

Time: 5.15pm

Venue: Runshaw College (Virtual Meeting held via MS Teams)

Present: Warren Middleton (Chairman), Yvonne Bradshaw, Jo Venn, Andy Pratt, Clare Russell (Principal), Joshi Jariwala, Alison Watson-Bird, Jacqui Chatwood, Robert Cobourne, Martina Jay, Safaa Hafiz, Pam Pye

In Attendance Martin Rigby (Deputy Principal), Zoe Smallman (Deputy Principal), Janet Ivill (Director of Finance), Fatema Hussein (Head of Governance)

Meeting began 5.15pm

Meeting closed 7.50pm

Attendance 92%

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Jessica Gill

The new Student Governor Safaa Hafiz was welcomed and introduced to the meeting.

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 21st September 2020

3.1 Approval of the Minutes Part 1

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

3.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The action progress log was reviewed, and it was noted that most of the actions had been completed.

The Chair requested that all Governors completed the Keeping Children Safe in Education quiz by 4th January 2020.

ACTION:

Head of Governance to re-send the link to all Governors

4. Corporation Committee Meeting Minutes

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

4.1 Search and Governance Committee Minutes 9th October 2020

Most of the items from the meeting had been included on the Board agenda for discussion or approval.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Governance SAR had been validated at the SRG meeting.

4.2 Standards and Curriculum Committee Minutes 9th October 2020

- The Committee had received an update on the Apprenticeship provision and progress against the action plan
- Targets for the key issues' subjects had been reviewed and the 2020/21 key issues list confirmed
- The "strategic curriculum intent" document had been presented and reviewed
- There had been a discussion re the blended learning model and feedback had been received from the Student Governor
- The Internal progression policy had been reviewed and some amendments proposed by Governors

4.3 Finance Committee Minutes 16th November 2020

- The Committee had approved the Procurement & Value for Money policies and proposed amendments to the bank mandate
- The Financial Statements and letters of Representation had been reviewed and recommended to the Board for approval
- There was a large deficit on catering income and the Committee had requested a briefing paper on the current position and planned mitigating actions
- The 10-year facilities plan had been reviewed and members had agreed that this was discussed further at the January strategy meeting

The Committee Chair reported that members were proposing the following amendments to the financial regulations and terms of reference:

- Board approval limit for additional capital expenditure, to be increased from £50,000 to £100,000, as the Principal could approve any variation up to that amount
- The £250,000 limit for approving any new aspect of business, or proposed establishment of a company or joint venture, was lowered from £250,000 to £100,000
- Requirement for Finance Committee to monitor all tenders and contracts for capital in excess of £50,000 to be raised to £100,000

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the amendments to the financial regulations and the Terms of Reference.

4.4 Organisational Development Committee Minutes - Part 1 – 16th November 2020

- Members had been appreciative of the efforts of the senior leadership team in promoting staff well-being
- Despite the challenging circumstances, College had ensured that all planned activities were undertaken
- Sickness absence rates continued to be below the national benchmarks
- College had continued to provide support to staff working from home

- The alcohol and substance miss-use policy had been reviewed in light of suggestions which had been made during the external Board evaluation
- The Committee had decided not to make any further amendments to the policy as the current process worked well with no issues having come to light

4.5 **Audit Committee Minutes 19th November 2020 Part 1**

- An adequate assurance opinion had been provided on the student transport audit
- All bus operator contracts were coming to an end this academic year, and a decision had not yet been made on whether all contracts would be extended or re-procured
- The cyber security audit was to be brought forward in view of staff working from home
- RSM would be issuing an unqualified audit opinion
- The Committee wanted to make the Board aware of the £8 million increase in the Pension liability and were suggesting that it would be prudent for the Board to take a 3 to 5-year view of cash flow in light of this

The Director of Finance stated that College would need to build up its level of surpluses so that it had some comfort in managing the pension deficit.

5. **Principal's Report**

The Principal's report to the Board covered the following topics; College response to Covid19, External & political developments, Teaching, Learning & Assessment, Finance and HR.

The following points were highlighted from the report:

- The College continued to prosper despite the challenges posed by the pandemic
- Colleagues had adapted admirably to new ways of working and students had therefore benefited from a consistently high-quality learning experience throughout
- Staff had been provided with a broad range of support, including new laptops for all teaching staff, CPD on blended learning and use of various technologies, health and wellbeing activities, and additional staffing capacity in a range of areas
- Student feedback about their learning experience and their safety at College was very positive on all programmes
- College continued to develop even better relationships with its partners and the community
- The partnerships would be enormously beneficial in helping to direct the College strategy for the future
- Discussions with the ESFA were ongoing in relation to the proportion of on campus learning that was currently being provided

