

**Time** 5.15pm

**Venue** Runshaw College (Meeting held via conference call)

**Present** Warren Middleton (Chairman), Yvonne Bradshaw, Jo Venn, Simon Partington (Principal), Will Sutton, Andy Pratt, Alison Watson-Bird, Stephen Gregson, Ella Lawrenson, Jacqui Chatwood

**In Attendance** Clare Russell (Deputy Principal), Wendy Higgin (Interim Deputy Principal), Janet Ivill (Director of Finance), Fatema Hussein (Head of Governance)

Meeting began 5.15pm

Meeting closed 6.50pm

Attendance 79%

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that due to the unprecedented circumstances facing the College as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak, the meeting was being undertaken via conference call as permitted within the Instrument & Articles.

Apologies were received and accepted from Jessica Gill, Joshi Jariwala and Pam Pye.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

Governors were invited to declare any direct, indirect, pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interest relating to any item on the agenda for the meeting.

No interests were declared.

## **3. Minutes of The Meeting Held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

### **3.1 Approval of the Minutes Part 1**

Agreed that: the minutes are approved as a correct record and authorised for publication.

### **3.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

In response to a question about the Apprenticeship review, the Principal reported that the intention was to go ahead as planned and Apprentices would be contacted over the phone.

## **4. Management Accounts February 2020 & Budget Update**

The Director of Finance reported that:

- At as the end of February, College had been in a comfortable position and ahead of the budget forecast
- Cash balances had been expected to dip to £2.8million at the end of March 2020
- Due to the current crisis, payments to suppliers had been accelerated resulting in an additional £300,000 reduction in cash
- The balance at the end of March was now expected to be £2.5million
- The year- end cash balance had been forecasted at £3.9million but could be substantially reduced if College was not able to draw down any Apprenticeship, achievement or loan funding
- The DfE had stated that the additional funding promised for 2020/21 would be provided as originally planned

### **Governor Questions**

- Q.** Has College identified any potential government funding or business interruption coverage to cover additional costs associated with Covid 19 management?
- A.** The Job Retention Scheme may provide a useful source of funding as there were a number of roles for which there was no 'remote/homeworking alternative', (e.g., Catering, Cleaning)
- There may also be a reduced requirement for some customer facing roles
  - The College would be seeking advice from the AOC/ESFA in relation to this
  - In regard to business interruption coverage, the current position from Zurich was that COVID-19 was not an eligible disease as per the terms of the policy and therefore, no support was available for this
  - The College would be able to take advantage of the government's extension to payment of VAT
- Q.** What are financial implications of the College closure because of Corona virus?
- A.** The financial implications from the pandemic could be far reaching
- For the current academic year, a schedule of risks for all income and expense categories had been completed, and calculated a combined risk of circa £1m
  - This would mean a deficit of £0.8m for the year and 'requires improvement' financial health
  - However, the College had sufficient cash reserves to cover this in the short term
  - The budget for 2020/21 will have much more risk – specifically with regard to Apprenticeship and Adult FE recruitment
- Q.** Which curriculum area was likely to be overstaffed next year?
- A.** The initial draft curriculum plan showed the school of sport to be slightly overstaffed. However, the latest version of the plan indicated that projected staffing levels in the school of sport would be about right.
- Q.** Could the planned capital expenditure on Catering / Chef's kitchen be used to increase provision/make it more profitable with this investment?
- A.** The proposed capital expenditure does not create extra capacity within the catering classrooms. The investment is in relation to air handling/heating improvements in the kitchen
- Q.** What is the position with bus contracts now College is closed?
- A.** The bus contracts include a clause for adjustments to the service, and this has typically been used for re-routing, combing routes, adding extra buses
- College has committed to pay the contract up to the end of April, and then initiate the 'change clause' to, suspend the contract from that point (potentially saving circa £320k)
  - This was subject to negotiation with the bus contractors
  - College had also committed to refunding student bus pass fees from the date of closure, and this would cost circa £250k.

