

Venue: Runshaw College

Present: Warren Middleton (Chair), Alison Watson- Bird, Jo Venn, Portia Bailey Barrow, Clare Russell (Principal), Ali Kamel, Ade Oladapo, Joe Connolly, Alex Magowan, Joshi Jariwala

In Attendance Martin Rigby (Deputy Principal), Zoe Smallman (Deputy Principal), Janet Ivill (Vice-Principal Finance & Facilities), Fatema Hussein (Head of Governance)

Meeting began 5.00pm

Meeting closed 7.15pm

Attendance 68%

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Simon Drew, Michael Lowe, Dominic Martinez, Graham Murphy and Robert Cobourne.

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.

The Principal declared an interest in Item 21.2

The Head of Governance declared an interest in Item 21.3

3. Presentation of Audit Findings Report – Karen Musgrave (RSM)

Karen Musgrave (RSM) presented the Audit findings report and explained that it was now a requirement for the external auditors to present the report to the Board prior to approval of the financial statements.

Board members were informed that:

- The proposed sale of the Chorley campus would have to be recorded as an impairment in the financial statements as there was a difference of -£880k between the net book value and the sale value
- As the sale was likely to be agreed prior to the final signing off the financial statements, an adjustment would be made in the financial statements to reflect this
- There were no other items in the Audit findings report that were of any concern or needed to be brought to the Board's attention

The Chair of the Audit Committee stated that this was the second year that RSM had undertaken the additional work related to the ESFA funding audit. RSM had worked with the MIS team on this, and all previous control recommendations issued by them had been implemented.

Governors thanked Karen for her report and the work undertaken by her team on the external audit.

Karen Musgrave left the meeting at this point.

4. Minutes of The Meeting Held on 22 September 2022

4.1 Approval of the Minutes Part 1

Agreed that: the minutes are signed as a correct record and authorised for publication (Part 1)

4.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes

The Action Progress log was reviewed, and it was noted that all actions had been completed or were being progressed.

5. Corporation Committee Meeting Minutes

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

5.1 Search and Governance Committee Minutes 7th October 2022

- The Governance SAR and QIP had been reviewed and endorsed for approval by the Board
- Membership of the Board and Committees had been considered and recommendations for appointment were being made to the Board
- The updated F.E. Governance guide had been reviewed and the Committee had agreed that a compliance check was undertaken

5.2 Standards and Curriculum Committee Minutes 7th October 2022

- The Committee had received a presentation on how the College delivered careers information, advice and guidance to students
- A review of the 2022 results had been undertaken and the Committee had been provided with details of the key areas for improvement and how these would be addressed
- A discussion had been held on the new ROQ process and a separate meeting had been held with the Deputy Principals to receive a more detailed overview

5.3 Audit Committee Minutes 10th November 2022 Part 1

- The annual internal audit report had been reviewed and it had been noted that there had been a delay in implementing some of the audit recommendations due to resource issues
- Key risks had been reviewed and the Committee had sought assurance that appropriate mitigations were in place
- The re-tender of the internal audit contract had also been discussed

5.4 Finance Committee Minutes 7th November 2022

- The Committee had agreed that the Transport Task & Finish group would meet in mid- January before the tender documents were issued
- The financial statements had been reviewed and were being recommended for approval
- Bids received for the sale of the Chorley campus had been discussed and a recommendation was being made to the Board

5.5 People & Organisational Development Committee Minutes 15th November 2022

- The Committee had received an update on the new teaching staff pay framework and additional responsibility allowances
- The Head of Health & Safety vacancy had been discussed and members had stressed the importance of having a named person in College

- It had been agreed that the risk related to erosion of College culture was discussed further at the next meeting

The Vice-Principal Finance & Facilities confirmed that she was the named health and safety person in College.