Governor Questions

Q. Did many students take up the offer of sitting missed examinations?

A. 80 students had sat the Autumn A Level exam series between 5 and 21 October at Chorley campus, and the results were due on 17 December 2020. 140 16-18 year olds took the November GCSE resit at Leyland and c.10 adults took the GCSE English resit between 2 and 9 November. Results were due on 14 January 2020. The invigilators fed back that student behaviour was exceptional with not one concern raised

Q. Did all Apprentices complete the exit survey?

A. 101 out of a possible 164 apprentices completed the survey

Q. Is there an A level recognition event of any kind this year?

A. A virtual event was to be held with pre-recorded messages from the Principal and Chair of Governors

Q. Has the focus group with L3 and L5 CIPD students to follow up concerns happened yet and what were the outcomes

- A. One focus group had taken place and the other one was planned for tomorrow night. The focus was on how blended learning was working this year, the split between onsite and online time and how well students felt they were progressing. The feedback from the first group was that, initially, students found Zoom meetings with a new teacher a little difficult, and they provided the Teacher with some quite direct feedback. As a result, lessons moved onto Teams and Students had stated that online lessons were more effective, and they felt they were making progress

Covid Update

- The key priorities and control measures for a Covid secure campus had not changed
- 30 staff and 136 students had tested positive between September and November
- This had caused significant disruption due to self-isolation as 875 students and 45 staff had been instructed to self-isolate between September and November
- However, this was minimal compared to other Colleges
- The financial impact of Covid was significant with a total cost of £1 million to date
- Arrangements for July 2021 examinations were still to be clarified (A Level, GCSE and Vocational/Technical)
- The requirement for work placements and work experience was very difficult to achieve

Proposed delivery model from January 2021

College was proposing that, after the January mock exams:

- Year 2 A Level students to be on campus two days per week (Thursday and Friday) starting Thursday 28th January
- Year 1 A Level students to be on campus two days per week (Monday and Tuesday) starting Monday 1st February
- This would improve the teaching and learning experience with more face-to-face time with teachers
- 2 metre social distancing for teachers would be maintained at all times
- Social distancing and face coverings in all indoor areas of the College (except classrooms) would also be maintained
- The increase in close contacts could lead to more students self-isolating
- However, the use of seating plans will allow for the identification of close contacts and minimise the impact on other students

Governor Questions

Q. Would it be possible to accommodate more face to face delivery by splitting classes and extending the College day to include evenings?

A. This could be done but the issue was around transport logistics and students travelling from a wide area

Q. Was it possible to utilise the Chorley campus to spread students out across both sites to allow for more face to face teaching?

A. This had been considered but would be difficult to implement due to the range of A level subjects that students were studying

The Student Governor reported that students were keen to have more face to face contact with their Teachers and spend more time on campus. However, a greater emphasis needed to be placed on students wearing face masks in public areas and corridors, and that this needed to be rigorously enforced.

The Staff Governor stated that students were missing the contact with their peers and were better motivated studying in College than at home.

RESOLVED:

Governors confirmed that they were supportive of the proposal and agreed that the delivery model would require ongoing review to take account of changes in Government restrictions

Break in at Leyland Campus

The Principal updated board members on the recent break-in at the Leyland campus. It was noted that most of the damage would be covered via the College insurance policy and the total loss would be £1000 in insurance excess. Several measures had since been implemented to improve security.

Governor Questions

Q. Could the intruders be ex Runshaw students as they had knowledge of the layout of the College?

A. This was a possibility, but College had a lot of visitors on site during that period

Q. Could College manage without a cash machine on the premises?

A. There was no intention to replace it as the plan was to go cashless

A Governor suggested that additional signage was placed around the College stating that no cash was kept on the premises, as this may provide an additional deterrence.

ACTION:

College to investigate

5.1 Ofsted Visit Update

- The interim visit had taken place on 7th and 8th October
- Inspectors had a series of meetings with SMT, College managers, staff, students, parents, apprentices and employers.
- They were extremely positive about everything they saw
- The full report has now been published on Ofsted's website

5.2 F.E. Commissioner Diagnostic Visit Update

- At the College's invitation, two members of the Further Education Commissioner's team spent two virtual days at the College, on 23rd and 24th November
- They had a series of meetings with Governors, SMT, College managers, staff and students.
- The initial feedback was very positive and constructive, with several helpful recommendations to explore further

Governor Questions

Q. Did the FE Commissioner see the SAR and if so, was there any comment regarding Apprenticeships?

A. The FE Commissioner saw the 2018-19 SAR which included the 2019-20 QIP. They also had the 2019-20 QIP with updates as a separate document and the 2019-20 Key Issues list with updates as well as the 2020-21 Key Issues list. They did not discuss apprentices in the meetings relating to the SAR

The Board thanked the Principal for a very well presented and informative report.

