

**Minutes of a Meeting of
the RHC Corporation**

**on Monday 23 September 2019 at 5.30pm at Nerrols Primary and Nursery,
Nerrols Road, Taunton**

Governors in Attendance: Duncan Alexander(Chair), Barbara Barratt (Vice-chair), Jonathan Langdon (Vice-chair), John Abbott (Principal), Guy Adams (Foundation Governor), Sasha Burns, David Griffin(part), Ann Helsby, Nikki Lewis (Staff Governor), Nicola Reid, Moira Reynolds (Parent Governor), Victoria Sadler (Co-opted Governor), Anthony Smith, Mary Tighe (Foundation Governor) and Dave Tomaney (Parent Governor).

Also in Attendance: Colin Barnard (Assistant Principal-Student Support, Xanne Blythe (Clerk), Emma Fielding (Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality), Paul Lonsdale (Vice Principal Finance), Liz Williams (Director of Marketing Admissions and International), Saffron Lee (Assistant Principal Business and Creative Industries), Joe Bennett (Assistant Principal English Science and Mathematics) and Becky Flower (Assistant Principal Humanities and Social Sciences).

Action

The Chair welcomed the newly co-opted Governor Victoria Sadler to the meeting. At the request of the Chair it was agreed to move agenda item 3.2 'Governor Safeguarding and Prevent Training' to the end of the meeting, to allow the senior leadership team to leave earlier.

Min **Apologies for Absence (agenda item 1.1)**

COR

1 Apologies for absence were received from Governors Stephen Haydock, Pat Flaherty and Karuna Tharmananthar.

COR **Declarations of Interest by Governors (agenda item 1.2)**

2

No declarations of interest were made for any agenda items.

COR **Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising (agenda item 1.3)**

3

All actions recorded in the 2019-20 matters arising report were noted.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Corporation meeting dated 1 July 2019 be agreed and signed as an accurate record.

COR **RHC Principal's Presentation 2019-20 (agenda item 5.2)**

4

The Principal gave a presentation entitled 'Start of Year 2019'. The presentation provided an overview of the College's strategic vision 2019-22 and values, the overall College performance, to include summer 2019 results, and key priorities for 2019-20.

In response to discussion, challenge and questions from Governors, the following key points were made:

- the College had celebrated a set of excellent academic results across a large number of courses and in all types of qualification, there had been improvements in all key measures with greater consistency,
- explanations for the improvements were discussed, there had been greater reflection and analysis of the previous delivery, the College had been one of the first colleges to adopt linearisation, students were spending more time on the College site to include study

sessions and enrichment, there was a direct correlation with the amount of time students spent on site and successful academic outcomes,

- student progression was detailed with 473 confirmed places at university, eight students had gained places at Oxbridge Universities, eight students at medical school and two students at veterinary school,
- 54% of Level 2 students had progressed to Level 3 study at Huish, a growing number of leavers were looking to apprenticeships as their next step,
- other achievements were summarised: 164 students had completed the Extended Research Project Qualification (EPQ) with 90% achieving A*-B, 99% A-C and 100% pass, 36 students had completed Core Maths with 58% achieving A*-B, 83% A-C and 100% pass rate, 46 students had completed the Higher Project Qualification (HPQ) with 100% achieving A* -C and 67% A*-B,
- further security improvements to the campus had been completed, a new tutorial system had been reviewed and developed, a capital grant had been secured to renew the hall, reception and front of the College, additional land had been secured adjacent to the playing field and the development of the 3G AstroTurf pitch was being progressed, 700 primary pupils had visited the College in July 2019, for the biggest Huish Primary day,
- IT and Estates summer works on the College site and across other Richard Huish schools were noted,
- Huish, as a group structure, was detailed with one secondary school and four primary /nursery schools, plus Lyngford Park Primary school to officially join in early 2020. The meeting looked at the reasons for Trust growth which were namely, moral purpose and aspiration, future proofing, economies of scale, shared services, financial and commercial resilience,
- key priorities for 2019-20 were pastoral and academic support, assessment and feedback and student retention. The College self-assessment would be completed earlier this year,
- schools and FE establishments in the South West were beginning to work more collaboratively rather than in silos, the Principal now presided as chair at the Somerset and Devon Principals Group, and met regularly with groups of Primary/Secondary Headteachers. He was also part of numerous committees and groups organised by the County Council, designed to improve the educational provision across Somerset.