- Q.** It was important to understand the items which had changed since January. Could a 'bridge' be done from what was agreed to what is being proposed with explanations as to why individual income or cost categories have changed?
- A.** Detailed papers will be provided to the finance committee members within the next few weeks/months in respect of the 20/21 budget. These will explain any key shifts in position

**RESOLVED:**

The Board agreed that in the interim, the Chair of Finance was kept updated of the financial position including any key changes and /or deterioration to cash balances and financial health

**ACTION:**

Director of Finance

**(Change in order of agenda)**

**6.1 Finance Committee Minutes 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

The following update was provided by the Chair of the Finance Committee:

- The Committee had reviewed the cash-flow forecasts and been satisfied with the rationale provided by the College for the dip in cash flow in March
- Course contribution had been reviewed and it had been noted that there were no courses that were operating on a deficit
- It had been agreed that the pension risk was increased on the risk register
- A forecast position to the end of April 2020 had been requested
- Members had agreed that the revised budget position for 2020/21 was shared with the Committee for review and comment before it was presented to the Board
- Peter Zak had been welcomed back to the Finance Committee

**Governor Questions**

- Q.** When would more information be available regarding the target for break even (for other than 16-18) and why it would not be met?
- A.** Detailed papers will be prepared alongside the budget schedules, and presented to the June Finance Committee

Jacqui Chatwood left the meeting at this point

**5. Environment & Sustainability Presentation**

Board members reviewed the information presented and the following questions were raised:

**Governor Questions**

- Q.** What was the DfE position regarding financial support for estate improvements?
- A.** DfE had last year completed a full independent survey of all Colleges, and a review of this data confirmed about 1% in the category C/D standard
- In previous capital funding you had to have a large C/D rating to be able to access any type of match funding.
  - ESFA had also recently completed a condition survey of all college estates
  - 98% of the Runshaw estate had been graded at category A or B, with only 2% at category C
  - The eligibility conditions have yet to be clarified, but previous college condition capital bids have required the estate to be at category C or D in order to submit bids

- The default position will be that the College must maintain its estate through its own reserves
- Q.** What other sources of funding and partnership working could be explored to keep the green agenda moving forward in a financially affordable way?
- A.** The LEP has been the main source of funding, but nothing has been available since 2015. The last successful bid was the Science and Engineering Centre at Chorley campus. SALEX funding is available, but must be repaid out of the return on investment and has to be 5 years or less
- Q.** It would be useful to see the plan for electric charging stations with costings and more use of technology to reduce travel. Has College consulted with staff and students for their ideas?
- A.** Some initial quotes for charging points have been received and some partial grants are available. Preston's College installed 4 charging points and it cost £18,000 with the grant. If Runshaw was willing to give away the energy free then the system is much cheaper. It is the form of monitoring and payment systems that the cost is incurred on
- Q.** What are we doing to cut down on disposable plastic, drink bottles in particular; and could we change to aluminium cans?
- A.** To reduce disposables generally, College has recently purchased additional ceramics
- Both campuses also have a large number of chilled water dispensers, which have an annual cost with cleaning and maintenance of £10,000
  - All polystyrene has been removed and replaced with recyclable plastics
  - Plastic straws have been replaced with straws made from natural straw, along with the use of reusable cups

## **6. Corporation Committee Meeting Minutes**

The Board received reports from the Committee meetings and the following points were noted:

### **6.2 Remuneration and Organisational Development Committee Minutes Part 1 – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

- The provision of death in service benefits was considered and the Committee had agreed that there was no pressing requirement to explore this at the present time and the matter would be reconsidered when appropriate to do so
- The proposal to establish a separate Remuneration Committee whose membership would include the Chair of Governors but not the Principal was discussed
- The name of the Remuneration & Organisational Development Committee would be changed to Organisational Development.
- Some amendments were suggested to the draft terms of reference for a separate Remuneration Committee and questions raised about the Committee's delegated powers
- A recommendation would be made to the Board once these matters had been clarified

#### **Governor Questions**

- Q.** What were the insurance arrangements for staff being Ofsted inspectors/examiners? Do they have professional liability insurance as they are being paid for this work? What are the risks?
- A.** The College's understanding was that Ofsted Inspectors who are serving practitioners are expected to have professional liability insurance organised via their employer, and Runshaw had organised this for its 2 serving inspectors

### **6.3 Audit Committee Minutes 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 Part 1**

- The report from the 16-18 funding compliance audit had been considered and it had been noted that some very minor errors had been found
- Management had taken all necessary actions to address the recommendations from the Safeguarding Audit
- An additional 320 records had been checked and only one case of non-compliance found
- Mazars had been requested to provide additional assurance on the adequacy of the revised procedures that College had put in place
- The Committee had agreed that the Information Systems audit was deferred and replaced by an audit of business continuity
- It had also been agreed that the Transport audit was deferred until September and replaced by an Ofsted readiness audit
- Discussions had taken place on next year's internal audit plan and key risk areas that could be considered for inclusion

Stephen Gregson joined the meeting at this point.