6. Strategic Planning – Confirmation of Agenda Items

The Principal explained that:

- A draft agenda for the strategic planning meeting had been circulated with the meeting papers
- Recommendations from the F.E. Commissioner's diagnostic assessment had since been received
- The Senior leadership team had also met to discuss the strategic plan and it was proposed that now would an appropriate time to undertake a review of the strategic planning process

A Governor stated that it would be useful for the Board to get a more commercial view of how the needs of the Community could be met. It was suggested that external consultants could be commissioned to undertake an environmental scanning exercise, the results of which could be used to inform the strategic plan.

RESOLVED:

Governors endorsed the proposal to undertake a review of the strategic planning process

7. Board Evaluation Report

Governors considered the key recommendations from the independent Board evaluation report and the Head of Governance advised that these had been incorporated into the Governance Quality Improvement plan for this year.

7.1 Increasing Board Diversity

It was noted that the recommendation from the Search Committee for a Governor appointment would help to widen the diversity of the Board. A further discussion would also take place at the next meeting of the Committee.

7.2 Governor Engagement with Staff & Students

The Board discussed how Governors could further increase engagement with staff and students. Governors agreed that consideration was given to utilising the existing forums and mechanisms that College had in place. Martina Jay agreed to attend a Student Council meeting and provide a report to the Board.

7.3 External Stakeholder Engagement - Task & Finish Group

The Head of Governance advised that the Search Committee had put forward a proposal to set up a Task & Finish group to develop an external stakeholder engagement strategy and action plan. The group would meet in early January and membership would comprise of Search Committee members plus the Chair of the Standards Committee and the Director of Employer Relations.

The Principal suggested that Governors could also attend employer liaison board meetings as this would enable the Board to further understand employer needs.

8. Corporation Annual Reports

8.1 Audit Committee Annual Report to the Corporation

The Head of Governance explained that the purpose of the report was to advise the Board on the effectiveness of the College's systems of internal control before the final accounts for the year were approved.

The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that the report had been reviewed and endorsed by Committee members prior to submission to the Board.

The Board noted the opinion of the Audit Committee, in their Annual Report, that there are effective internal and external audit arrangements in place and that there is an effective framework of governance, risk management and control to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness and that these had operated as such throughout all of the financial year ended 31 July 2020 and to the date of the report.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Audit Committee annual report.

9. Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 July 2020

The Annual Report and Financial Statements were presented. These had been considered by the Finance and Audit Committees, in line with their respective remits, and were recommended for approval.

It was noted that the final out-turn was in line with what had been reported in the management accounts. The increase in the pension deficit had been highlighted but would not impact on the financial health grading. The Auditors had also confirmed that there were no issues in relation to the “Going Concern” opinion.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2020 and authorised the Chairman and Principal to sign the relevant pages of the report.

9.1 Representation Letter

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Representation Letters 2019/2020 and the Regulatory Questionnaire 2019/2020.

Governors thanked the Director of Finance and her team for the work undertaken on the preparation of the accounts and congratulated them on the clean audit opinion.

10. College SAR

The Board reviewed the SAR and it was confirmed that College was continuing to self-assess as “Outstanding”.

Governor Questions

Q. Had progress been made with the Apprenticeship action plan?

A. Covid had impacted on some of the actions, but College was confident that the measures that had been put in place were having a positive impact

The Vice-Chair and Chair of the Standards Committee had attended some of the Strategic Review Group meetings to validate the Departmental SAR’s and confirmed that Apprenticeship provision had been reviewed as part of these meetings.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the 2019/20 College SAR and 2020/21 Quality Improvement Plan

11. Governor Appointments

- 11.1 To approve the re-appointment of Peter Zak as a Co-opted Member of the Finance Committee**
- 11.2 To approve the appointment of Ade Oladapo to the Corporation Board**

Governors considered the recommendations from the Search and Governance Committee.

RESOLVED:

- The Board approved the re-appointment of Peter Zak as a Co-opted member of the Finance Committee
- The Board approved the appointment of Ade Oladapo to the Board with effect from 27th March 2021

The Vice-Chair informed the meeting that:

- She would be moving away from the area next week but was happy to remain on the Board until her term of office expired next December if meetings continued to be held virtually
- Jo Venn had agreed to take on the Safeguarding Governor role and handover arrangements had been finalised

The Chairman advised that:

- Stephen Gregson had resigned from the Board with immediate effect
- The Search Committee would be meeting in early January to interview candidates to fill the vacancy
- A new Vice-Chair would need to be elected before Yvonne Bradshaw's term of office ended

The Chairman thanked Yvonne Bradshaw for her contribution to the work of the Board.

It was noted that Andy Pratt would be stepping down when his term of office expired in March 2021 and the Board also thanked him for his contributions.

12. Committee Terms of Reference

It was noted that the Terms of Reference had been reviewed by each Committee and some minor revisions were being proposed.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the revisions to the Terms of Reference.