COR 5 Huish Strategic Development Plan 2019-2022 (agenda item 2.1)

The process of creating the Richard Huish strategic plan for 2019-22 had involved the Corporation, in its formation with various opportunities for strategic considerations and steering discussions, with the Governors' strategy day in February 2019, and other Corporation and Committee meetings throughout the year. The process had included a review of the Vision and Values. The Development Plan captured the key activity and work that managers of the College were attempting to complete, to deliver the College Drivers and the College's vision 'Delivering Exceptional Education'. Governors asked for the document to be presented to the Corporation every six months with success criteria and milestones.

RESOLVED: that the Huish strategic development plan for 2019-2022 be noted and circulated to all Committees during the autumn term for comment for final approval on 2 December 2019 Corporation meeting, with biannual submission to the Corporation.

Clerk

COR 6 Richard Huish Trust Update (agenda item 2.2)

The Chair of the Richard Huish Trust Board updated the meeting on Lyngford Primary School joining the Trust from 1 April 2020 with 300 pupils. The school was in close proximity to Nerrols Primary and was a feeder school to the Taunton Academy.

Governors had been toured around Nerrols Primary School and Nursery prior to the Corporation meeting and agreed that it was a fabulous facility with a capacity of 420 pupils. In total, Richard Huish group of schools, including the College, would have approximately 4500 learners.

Clerk

The Chair advised Governors that the College Mental Health Project presentation (agenda item 3.1) had been rescheduled for the December 2019 Corporation meeting.

COR 7 RHC Student Accommodation Task and Finish Group 2019 (agenda item 3.3)

The Task and Finish Group was set up in January 2019 with agreed terms of reference to oversee and monitor the implementation of an Oak House inspection (27-29 November 18) under the Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCIF) for the residential provision of FE colleges. The Group had met on a regular basis, chaired by Barbara Barratt, for assurance that all of the action points had been addressed. A successful Ofsted monitoring visit report had now been received (18.9.19) with assurance that the College had met all of the FE Residential Accommodation national minimum standards published on 1 September 2018. There would be another Residential Care Inspection by November 2020 or earlier and there was the possibility that this inspection could be part of an Aligned Inspection (i.e. whole college). The Task and Finish Group Chair asked the Corporation to make a decision on the Task and Finish Group's status going forward.

The Task and Finish Group Chair was thanked for her continued efforts and for leading the Group to oversee and monitor the implementation of the post inspection action plans for Oak House, and the recently commissioned safer recruitment audit.

Governors discussed how oversight of the College educational performance and quality, finance, assets and staff performance, was applied by the current Committee structure and the level of Board assurance, and whether an additional subcommittee would add any further value to the current level of challenge and scrutiny. The Personnel Committee had enhanced its terms of reference to apply greater scrutiny to the College's safer recruitment practices. Regular post audit safer recruitment reports were being closely monitored by the Personnel Committee with Audit Committee oversight. Governors were in support of the 16-19 Peer review scheduled for 25-26 November 2019, with four other Colleges. A number of peer College senior leaders were trained Ofsted Inspectors, this would provide additional challenge for Board assurance. EIF training had been arranged specifically for Governors on 2 Dec 2019, with an Ofsted trained external consultant.

The Chair asked for each Committee to have a standing agenda item to review their individual compliance with governance arrangements.

RESOLVED: that the Student Accommodation Task and Finish Group 2019 be brought to a close, and for each Committee to review their individual compliance with governance arrangements.

COR 8 RHC Management Accounts Period 12 –31 July 2019 Year End (agenda item 4.1)

The Management accounts report had been fully scrutinised by the F&GP Committee on 9 September 2019 and had been circulated to all Governors. The report also provided the Committee with the ESFA financial health score forecast for the College for 2017-18 and 2018-19. The financial health score was 'Good' for 2017-18 and had dipped into the 'RI' score for 2018-19, missing the 'Good' threshold by only 10 points, the EBITDA measure had improved slightly.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee Chair explained that the Committee had discussed the release of £50K Devolved Formula Capital Grant (DFCG) to income, instead of using it to augment future capital investment funds, with no impact on the following financial year. Governors supported the release of the DFCG fund, which should ensure a 'Good' financial health score for the College for 2018-19, assuming there were no further adjustments required.