#### **6.4 Search and Governance Committee Minutes 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

- Governor link visits and learning walks would now have to be undertaken once College was open again
- The ETF Governance development sessions had been held by webinar as the face to face sessions had been cancelled
- 3 Governors from Runshaw had been involved and the feedback had been mixed

The Chair of the Search & Governance Committee reported that most links could be suitable for Learning Walks, and the ETF training had emphasised that this would be good practice.

It was suggested that guidance needed to be developed and issued on how this may be conducted, and could be something to be worked on whilst college was closed.

The Principal stated that learning walks in which Governors were accompanied by a manager or teacher could be arranged, and agreed that it would be useful to outline some protocols for this.

#### **ACTION:**

Principal / SMT

#### **6.5 Standards and Curriculum Committee Minutes 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

- The Committee had reviewed the latest data for the key issues subjects and monitored progress against the action plan
- The GCSE Maths and English mock exam results would be available soon and would be circulated to the Committee
- DfE national performance data had been reviewed and was positive overall
- The annual Equality & Diversity report had been presented and it had been noted that the College had been unsuccessful in its attempts to appoint a Chaplain

A Governor advised that an offer of support for Chaplaincy services had been made by Balshaws High School and St Andrews, and suggested that this should be explored further.

#### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** How did Runshaw compare to Newman and other colleges for GCSE Maths and English results, and what were the plans to move Maths up from the 33% pass rate?

A. Runshaw was comfortably in the top quartile for both Maths and English when compared to all Colleges (SFCs and GFEs). When compared to just other GFEs, it was ranked first for English and fourth for Maths.

## 7. Apprenticeships Action Plan – Progress so far

The action plan was presented and discussed.

### Governor Questions

Q. How was the Apprenticeship conference in January received, and had this resulted in any changes to objectives and measures used with trainers/assessors?

A. The conference in January was well received by trainer assessors' overall

- There had been a number of changes implemented following the external review in December 2019 and the key actions and progress towards those were detailed in the college action plan
- This first phase action plan essentially focussed on the basics, which was a combination of systems, processes and quality.

Q. How was College engaging with Apprentices and Employers in this improvement plan as they were equally integral to lifting performance?

A. The first phase of the action plan has focussed on the basics of systems, processes and quality from an internal perspective. The second phase would focus on engaging employers and apprentices in both perceptions and their experience on the ground against our quality standards (which align to the new inspection framework).

Q. What feedback was being gathered from apprentices and employers on the perceived step change in what they see and feel?

- Actively seeking, monitoring and acting upon employer and apprentice feedback is now integral to the remit of the Head of Studies for Apprenticeships
- This will include engagement of employers and apprentices in focus groups in key areas and cross programme stakeholder feedback, and was in addition to the usual annual surveys
- Apprenticeship feedback was also now part of the COR cycle which aligned to new EIF framework judgements for apprentices to drive the agenda at programme level.
- Feedback is planned to become part of the monthly quality audits from May
- College had also planned to obtain some early feedback on this aspect in the March external temperature check, and the final external review in May 2020.

Q. What else should College be doing with Apprentices and Employers to attain and sustain trajectory to best outcome?

A. The primary focus has been on quality of education aspects, but there is more to be done on the wider pastoral elements e.g. personal development. College was planning to take best practice examples from the Education for YP pastoral curriculum, such as wellbeing, confidence and resilience, and adapt to best meet the needs of apprentices

Q. What would an outstanding rating look like and how confident was management that this could be attained in the coming months?

A. Putting the Covid 19 outbreak to one side, it was felt that a good and rapidly improving judgement for 'quality of education' was a realistic target if College was to be inspected in September. However, College needed to acknowledge the impact that Covid19 would have on all providers in terms of their ability to drive improvements at the pace, which has been established, to date.

Q. What additional support could be provided to Apprentices through the current Covid 19 situation?

- A.** College continued to engage as before, which was regularly, but remotely for the time being
- Inevitably, some employers would not be able to continue to run their businesses and will lay employees off as a result
  - Runshaw would be doing its very best to offer support if this happened to any of its Apprentices
  - Apprentices had been advised to contact College immediately so that support could be provided to secure a suitable alternative
  - There was also the option of putting apprentices on a break in learning over this period to enable training to resume once normal business was restored
  - Employers and providers were all hoping for greater clarity and guidance from the DfE over the coming weeks
- Q.** Could anything be done whilst College was closed on Targeted Professional Support and expectations of Trainer/Assessors?
- A.** The March 2020 external review of apprenticeships was going ahead as planned. The relevant members of the Senior Management Team would also continue to ensure that quality audits were being conducted to identify any remaining concerns in relation to the practice of trainer-assessors

## **8. Inspection Readiness – What Governors Need to Know**

The Board reviewed the information that had been presented and agreed that it was very comprehensive.

