

Time: 5.15pm

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

Present: Warren Middleton (Chair), Yvonne Bradshaw, Jo Venn, Joshi Jariwala, Clare Russell (Principal), , Portia Bailey, Michael Lowe, Jacqui Chatwood, Robert Cobourne, Safaa Hafiz, Pam Pye, Martina Jay, Graham Murphy

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 87%

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Alison Watson-Bird

No apologies had been received from Ade Oladapo.

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.

There were no declarations made.

3. Minutes of The Meeting Held on 17th May 2021

3.1 Approval of the Minutes

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 all of the actions from the previous meeting had been completed.

4. Corporation Committee Meeting Minutes

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

4.1 Finance Committee Minutes 14th June 2021

- The budget and financial plan had been reviewed and was being recommended to the Board
- Proposals for the Buttermere estates project had been considered and the Committee had requested that some additional risk and sensitivity analysis was undertaken
- The Staff well-being gift proposal had been discussed and endorsed

Governor Questions

Q. Why had a Task & Finish group been suggested to review the transport strategy?

A. The Chair of Finance explained that transport costs were one of the highest risk areas for the College. As the contract was due for renewal in the next 12 months, the Committee had proposed that a Task and Finish group would be useful in supporting the College to achieve the best outcome

Q. Had the VAT rules on College buildings changed?

A. VAT advisors from RSM had attended the Finance Committee meeting and explained that there was currently a case going through the courts that may change the current position, and VAT on new builds may have to be paid. College would be taking advice on this before signing any contracts. A contingency had also been included in the costings for the estates project

4.2 People and Organisational Development Committee Minutes 17th June 2021

- The main focus of the meeting had been on staff well-being and the results of the recent staff survey
- Members had been pleased with how staff well-being was prioritised by the College
- The recent health and safety audit and visit from the infection prevention control (IPC) team had provided additional assurance that the necessary Covid control measures were in place

4.3 Audit Committee Minutes 17th June 2021 Part 1

- The Internal Audit plan had been considered and was being recommended to the Board
- RSM had presented the external audit plan and advised that additional work would have to be undertaken in relation to funding assurance, and this would incur an additional cost
- The Audit Code of Practice had been updated and the Committee Terms of Reference amended to incorporate the changes

4.4 Search and Governance Committee Minutes 18th June 2021

- The update to the Governor dashboard had been reviewed and endorsed
- The Governor link programme had been updated and the Committee was recommending that this was relaunched, and Governor links set up by the beginning of the academic year
- The results of the Governor self-assessment survey had been reviewed and the Committee had considered ways to reduce the volume of Board papers

A Governor suggested that it might be helpful to publish the Board papers over a period of two weeks and not all at once.

4.5 Standards and Curriculum Committee Minutes 18th June 2021

- The Committee had reviewed the Teacher Assessed grades process and sought assurance that College had all the relevant evidence in place should there be any appeals
- Plans for transition arrangements and catch up support for vulnerable students had been considered

- The progress of key issues subjects had been monitored and it had been noted that there was no recent progress data for History and Spanish due to a lack of exams this year
- There had been a low response rate to the learner survey this year, but College had been undertaking additional surveys with learners throughout the year

5 Principal's Report

The Principal's presented her report with the following points highlighted to Governors:

- College had entered the Chamber of Commerce "Best in Business Awards" for the Education Establishment of the Year category, and been shortlisted as a finalist
- Individual Covid secure tours of the College campus were being undertaken for students and their parents, in the absence of New Student Day
- Financial year end targets were on track to be met
- A dedicated bid writer had been appointed to manage applications for funding bids
- Four very long-serving members of the College Management Team had chosen to retire this summer
- There were 5 CMT vacancies and interviews had been held last week
- All posts had been filled with 3 internal and 2 external appointments
- The issue with the traveller encampment at the Chorley campus had now been resolved
- Kathryn Fletcher MP had visited College last week and the senior management team had raised their concerns regarding the withdrawal of Applied General Qualifications with her

Print Nightmare Cyber Security Threat

- The security sector (as well as JISC) had become aware of a "Zero Day Vulnerability" in versions of Microsoft Windows
- The flaw known as "Print Nightmare" allowed an attacker to take full control of the system, and thus potentially execute unwanted code (e.g. ransomware)
- Microsoft were working to develop and quality control a fix
- In the interim, the advice from Microsoft had been to disable the Print function on all systems, which had resulted in a temporary suspension of all printing

Governor Questions

Q. Had there been any harm to systems from printing before the College became aware of this?

A. College had become aware of this during out of hours and no harm had been identified

6 Plans for Enrolment 2021

The Deputy Principal Zoe Smallman reported that College was planning to have in person enrolment this year. This would take place on results day and in a Covid secure manner. Sufficient numbers of staff had volunteered to assist on the day (due to it taking place during the summer break period for term-time only staff).