The meeting noted the potential of penalties that might arise from the recent ESFA Apprenticeship Funding audit, which could reverse any upside movement, any funding adjustment would be known by late September 2019. The final ESFA Apprenticeship Funding audit report would be submitted to the Audit Committee in October 2019.

RESOLVED:

1. that the RHC management accounts for July 2019 period 12 be noted, and
2. that the release of £50K Devolved Formula Capital Grant (DFCG) to income be agreed for 2018-29, to provide a 'Good' financial health score for the College for 2018-19, on the assumption that there were no further adjustments required.

COR 9 Summary of Key Points from Committee Meetings (agenda item 5.1)

Committee Chairs summarised key points arising from recent Committee meetings. Committee minutes were also circulated to all Governors for information. The following areas were highlighted in particular:

- the Audit Committee Chair, updated the meeting on the 16 September 2019 when the external audit plan was presented setting out the proposed approach to the audit of the financial statements for 31 July 2019. Both the recent ESFA Apprenticeship Funding audit, the potential for a funding clawback, and the safer recruitment post audit (21.6.19) action plan had been discussed in detail. The Audit Committee would receive the final ESFA Apprenticeship Funding Audit Report at its meeting in October 2019. The Principal had informed the Committee that the Manager of Apprenticeships and Adult Skills was no longer in post and a replacement was being sourced,
- the (10 Sept 19) Academic Planning and Quality Committee Chair provided an overview of the Sociology exam papers' marking discrepancies and inconsistencies, which had led to an immediate change in exam boards. Sociology paper remarks had been returned unchanged, and the further appeal process was with Ofqual. The College had currently enrolled 35 more 16-19 students compared to this time last year and the international student intake for Oak House was good.

COR 10 2019 RHC Personnel Committee Terms of Reference (agenda item 5.2)

The RHC Personnel Committee Terms of Reference had been revised by the Committee in August 2019 to strengthen challenge on safer recruitment areas.

RESOLVED: that the RHC Personnel Committee Terms of Reference for 2019-20 be approved.

COR 11 Consent Agenda - Policies and Other Documents (agenda item 6.1 – 6.4)

Matters in this section were taken as a single agenda item with each proposal being agreed without introduction or discussion.

RESOLVED: that the following items/resolution be approved:

1. 2019 RHC Safeguarding and Child Prevention Policy
2. 2019 RHC Financial Regulations
3. 2019-25 RHC Property Strategy
4. that the College move across with immediate effect to the alternative platform offered by Bankers Lloyds Bank 'Commercial Banking Online', already in place for the Richard Huish Trust, with increased security protocols,
5. that the Commercial Banking Online form (5.1) be signed by the Chair of Governors and Principal.

COR 12 Committee Minutes and Other Matters for Note (agenda items 6.5 – 6.10)

The following matters in this section were noted:

- RHC Draft Personnel Committee minutes dated 27 August 2019
- RHC Draft Finance and General Purposes Committee minutes dated 9 September 2019
- RHC Draft Academic Planning & Quality Committee draft minutes dated 10 September 2019
- RHC Draft Audit Committee Minutes dated 16 September 2019
- 2018-19 Final Internal Audit Reports
- Outcomes for Previous Electronic Written Resolutions UE21 and UE22

The following information had been circulated since the 1 July 2019 Corporation Meeting: A Level Results 2019, College Funding Boost, ESFA Financial Oversight, Prize Giving & Graduation Ceremony Invites, Staff Welcome Back Pack 2019-20.

COR 13 Date of the Next Meeting and AoB (agenda item 7.1)

The date for the next Corporation meeting scheduled for 2 December 2019 and the EIF Governor Training event for 2 Dec from 4.15pm were noted.

The Chair, at the time of circulating the agenda, had asked for Governors' comments on timings of meetings to maximise attendance. Governors agreed that improved teleconference facilities would improve governors' attendance rate, and asked the Clerk to investigate affordable options.

Clerk

At this point College Managers and the Staff Governor, having previously had the Safeguarding training, left the meeting

COR 14 Governors' Safeguarding and Prevent Training (agenda item 3.2)

The College Designated Safeguarding Lead provided Governor training, a copy of which, would be circulated to all Governors. The Clerk had previously circulated to all Governors the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance published 2 September 2019. A copy of the training materials and the training date would be recorded on the Governors' training register and the College Single Central Register.

At this point the VP-Finance and Co-opted Governor left the meeting

With no further business the meeting concluded at 7.30pm

The minutes were agreed and signed:

Chair..... Date.....