13. Policies for Approval

The proposed changes to the policies were highlighted to the meeting.

13.1 Disciplinary and Capability Procedure for Senior Post-holders

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Disciplinary and Capability Procedure for Senior Post-holders subject to an amendment of the review date.

13.2 Grievance Procedure for Senior Post-holders

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Grievance Procedure for Senior Post-holders.

13.3 Procedure for Dealing with Grievances Against Senior Post-holders

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Procedure for Dealing with Grievances Against Senior Post-holders

12.1 Sixth Form Admissions

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Sixth Form Admissions Policy

12.2 Risk Management Annual Report and Policy

The report set out the risk management policy requirements, reviewed significant risks identified in 2019/2020 and the approach taken to address them. It was noted that in addition to a risk register, there was also a risk management plan in place.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the risk management annual report and policy and endorsed the recommendation of the Audit Committee to maintain the risk appetite as low.

14. Finance Monitoring Reports

14.1 Finance Report to 31 October 2020

The Board received the financial report for the three months ending 31 October 2020 and the following points were highlighted by the Director of Finance:

- College was on track to meet the budget surplus target
- Any further closure of the campus would impact on the forecast and mitigating actions were being taken to address this

The Chair of Finance provided an update on the discussions that had been held at the Committee meeting regarding the impact of Covid on College finances, and it was noted that catering income and transport costs were the two key risks.

Governor Questions

Q. Would the A level students pay an additional fee for bus passes if they returned to campus for 2 days a week?

A. Students would not be charged an additional fee, but College would not need to issue any further rebates

15. Revised Governor Dashboard

The Board reviewed the dashboard which was used to monitor key College performance indicators.

It was noted that the dashboard had been revised following a suggestion at the previous Board meeting.

Governor Questions

Q. Have the Census targets been met?

A. College had 4967 students on roll at the census date against a target of 4960

Q. What actions were being taken to address the lower GCSE attendance?

A. The Attendance Clerk was following up on all instances where attendance was low. Discussions had taken place between the Vocational and GCSE curriculum teams on greater connectivity so that the GCSE subjects were more valued by the students

Q. What are the plans to address the improvement points identified in Parents' survey?

A. Some of the improvement points would be addressed via the re-instatement of the progress evening. The progress reporting to parents had also been streamlined

In response to a request for feedback on the revisions to the dashboard, Governors suggested that it would be helpful to streamline it as some of the information could be uploaded to the Convene document library.

It was agreed that a further review was undertaken after the strategic planning session.

16. Safeguarding / Prevent Update

The Deputy Principal Zoe Smallman presented the report and it was noted that 200 students had been referred at the end of October 2020 in comparison to 181 at the same point last year. The highest number of referrals to date continued to relate to Health and Wellbeing and there were a higher number of referrals relating to Mental Health.

Governor Questions

Q. Has the College any voice on any of the Lancashire Resilience Forum meetings, particularly the education one?

ACTION:

Zoe Smallman to clarify and report back

Q. There appear to be high percentage of students on the pre-advanced vocational programme that have been referred relative to Level 3 Courses. Was there a specific issue or cause for concern?

A. There was no specific reason for this. The number of A level referrals were lower compared to previous years and this was to be further explored at the next Safeguarding meeting

17. Risk Register (*High Risks*)

The risk register was reviewed, and it was noted that the two highest risks were cyber security and the impact of Covid.

It was confirmed that the full register would be available on Convene for Governors to review and was also monitored at every Audit Committee meeting.

18. Governance Impact Statement

- Financial statements reviewed and approved in line with statutory requirements
- Governor appointment / re-appointment will ensure that the Board has an appropriate balance of skills and diversity
- Discussion on revising the strategic planning process will ensure that process continues to be robust
- Agreement to move to 2-day face to face teaching for the A Level programme will lead to higher student satisfaction
- Feedback and actions from external Board review will further strengthen governance
- Governor suggestion regarding additional signage following the recent break-in

- Governor suggestion on using external consultants to undertake an environmental scanning exercise

19. Reserved Business Minutes

- 19.1 Corporation Meeting Minutes Part 2 – 21st September 2020
- 19.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes
- 19.3 Standards & Curriculum Committee – 9th October 2020
- 19.4 Audit Committee Minutes 19th November 2020 Part 2
- 19.5 Remuneration Committee Minutes Part 2 – 16th November 2020
- 19.6 Matters Arising from the Committee Minutes

Items 19.1 to 19.6 were discussed under reserved business.

20. Principal and Senior Postholder Appraisal

- 20.1 Appraisal & Remuneration of Senior Postholders
- 20.2 Appraisal & Remuneration of the Principal
- 20.3 Annual Appraisal & Remuneration of the Head of Governance

Items 20.1 to 20.3 were discussed under reserved business.

21. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 18th January 2021 at 5pm (Strategic Planning Meeting)