Governor Questions

Q. Were plans in place for students who could not enrol on that day?

A. Alternative arrangements would be made for those students by the Schools Liaison team

Q. How would students who had not achieved the required grades for their course be identified?

A. The first part of the process would be completed online; so students would be identified at that stage and then picked up as they arrived for enrolment

7 Plans for Teaching, Learning & Assessment 2021-22

The Deputy Principal Martin Rigby presented the report and explained that:

- A series of CPD programmes had been planned throughout the year
- The aim was to provide teaching teams with training to support new initiatives and emerging themes
- Beginning of term training would focus on differential learning loss

A Governor stated that College may receive a lot of enquiries relating to exams at the end of the 2021/22 year and needed to be prepared for this.

8 Estates Capital Projects Update

The following update was provided by the Principal:

- College was progressing with plans for the following two projects;
- Buttermere building: a 1000m² building at the front of the campus, alongside Patterdale
- Coniston building: a 4000m² building at the rear of the campus, replacing Dalehead single storey
- Both were in line with the overarching Estates Strategy, as agreed by Governors at the strategy meeting
- College had applied for the following funding opportunities; Post-16 Capacity Fund, T Levels capital fund and the Further Education Capital Transformation Fund
The outcomes of all 3 bids had been delayed which meant that College was continuing to progress at risk with the plans

9. Student Governor Presentation

The Student Governor delivered a presentation to the Board on the student experience at Runshaw. The presentation focussed on what students liked about Runshaw and areas for further development and improvement.

It was noted that:

- Students were very understanding of how the College had dealt with the challenges created by the Pandemic
- Students enjoyed the social aspects of the College and being part of the Runshaw community
- Support from Student Services and the enrichment opportunities were highly valued
- Suggestions for improvement included extended opening hours for the Mardale shop and Tiki Café, the provision of additional benches and more trips once restrictions were eased
- It had also been suggested that Teachers could be provided with training to support students' mental health, so that those who were struggling, could turn to specific teachers for advice

Governor Questions

Q. Could the provision of additional benches be factored into the estates strategy?

A. The Director of Finance confirmed that additional benches had been ordered

Q. Did students know who to approach in College for support with mental health issues?

A. College provided students with extensive information on how support could be accessed

Q. What specific support could Teachers provide in relation to mental health?

A. The Student Governor stated that training could be provided to enable Teachers to identify warning signs that a student was struggling so that they could signpost them to available support

The Principal advised that all Progress Mentors had received Mental Health First Aid training to help them identify issues even if not reported. Student Liaison Officers had also attended an accredited mental health course as they worked directly with students.

Q. What concerns had been raised about the display on discrimination?

A. A Student had mentioned that it was gloomy, and they had not been aware that this was an issue in College. It had been suggested that the topic was discussed as part of the Progress Mentor sessions

Members thanked the Student Governor for an interesting and informative presentation.

10. Board and Committee Membership and Succession Planning

10.1 Vice-Chair Role

The Chair advised that Yvonne Bradshaw's term of office would end in December 2021 and a new Vice-Chair and Chair of Search & Governance would need to be elected.

Nominations would be invited from members at the beginning of the academic year and an election held at the September Board meeting.

10.2 Chair of Search & Governance Committee

Discussed as part of Item 10.1

11. Review and Approval of Strategic Plan

The Principal presented the plan which had been developed in consultation with staff, managers, Governors, employers, partner high schools, civic partners and the wider community. The document set out the College's over-arching key strategic priorities for the 3-year period from 2021 to 2024, and outlined the specific objectives for the first year of the plan (2021-22).

Governors agreed that the final document was excellent and in a very easy to read format.

A Governor suggested that some pictures of adult students were included in the document.

