

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
CURRICULUM SKILLS AND STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2026 2pm

Committee Room, Reaseheath College

Present: Sean Houlston (independent, chair)
 Kate Boundy (co-opted)
 Charlotte Brooks (student)
 Jane Cowell (independent)
 Jan Chillery (independent)
 Marcus Clinton (principal)
 Mike Gorton (independent)
 Charlotte Riley (staff)

In attendance: Eli Broadhurst (student)
 James Eageny (assistant principal curriculum and performance)
 Jane Nickisson (assistant principal and dean of higher education)
 Paul Spearritt (vice principal curriculum and quality)
 Sharon Yates (assistant principal skills and partnerships)
 Jackie Schillinger (head of governance)

PART A unless stated

item	Content
1.	Opening items
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Introductions were made, with Charlotte Riley as the new staff governor joining her first meeting and a new co-opted member.
1.2	RESOLVED: Kate Boundy was appointed as a co-opted member of the committee for an initial period of one year.
1.3	Apologies were received and accepted from Jane Artess.
1.4	RESOLVED: The minutes of meeting held on 20 November 2025 were approved as a correct record.
1.5	RESOLVED: The updated cycle of business 2025-26 was approved.
2.	TOR 2 Source Information/evidence for Curriculum Intent
2.1	The Committee considered impact of employer curriculum validation meetings on curriculum design and delivery. The VP requested views on whether the work shows employer-led curriculum development and whether stakeholders are effectively influencing curriculum design and whether further assurance or direction is needed. Key strategic issues raised included: • How effectively employer feedback is driving curriculum change across diverse curriculum areas. • The sufficiency of employer engagement. • The extent to which developments improve learner readiness, progression and alignment to industry needs.
2.2	Governors' questions and challenge focused on the following areas: • Ownership for this work and how is it being driven - The curriculum area manager (CAM) and there is an action plan in place, which is monitored via the termly performance reviews. The action plan is important because it helps to focus on the

granular details so we can show examples in each area of how these meetings have had impact on what we do.

- How the validation meetings work - We present the course details, and they ask and question why do you do this and not that and provide suggestions of doing things differently. An example in Construction has been changing little details in the environment to make it a more professional customer focused environment to develop these professional behaviours. Employers also looked at the career ready programme and focused on the behaviours as well as actual technical course content.
- How employers know what impact they are having - We are doing this again in May with a 'You said we did' approach. We present to them what we have done since the last time. We will also ask about inclusion. We will present the profile of the learners that are coming through in their industries, this fits with the new Ofsted toolkit. We need to include employers in our work on inclusion and to make sure the courses are focusing on the actual tools used in the industry.
- Benefits of the exercise - It has been very useful not only in relation to the curriculum planning but also to get employers on site and develop more links. It is also valuable two-way feedback as the Principal takes this information back to the local skills improvement plan to feedback to inform their skills policy.
- Gaps in coverage - We need to focus more on maths and English this year. In Sport the work has been delayed but it is now completed. This has been valuable work because this area previously found it hard to articulate employer input to curriculum, but they have now been able to evidence some good examples. ACTION to update on this work at the next meeting.
- Influencing back to employers as well - We have done this already with foundation. We invited a range of employers from different backgrounds, and we asked what would prevent you from taking on employees with additional needs, which is helping them to be confident to take people on.
- Governor engagement with employer validation events – There was engagement and will do this again in May. Important for governors to have bitesize key message information to use as they are engaging with employers.
- Student feedback used to shape the curriculum – This happens more so in higher education with the module feedback, within further education the actual content and delivery is more prescribed, but the student voice is brought in via the course representative meetings. An example of responding to student feedback in further education provision was on feedback on the structure of the week/timetable.
- Student awareness of employer input shaping the courses – With the higher education courses it is not that visible, but the engagement comes in via guest speakers. It can have an impact on student mindset if they know that an aspect is there because employers say it is important.
- Depth and breadth of engagement with employers – We are confident that we are getting sufficient range and participation such that it is representative of the industry.
- How we know that it is happening - We check implementation via lesson visits and learning walks and we need to keep monitoring whether and how this has been implemented and is it credible.
- Impact and outcomes – Impact measures are whether we are retaining more students and whether our progression and destination data and our survey feedback is strong. These are within the college level KPI.

	- Usefulness of the employer skills boards events - Skills boards are useful for informing the strategy. Validation events are much more about is this meeting your needs now and are we delivering it. We will hold employer skills boards every three years and annual curriculum validation events. - Report structure – Useful to present as ‘you said we did’ next time ACTION
2.3	RESOLVED: Good progress is being made overall using the employer validation events to help shape curriculum, with evidence of employer-responsive curriculum enhancement in the reporting with a next round of events planned for May with a ‘you said we did’ focus as well as a focus on inclusion.
3.	TOR 1 Curriculum Intent and Impact of College’s Curriculum
3.1	The Committee considered the outcomes of curriculum planning for 2026-27, including changes to the foundation offer and higher-level skills curriculum development in higher education. In summary the main changes considered were: - The next phase of curriculum changes in Foundation will be implemented along with a re-branding of the name of the department to better reflect the offering in the area. Phase 2 will see the introduction of additional ‘pathways’ courses in Animal Care, Agriculture and Equine, using the RARPA framework (Start and Grow in the Land-based Sector). The provision will be based around the key principles of the ‘preparation for adulthood agenda’, ensuring that the offer is more inclusive and better meets the needs of learners, thus enhancing retention and achievement at Level 1 and below. - The Foundation department will also launch a bespoke offer for those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The addition of this offer is a high priority to ensure that the College is addressing a key local, regional and national priority. It is currently envisaged that the offer will consist of courses offered via The Kings Trust, which lasts approximately 10 weeks, with three points of enrolment during the academic year. Alongside the specialist NEET offer, we will continue to enhance our Future Tracks offer that supports effective transition into the College and provides a supportive intervention strategy, during the academic year, for any learners who may have become disaffected. - To facilitate the introduction of the NEET offer and to better reflect the College’s strategic intent, a small part time offer for Home Schooled learners aged 14-16 will no longer run. - A wider level 1 offer for Engineering, Construction, Food and Sport to ensure that there is a focus on the preparation for adulthood agenda. Ultimately this will enhance the inclusiveness of the College’s offer. - The Food curriculum area will be part of the Academy of Land and Environment (ALE), led by two Curriculum Area Managers. This will enhance the Agri-Food offer. - A new Business and Professional Skills curriculum area will be created. Business and Professional Services has been identified as one of the UK Government’s priority skills areas and is also included, as a priority sector, in the refreshed Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). There is opportunity for growth in this area, in full-time numbers, adult learners and through direct delivery to industry. - Maths and English delivery will continue as 3 separate 1-hour lessons in these subjects, as this is the best pedagogical approach. Group sizes will be limited to a maximum of 17 and further enhancement of digital and AI assessment abilities with adding AI feedback tool Markus.