Governor Questions

Q. When did the advert for the Head of Health & Safety role close?

A. It was due to close tomorrow

Q. Did College pay the living wage to its lowest paid staff?

A. The living wage was to be paid from 1 January 2023 and would become a legal requirement from April 2023

6. Principal's Report

The Principal's report to the Board covered the following topics: College External & political developments, Stakeholders and Partnerships, Teaching, Learning & Assessment, Estates strategy

The following points were highlighted from the report:

- The Buttermere building would be completed soon, and an official opening ceremony had been planned for January 2023
- The self-assessment process was complete, and progress was being made on the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan
- College was working closely with the Chamber of Commerce on the LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan) and Strategic Development Fund Projects
- A DfE immersion visit had taken place last week and the ESFA strategic conversation meeting was to be held tomorrow
- There was no Director of Quality in post at present
- An appointment had been made and the new postholder was due to start in February 2023
- The ONS (Office for National Statistics) had reclassified Colleges back into the public sector with immediate effect but there would be 2 years of transition arrangements
- Further information on the implications of the re-classification was emerging and would be shared with the Board and each of the relevant Committees

Governor Questions

Q. Had the pay award been agreed?

A. A final offer had been submitted to Trade Union Colleagues. The lowest paid staff would receive a 9.7% increase and staff earning above £29,000 would receive 4%. The proposals would help with recruitment and retention and were within the budget previously agreed by the Board

Q. How did attendance on L2 courses compare to pre-pandemic levels?

ACTION:

Information to be included in future reports and to be presented to Standards Committee

Governors also requested that a pen portrait of new senior staff appointments was included in the Principal's report

ACTION:

Principal

7. Items for January Strategic Planning Meeting

Governors reviewed the proposed agenda items for the January strategy meeting and agreed that updates on progress with the following specific strategies were provided:
Quality of Education processes (SAR and ROQ) and Runshaw Extra (enrichment, enhancement, employability)

Governor Questions

Q. Had progress been made on making students aware of the enrichment opportunities that were available?

A. Every opportunity was publicised via the Aspire APP

The Student Governor stated that not all students were aware of the enrichment offer and there may be issues with the design of the APP

ACTION:

Deputy Principal Martin Rigby to gather student feedback on the usage of the APP by students

8. Governance SAR KPI's

The Chair queried whether the Governance KPI's needed to be reviewed, as many of them were quite challenging, and Governors needed to be comfortable that these could be met.

RESOLVED:

Following a discussion, it was agreed that the existing KPI's were maintained

9. Chorley Campus Disposal

Discussed under Reserved Business.

10. Corporation Annual Reports

10.1 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 Board noted the opinion of the Audit Committee, in their Annual Report, that there is an effective framework of governance, risk management and control to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness and that this had operated throughout all of the financial year ended 31 July 2022 and to the date of the report.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Audit Committee annual report.

10.2 Remuneration Committee Annual Report

The Head of Governance explained that the report was a requirement as part of the Senior Postholder Remuneration code which College had adopted. The report would need to be published on the College website.

A Governor stated that following the ONS reclassification of Colleges, approval may be required from the DfE for pay awards that would lead to pay exceeding £150,000 and Governors would need to take the senior pay guidelines into account.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Remuneration Committee annual report.

11. Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 July 2022

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 slightly better than reported in the management accounts in July 2022. The College had retained its “Good” financial health rating and all loan covenant requirements had been met. 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 2022 and authorised the Chair and Principal to sign the relevant pages of the report.

11.1 Representation Letter

Governors were referred to the paragraphs highlighted in the Representation letter and informed that the Chorley campus sale and related impairment would not have any material impact on the operations of the College and did not affect the “Going Concern” assessment.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Representation Letters for 2021/2022

12. College SAR

The Principal explained that:

- The self-assessment process had been streamlined for this year
- An external consultant had attended the SAR validation meetings to provide independent assurance on the judgements being made
- The self-assessment grades had been matched to the Ofsted gradings in the recent inspection
- The Quality Improvement Plan actions had been developed with the intention of returning the College to Outstanding at the next inspection

Governor Questions

Q. Would Governors be attending the SRG (Strategic Review Meetings) meetings next year?

A. It was confirmed that Governors would be invited to the meetings

The Chair of the Standards & Curriculum Committee reported that some members of the Committee had met with the Deputy Principals to receive an overview of the ROQ (Review of Quality) process and had received assurance that appropriate measures had been put in place to make the quality improvements identified by Ofsted.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the 2021/22 College SAR and 2022/23 Quality Improvement Plan

13. Governor Appointments

13.1 To approve the appointment of Alison Watson Bird as Vice-Chair of the Corporation

Alison Watson Bird withdrew from the meeting.