ACTION:

Principal

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the strategic plan including the 2021/22 objectives

12. Financial Planning - Review and Approval of 2021/22 Budget

The Director of Finance presented the budget and financial plan for 2020/21 and explained that:

- The budget had been based on the underlying assumption that there would be no further lockdowns in the next academic year
- A contingency had however been included to address any unexpected circumstances
- A £200k operating surplus was proposed for the end of the next financial year
- £665,000 had been allocated to the capital budget
- Cash balances were projected to remain within acceptable parameters throughout the year

Governor Questions

Q. Was there a risk of a deterioration in financial health as a result of the increase in pension costs?

A. Confirmation had been received from the ESFA that funding would be provided for this for the 2021/22 financial year. There was a risk that support would not be provided after this

Q. Did College have any concerns regarding the ongoing procurement of the Adult Education Budget?

A. College had received its grant allocation for next year and there had been no issues in relation to this

The Chair of Finance reported that the budget had been considered in detail by the Finance Committee who were satisfied that it met the requirements of the financial road map with sufficient contingencies built in.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the budget and financial plan for 2021/22

12.1 CFFR (College Financial Forecasting Report)

Board members were informed that:

- A new report (CFFR) had been released by the ESFA which required submission by 31 July
- The proposed budget for 2021/22 had been included into the forecasts and the CFFR report matched with this
- The revised ESFA Financial Health scoring showed a more favourable position for the College
- There was no change to the points gained for the Current Ratio or EBITDA as % of income, but additional points were gained in respect of the debt servicing/cash generation ratio
- The College was therefore shown to have Outstanding Financial health from 2021/22 onwards

RESOLVED:

Governors agreed that the CFFR report was submitted to the ESFA following a review and discussion between the Chair, Chair of Finance and Finance Director

12.2 Buttermere Capital Project

The Director of Finance explained that:

- College was seeking Board approval for a capital budget of £3.6 million for the next financial year in relation to the Buttermere project
- Good financial health would be maintained and all loan covenants would be met throughout the plan
- It had been assumed that £1.5 million of T Level funding would be received to support the build and the project was conditional on receipt of these monies
- Plans were being progressed to a 'spade ready' position, so that works could commence in Summer 2021, if the T-Level funding bid was successful
- A risk and sensitivity analysis had been undertaken and reviewed by the Finance Committee
- The project would be undertaken on a fixed price tender basis

Governors queried whether it would be possible to get contractors to agree to a fixed price contract and the Principal advised that a fixed price tender submission had been received today.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the capital budget of £3.6million for 2021/22, subject to a successful outcome from the T-Level Capital Bid and/or Capital Expansion Fund

12.3 Barclays Loan Variation

The meeting was informed that:

- Barclays had agreed to the loan variation and this would reduce the overall ratio from 1.75 to 1.3 for 2020/21
- Reference had been made in the letter to a breach in relation to the 2019/2020 accounts as the pensions liability had been included as part of the loan arrangement
- A retrospective waiver had since been issued for this

Governor Questions

Q. Had any discussion taken place with RSM on whether this would be classed as a technical breach?

A. This had not yet been discussed

Governors agreed that the external auditors were consulted on whether a note would need to be added to the accounts

ACTION:

Director of Finance to discuss with RSM

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the variation to the Barclays loan

12.4 Summer Recognition Gift Proposal

The Principal advised that the proposal had been reviewed and endorsed by the Finance and People & Organisational Development Committees. Tax advice had also been sought and received.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the proposal for the staff well-being gift

13. Audit Committee Terms of Reference

The Head of Governance advised that the Terms of Reference had been amended to incorporate the changes to the Audit Code of Practice.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the updated Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee

14. Internal Audit Plan 2021 / 2022

The Director of Finance presented the plan and reported that the plan would focus on the high-risk areas of the College.

Governor Questions

Q. Had the proposed audit areas been suggested by Mazars or the Committee?

A. The Committee had discussed and identified key risk areas at the March meeting and the plan had been developed after this

Q. Why was the Information systems audit not included in the plan as this area had not been audited since 2014?

A. An ESFA funding audit had been undertaken 2 years ago. Next year's plan would include a review of the project management of Information Systems

Q. What external assurance was available on student performance and attendance?

A. A performance reporting audit had been undertaken in 2017/18 and a substantial assurance opinion had been issued

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22

14.1 External Auditors – Presentation of Audit Findings Report

The meeting was informed that the updated Audit Code of Practice now required the External Auditors to present the Audit Findings report to the Board in addition to the Audit Committee.