	• Exploring apprenticeship opportunities for a pilot in 2026 in Butchery Level 3, Arborist Level 2, and Business Administrator Level 3. Likely roll-out of Foundation Apprenticeships from the 2027-28 academic year. • Adult offer success in 2025-26 was the successful delivery of the first Skills Bootcamp in Forestry and Arboriculture skills, however successes remain too few. More delivery is expected in 2026-27, as part of Wave 7, and currently have several progressing through the bid stages with Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington (ECW). • Higher education developments include the validation of the Level 7 MSc Human-Animal Studies programme, development of a new Foundation Year, the BSc Bioveterinary Science and BSc Equine Science offers, and progression of the Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) Assistant Farm Manager towards a Higher Apprenticeship model that integrates apprentices and full-time learners through flexible curriculum delivery. • Exploration of a collaborative partnership with Harper Adams University to deliver the Level 6 Integrated Degree Apprenticeship Food Industry Technical Professional, supporting progression from Eden Higher Apprenticeships and strengthening employer engagement. • Further HTQ development aligned to national policy includes Sustainable Business Management (2026 start) and Construction Management for England pathways repositioned for 2027 delivery. Strategic considerations relating to the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) and future modular delivery.
3.2	Governors' questions and challenge focused on the following areas: • NEET provision and how it will work and be promoted – planned to have three intakes over the year, linking with Crewe hub, youth workers and local agencies. Expect interest and intake to build over time. We are working with school and careers services. One aspect that needs to work is the data sharing agreements which once available from the local authority will support promotion of the offer, with learners placed by the local authorities. Inclusive offer has multiple different levels it is a flexible offer that meets the NEET agenda. Benefit might not be immediate but a little later on with positive progression to full time courses. A member provided a contact for the Youth Collective in Stoke. • The restructuring of Food into ALE with assurance on how the leadership responsibilities are structured. • Keeping an eye on the strategic split of courses if the business area grows as opposed to specialist land-based areas. • Focus on the business skills is really reflected through the development. Also, the research framing on the science cheshire and Warrington. • Consideration of defunding of current level 3 and how new V levels will work, which will need to be changed following the consultation as it is currently not workable. • Clarification of how the HE providers relationships are negotiated and structured and that these are in line with sector standards. • Student governor feedback on the views of the current level 6 cohort who may be keen to move on to the MSC. This suggested a need to talk to the students about expectations on the level of support and their needs. Assurance that the programme is a taught masters so it will be fully supported and that there is a set amount of hours for dissertation supervision.

3.4	RESOLVED: The proposed curriculum developments support the College's strategic intent to remove barriers to learning, enhance outcomes, improve progression and meet local, regional and national skills priorities.
4.	TOR 3 Stakeholder engagement strategies
4.1	The committee reviewed the draft industry engagement strategy, school strategy and Myerscough collaboration development in terms of alignment with the College's 4E strategy and considered the overall approach to take to development of an overarching stakeholder engagement strategy.
4.2	Governors' questions and challenge focused on the following areas: - Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and impact on the second draft plan – the College has made headway in making land based more visible and Agri-Tech and Food is now reflected. - Audience for the strategies - Positive feedback from employers. Audience includes civic partners, like LSIP. Schools' audience may be different. Need to consider presentation, use of visuals, thinning out and having a smart action plan and RAG rating where appropriate to measure success – linked to the strategic plan KPI. - The collaboration with Myerscough College and the draft MOU, with a joint working group at leadership level on work streams and following the MOU to include governance level feeding back to this Committee. Support for collaboration from the committee, where risk appetite is eager to develop these opportunities.
4.3	RESOLVED: The committee supports the development of the Myerscough collaboration via the MOU and the development of an overall stakeholder strategy that incorporates all stakeholders, including the college's key external stakeholder groups across Education, Employers, Civic Partnerships and Community, along with the data sources to support and inform strategic decision-making.
5.	TOR 5 Risk Review
5.1	RESOLVED: The Committee confirms it takes reasonable assurance on the management of the strategic risk of meeting skills and stakeholder needs due to the policy environment and current Ofsted 'reasonable contribution' judgement.
6.	Governance
6.1	RESOLVED: The Committee considered it had met its remit set out in its terms of reference and cycle of business for this term's meeting.
7.	Closing items
7.1	There was no other business reported to the meeting.
7.2	The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 30 April 2026.

The meeting closed at 4.15pm

Approved as a correct record 30 April 2026

Sean Houlston, Chair