Audit Committee/Escalation to Board
6.1	Review Strategic Risk 4 – governance and strategic leadership: Members considered the positive progress with the work on succession planning and governance development over the year. In the context of the Ofsted inspection outcome and the quality improvement plan, The Reaseheath Way was promoted to all staff at the staff conference in January and is being driven via an adjusted executive leadership structure. The governor day on 31 January 2025 focused on quality assurance and improvement and governor oversight of the quality of teaching and learning. However, impact from these actions is yet to be seen to the extent that substantial assurance can be taken at this stage in the year.
6.2	RESOLVED: Based on the reporting to and discussion in the meeting, the committee reports partial assurance on the strategic leadership and governance risk to audit committee.

7.	Any other Business There was no other business reported to the meeting.
8 8.1	Evaluation RESOLVED: The committee was satisfied that it had met its terms of reference and planned cycle of business and recommended its terms of reference aligned to the 4Es of the strategic plan.
9. 9.1	Date of next meeting RESOLVED: The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 15 May 2025.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm

Approved as a correct record 15 May 2025

Jane Cowell OBE (Chair)