RSM had agreed to attend the meeting to present the report.

15. Fees Policy

Governors were informed that the policy had been updated to take account of management structures, current operational conditions and the latest published funding guidance.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Fees Policy

16. Chair Performance Review Report June 2021

The results of the Chair's evaluation survey were reviewed and it was noted that the results and comments on the Chair's performance were very positive, with most of the satisfaction scores having remained high.

Governors thanked the Chair for his work and contribution to the effective running of the Board.

The Chair thanked all Board members for their continued support over the last 12 months.

17. Issues from Data Dashboard

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

Governor Questions

Q. Had the actions from the staff satisfaction survey been followed up by management?

A. These were being followed up by individual managers

Q. Was College expecting many complaints to arise from the Teacher Assessed grades process?

A. College was hoping that it would not receive many. More time had been available this year to plan and put appropriate processes in place to address this. The process for awarding grades had been robust and all relevant evidence was available in case of any challenge

A Governor requested that the People & Organisational Development Committee was added to the relevant column in the Dashboard

ACTION

Principal to arrange for Dashboard to be amended

18. Complaints Annual Report

The annual report was received and noted.

19. Safeguarding / Prevent Update

The Deputy Principal Zoe Smallman presented the report and it was noted that:

- The number of referrals had increased compared to the same time last year
- There had been a marked increase in referrals for Year 2 A level students and this could be related to the Teacher Assessed Grades process

The Safeguarding Governor Jo Venn provided an update on the recent Steering Group meeting that she had attended and confirmed that it had been an excellent meeting with lots of debate and suggestions having been put forward.

Governor Questions

Q. Were students making use of the support that was available to them?

A. The Student Governor stated that there was a lot of support available, but some students were reluctant or hesitant to come forward

Q. Were there any current students that would be willing to speak with learners who may need help and signpost them to where they could receive this from?

A. The Student Governor stated that Year 2 students were going to be involved in supporting new students in the next academic year

A Governor stated that the number of referrals for males was much lower than female students and suggested that consideration was given to initiatives to encourage more males to come forward.

Martina Jay informed members that she had received extensive training in offering mental health support and advice and would be happy to offer assistance to the College with any mental health initiatives.

A Governor suggested that it would be useful to include the number of overall learners in a particular cohort in the report as it would enable Governors to get a better sense of which programme areas the majority of referrals were coming from.

ACTION:

Zoe Smallman to include in future reports

20. Finance Report June 2021 Update

The Director of Finance reported that the June accounts would confirm a positive outcome for this financial year with the end of year surplus target on track to be met.

21. Risk Register – High Risks & Key Movements

The Director of Finance presented the register and explained that

- The full register was reviewed by the Audit Committee and a recommendation made regarding the high priority risks for monitoring by the full Board
- The Audit Committee had agreed that the following risks were monitored by the Board:
 - Breach of IT security
 - Contagious illness
 - Adverse publicity
 - Risk to OFSTED outstanding status
 - Failure to achieve 16/18 recruitment targets -whilst applications were on target, management considered this to be a high priority risk as the College had been unable to hold on-campus events for year 10 and 11 students in the summer term
- The risk of “Lack of, or inadequate physical security” had been increased to High due to travellers illegally moving onto the Chorley campus

22. Governance Impact Statement

- Approval of well-being gift for staff will further support staff well-being
- Endorsement of Internal Audit Plan will ensure that all key risk areas are independently assessed
- Governor assurance sought and received that management action was being taken on issues arising from staff survey
- Re launch of Governor link programme will enable Governors to further engage with key stakeholders
- Suggestions and Governor support offered re student mental health
- Governor suggestion to include additional data in Safeguarding report
- Approval of Fees and Complaints policies ensures that Governors are fulfilling statutory responsibilities

23. Reserved Business Minutes

23.1 Corporation Meeting Minutes Part 2B – 17th May 2021

Agreed: that the minutes are signed as a correct record

23.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

Discussed under Reserved Business.

23.3 Audit Committee 17th June 2021

The minutes were received and noted.

23.4 Standards Committee 18th June 2021

The minutes were received and noted.

23.5 Any other Reserved Business Matters

None.

24. Date of Next Meeting

Board

Monday 20 September 2021 at 5.15pm

Governors SAR Meeting

Tuesday 5 October 2021 at 8.00am