The Principal advised that the Audit Committee had suggested the internal auditors could undertake a review of processes to ensure that College was compliant with the requirements of the new framework. A series of staff and student briefings was also being planned.

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** How well did College evaluate non governor and non SMT staff and potentially students understanding of the strategy and intent to triangulate understanding through the organisation? Were staff and students questioned to probe understanding?

**A.** "COR" activities were the primary methods used to test staff and student understanding; in particular, the sampling of students' work and the review of planning documents involved focus groups with students / staff.

In addition, members of the senior management team were planning a series of staff and student briefings in the summer and autumn term.

It was suggested and agreed that the document was updated on a regular basis.

It was noted that summaries from reports of Colleges that had been graded as Outstanding were also to be circulated to Governors.

## **9. Principal's Report –Spring Term 2020**

The Principal presented his report and the following update was provided in relation to the current situation with the Corona virus crisis:

- Regular updates were being posted on the College website for learners and parents
- A decision had been made last Wednesday to switch to online learning
- All high needs learners had been contacted to ascertain if they wished to come into College and none had requested this
- In view of the Government guidance, a decision had therefore been made to close the College and switch to off -site working for all staff last Friday
- No issues or concerns had been raised by parents or learners

- College was still waiting for full details from the DfE and Ofqual on arrangements for how students would be assessed
- It was anticipated that in the absence of exams, final results would predominantly be based on teacher assessments
- Information on partial refunds for bus passes, cancelled College trips and Runshaw Pay would shortly be sent to students

In response to a question, the Student Governor Ella Lawrenson confirmed that she was receiving emails from her Teachers on a regular basis providing direction on online learning. Essays had been submitted and these had been marked and sent back.

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Had the Local Authority been approached on what funding it was prepared to commit to in order to create parity with the Greater Manchester bus pass scheme?

**A.** This had not yet been done but was worth raising. The Principal stated that he would also raise it with Lancashire Colleges so that a lobbying approach could be agreed

**Q.** Why had the previous IOT bid in 2018 failed and what would be different this time?

**A.** The key difference this time was that there would only be one bid made (led by Blackpool and the Fylde College); and all HE and FE providers in Lancashire had signed up to supporting it.

**Q.** What would a 5% increase in salaries for the 2020 - 2023 period mean for Runshaw from a financial outcome perspective?

**A.** This would cost an additional £900k-£1m per annum if salaries were raised by 5% during the same period

**Q.** In light of the challenges surrounding the understanding of county lines issues and the potential that had to increase incidents of violence and drug abuse, would the local policing team come and present their approach and insights to the Board and be open to discussing further collaboration and response to mitigate the likelihood of further incidents that may impact the college?

**A.** College could ask Lancashire Police to present and answer questions at a future board meeting.

The Board thanked all staff and members of the senior management team for their efforts during this very challenging time.

The Chairman confirmed that he would be sending a letter of thanks to all staff on behalf of the Board

### **ACTION:**

Chair of Governors

## **9.1 Business Contingency Planning**

The Board discussed the plans and arrangements in place to address the current crisis and how College was responding / reacting to it.

### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Was the Vocational awards evening being rearranged?

**A.** The date had not yet been changed as College remained hopeful that it would be open by then

- Q.** How was home working and online learning going?  
**A.** It was still very early days, but initial feedback from staff and students had been positive.

- Q.** What was being done to support the students with mental health issues?  
**A.** Students would still be able to contact their pastoral mentor and their teachers throughout this on-line learning period. The Principal's emails to students (and the web-site message) encouraged students to contact their GP if they were feeling very unwell, either mentally or physically. The safeguarding team were also emailing out some tips to students to keep themselves mentally well during a highly unsettling period.