The Chair explained that nominations had been invited for the Vice-Chair role in preparation for when the current Chair stepped down in March 2023. Alison had been the only nomination received.

RESOLVED:

The Board considered the nomination and agreed that Alison Watson Bird was appointed as Vice-Chair of the Corporation when Jo Venn stepped down in March 2023.

13.2 To approve the appointment of Gary Hall as a member of the Corporation Board

RESOLVED:

The Board considered and approved the recommendation of the Search & Governance Committee to appoint Gary Hall as a member of the Board.

13.3 To approve the appointment of Richard Evans as a member of the Board and Chair of Standards & Curriculum Committee

RESOLVED:

The Board considered and approved the recommendation of the Search & Governance Committee to appoint Richard Evans as a member of the Board and Chair of the Standards & Curriculum Committee.

13.4 Search & Governance Committee Membership

The Head of Governance advised that the vacancy had been advertised to existing Board and Co-opted members, but no one had come forward.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that a further approach was made to Governors and the vacancy advertised externally should no one come forward.

ACTION:

Head of Governance

14. Policies for Approval

14.1 Sixth Form Admissions Policy

The key changes to the policy were highlighted to Governors.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the Sixth Form Admissions Policy

14.2 Risk Management Policy

It was noted that minimal changes were proposed to the policy.

RESOLVED:

The Board approved the risk management policy and endorsed the risk appetite as Low.

15. Safeguarding / Prevent Update

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

- The number of students open to safeguarding to the end of October 2022 was 342, compared to 229 at the same point last year, with a total of 424 safeguarding referrals made from August 2022 to date
- There had been a 49% increase in the number of students open to safeguarding compared to October 2021
- There had been a 92% increase in the number of students open to safeguarding compared to pre-Covid figures (Oct 2019)
- Mental Ill Health and Home / Family Concerns continued to dominate reasons for referral, with 140, (41%) and 123, (36%) of referrals for each category respectively
- Senior management had responded to the significant increase in safeguarding referrals, plus additional work required to launch CPOMS by approving a 12-month fixed term safeguarding and wellbeing administrator post

In response to questions, the Student Governor reported that College had wide ranging safeguarding support and arrangements in place for students and they were more comprehensive than support available externally.

A Governor suggested that during the cost-of-living crisis, College could become a “warm space” for study days when students were not in College and funding was available to support this initiative.

ACTION:

Deputy Principal to consider

16. Finance Monitoring Report – 31 October 2022

The Director of Finance presented the report and stated that College was on track to meet the year end financial targets. There were some risks to income, but these would be mitigated by contingencies, with no adverse impact on loan covenants.

17. Governor Dashboard

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

18. Risk Register

Members considered the top 5 risks which had been recommended by the Audit Committee for monitoring by the Board. Governors were informed that the full risk register had been uploaded to the Convene Document library.

It was noted that the risk related to erosion of culture had been included on the register and it was agreed that, if necessary, the decision to change this to high priority would be made after the next meeting of the People & OD Committee.

19. Governance Impact Statement

- Consideration and approval of sale of Chorley campus
- Approval of College SAR
- Governor suggestion re warm spaces for students during cost-of-living crisis
- Reassurance sought from Student Governors re Safeguarding arrangements

- Discussion re agenda items for January Strategic Planning meeting
- Suggestion to seek feedback on effectiveness of Student App
- Governor suggestion re senior Pay awards in light of ONS re-classification

20. Reserved Business Minutes

- 20.1 Audit Committee Minutes 10th November 2022 Part 2
- 20.2 Remuneration Committee Minutes 15th November 2022
- 20.3 Matters Arising from the Committee Minutes

Items 20.1 to 20.3 were discussed as part of Reserved Business.

21. Principal and Senior Postholder Appraisal

- 21.1 Appraisal & Remuneration of Senior Postholders
- 21.2 Appraisal & Remuneration of the Principal & CEO
- 21.3 Annual Appraisal & Remuneration of the Head of Governance

Items 21.1 to 21.3 were discussed as part of Reserved business.

22. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 26th January 2023 at 5pm (Strategic Planning Meeting)