## **9.2 Curriculum Portfolio Changes**

The following update was provided by the Principal:

- The proposed changes to the curriculum portfolio had been discussed by both the Finance and Standards & Curriculum Committees
- New courses to be introduced in the next academic year included a T Level in digital studies
- It was proposed that a small number of courses would be discontinued as they had insufficient student numbers
- The proposals were not expected to have any significant staffing implications

## **10. Governors' Data Dashboard**

The Data Dashboard was reviewed and the following points noted:

- Both retention and attendance had been satisfactory to date
- Any attendance data from the start of the College closure would not be taken into account
- The DfE performance tables had highlighted that Runshaw was top in the country of all GFE Colleges for its GCSE English results and fourth for GCSE Maths
- This also put the College in the top quartile for both English and Maths
- Data for the key issues subjects had been reviewed in detail at the Standards & Curriculum Committee

### **Governor Questions**

- Q.** Looked After Children /IL retention is very low, given that some of this group, if not all, will be those eligible to continue to attend College. Will their decision not to attend mean that the remainder will be counted as completing?
- A.** The LAC/IL retention figure shown on in the Board papers is only for those students who are due to complete their studies in summer 2020; it includes students on 2 year programmes. Of the seven students not retained, five of these left college last year in 2018-19.
- Q.** The GCSE November results for English are showing an improvement in all measures. Maths is showing a slight increase in Grade improvement, but not in 3 to 4 conversion. Can it be assumed that it will be a similar picture for the end of year results, which will have to be determined by the College from data currently available to staff?
- A.** The exact arrangements for determining GCSE grades in summer 2020 have not yet been published by the DfE/Ofqual. For a big GCSE centre like Runshaw, it is hoped that they

will take into account the performance of previous cohorts. The mock results will inform the predicted grades, along with other contextual information.

## **11. Governance Matters**

### **11.1 Future Governance Arrangements**

The Head of Governance explained that:

- In view of the current College closure, it would be prudent to review governance arrangements
- The Board needed to consider what measures could be put in place to ensure that it continued to provide oversight, scrutiny and support to College management in addition to fulfilling its' statutory responsibilities
- Alternative ways of operating could be considered including the use of Chair's action, reducing the quorum and setting up an emergency Governance Committee.

#### **ACTION:**

Head of Governance to put forward proposals for consideration

### **11.2 External Evaluation of the Board**

The Head of Governance reported that this had been planned for 4<sup>th</sup> May with an external assessor in attendance.

#### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Could this still be undertaken by sending necessary documents and having on-line "interviews"?

#### **ACTION:**

Head of Governance to check and report back

### **11.3 Board and Committee Membership**

#### **RESOLVED:**

- The Board approved the re-appointment of Diane Bourne as a Co-opted member of the Remuneration & Organisational Development Committee.
- It was agreed that Ken Lee's term of office was not extended beyond December 2020.

### **11.4 F.E. Commissioner Letter**

The letter was considered and noted.

## **12. Safeguarding / Prevent Update**

The Safeguarding report was presented and discussed.

#### **Governor Questions**

**Q.** Had consideration been given to how contact could be maintained with learners who were vulnerable / on the safeguarding register?

- A. The Safeguarding team had contacted every learner and provided contact details including those for external agencies. Learners could also continue to contact their Teachers and Pastoral Mentors

The Safeguarding Governor Yvonne Bradshaw provided the following update from the recent Steering Group meeting that she had attended:

- Runshaw was the only college in Lancashire working towards the Quality Standard in Carer support
- Consideration could be given to the College publicising its efforts in this area
- Online reports were improving visibility on Counselling appointments, and the Counselling team were using this new information to target their work and support

### **13. Risk Register (High Risks)**

The Director of Finance advised that the risk register was constantly being updated and utilised as part of business contingency planning.

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Board agreed that consideration was given to how this could be shared with Governors.

#### **ACTION:**

Director of Finance

### **14. Governance Impact Statement**

- Discussion on impact of Corona virus on learners, staff and College finances
- Monitoring of the Apprenticeship action plan
- Consideration of future Governance arrangements in response to the College closure and current crisis
- Use of technology to ensure that Governor meetings would continue
- Monitoring of key issues subjects
- Curriculum intent / discussion on plans for next academic year
- Discussion and actions to further enhance Governor understanding of the new inspection framework

### **15. RESERVED BUSINESS**

#### **15. Reserved Business Minutes**

##### **15.1 Corporation Meeting Minutes Part 2 – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Agreed: that the minutes are approved as a correct record.

##### **15.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Discussed under reserved business

##### **15.3 Standards & Curriculum Minutes 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

Discussed under reserved business

##### **15.4 Remuneration & Organisational Development Committee -11<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

Discussed under reserved business

**15.5 Audit Committee – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

Discussed under reserved business

**15.6 Senior Postholder Mid-Year Review**

Discussed under reserved business

**15.7 Other Reserved Business Matters**

**15.8 Principal Mid-Year Review**

Discussed under reserved business.

**16, Date of Next Meeting**

18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 5.15pm