RUNSHAW COLLEGE

Runshaw College Corporation Board Meeting Minutes [Part 1]

Thursday 5 December 2024, 5.30 pm – 8.00 pm

Corporation Board Members		Attendance				
		03.10.24	05.12.24	27.03.25	15.05.25	26.06.25
Full Name	**Position**					
Alison Watson-Bird	Chair	✓	✓			
Motunrayo Ainenehi	Student Governor	✓	✓			
Portia Bailey-Barrow	Independent Governor	A	✓			
Sophie Brocken	Student Governor		✓			
Simon Drew	Independent Governor	✓	✓			
Richard Evans	Independent Governor	✓	✓			
Gary Hall	Independent Governor	✓	A			
Stuart Hide	Academic Staff Governor	✓	✓			
Michael Lowe	Independent Governor	✓	✓			
Martyn Lylyk	Independent Governor	A	A			
Dominic Martinez	Independent Governor	✓	✓			
Graham Murphy	Independent Governor	✓	A			
Ade Oladapo	Independent Governor	✓	✓			
Clare Russell	Principal	✓	✓			
Danniella Silence Benson	Support Staff Governor	✓	✓			
Total attendance		**86%**	**80%**			
Clerk						
Denise Williamson	Head of Governance	✓	✓			
In Attendance						
Martin Rigby	Deputy Principal	✓	✓			
Janet Ivill	Vice Principal	✓	✓			
Sue Hutchinson	Beever & Struthers		✓			

✓	Present
A	Apologies
X	Absent

Item	Agenda item
1.	**Apologies for Absence/Opening Comments**

Apologies for absence were received from Gary Hall, Martyn Lylyk and Graham Murphy.

The Chair welcomed Sue Hutchinson from Beever & Struthers who was in attendance to present the Audit Findings report and Sophie Brocken, new Student Governor.
The Chair also welcomed the new student governor, Sophie Brocken.

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 with reference to the Part 1 agenda items.

3.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 October 2024
3.1	Corporation Board Minutes – 3 October 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2024 were approved as an accurate record and authorised for publication.

3.2	Action Log

All actions remaining on the Action progress log had been completed except for the following:

CB A38 regarding the expansion of the cohort analysis within the Gender Pay Gap Report which is not yet due.

CB A45 regarding the potential for governors to meet with student union members which is not yet due.

CB A48 regarding the delivery of a presentation by the new Academic Staff Governor which has been deferred to a future meeting.

CB A50 regarding information for Board members on the use of the public comments function within Convene which will be discussed as part of 1-1 meetings with governors and co-opted members in relation to training needs.

CB A69 regarding updating the success measure in relation to the robustness of assessment/reliability of assessment data which the Deputy Principal confirmed remains a focus which is being addressed through targeted 1-1s and SRGs.

With reference to the completed actions, the Head of Governance highlighted the inclusion of a position paper in relation to Data Quality and an updated College Events Calendar within the appendices.

4.	Presentation of Audit Findings Report

Sue Hutchinson from Beever & Struthers presented a summary of the Audit Findings Report, confirming that the process is now substantially complete, and that all information has now been received with the exception of confirmation from the ESFA in relation to the final submission of student income which is not expected to differ from that stated in R14.

Sue Hutchinson highlighted particularly the position in relation to the pension fund and the Dalehead building impairment provision which had also been discussed by the Audit Committee.

The Auditors confirmed that the outcome of the audit was very positive, that there were no material issues to report to the Board and that they would be signing an unmodified audit opinion.

Ade Oladapo joined the meeting at 17:41.

The Vice Principal Finance and Facilities confirmed that the audit had been very robust, that the team accepted the recommendations made and had implemented actions accordingly.

The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that a detailed discussion had taken place at the last Audit committee meeting to review the outcome of the Audit Findings Report.

A Board member asked that the action plan be presented at a future Audit Committee meeting and this was agreed.

Action: CB A78: Action Plan and associated progress to be included as an agenda item for the next Audit Committee meeting [Owner: Head of Governance]

The Chair thanked the Auditors for their work and Sue Hutchinson thanked the Vice Principal and Head of Finance who had led the Audit from the College's perspective.

The Board received the Audit Findings Report.

5.	**Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024**

The Vice Principal, Finance and Facilities presented the Annual Report and Financial Statements for approval. The Vice Principal confirmed that the financial position is positive, and that the College meets the criteria for Good Financial Health.

The Chair of the Finance Committee confirmed that members of the committee had reviewed the information and were content to recommend the approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements to the Corporation Board.

Decision: CB D68: The Board approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 July 2024.

Action: CB A79: Financial Statements and accompanying documentation to be signed and submitted [Owner: Vice Principal Finance and Facilities]

6.	**Corporation Annual Reports**
6.1	**Audit Committee Annual Report to the Corporation 2023/24**

The Chair of the Audit Committee presented the Audit Committee Annual Report to the Corporation, confirming that the purpose of the report was to advise the Board on the effectiveness of the College's systems of internal control.

The Board noted the opinion of the Audit Committee that there is an effective framework of governance, risk management and control.

The Board received the Audit Committee Annual Report.

Action: CB A80: Audit Committee Annual Report for 2023/24 to be published on the College Website [Owner: Head of Governance]

6.2	Remuneration Committee Annual Report to the Corporation 2023/24

The Chair of the Remuneration Committee presented the Remuneration Committee Annual Report confirming that the production and publication of the report was a requirement as part of the Senior Postholder Remuneration code adopted by the College.

The Board received the Remuneration Committee Annual Report.

Action: CB A81: Remuneration Committee Annual Report for 2023/24 to be published on the College Website [Owner: Head of Governance]

7.	Governance Matters
7.1	Appointments/Re-appointments

The Head of Governance confirmed that, following the conclusion of the Student Governor election process, Sophie Brocken has been appointed as the new Student Governor. The Head of Governance also confirmed that the terms of office for Diane Bourne and Louise Myers, both independent governors, would commence on 1st January 2025.

In relation to re-appointments, the Head of Governance confirmed that the terms of office of four existing governors are due to expire in the spring term and that, following a discussion at the Search & Governance Committee, she would be contacting these governors to confirm, or otherwise, their willingness to serve an additional term. The Head of Governance confirmed that one of the governors had already confirmed that they did not wish to serve an additional term and that they would, therefore, be resigning from the Board.

The Board received the update.

7.2	Membership of Audit Committee

The Head of Governance confirmed that, following the discussion at the recent Corporation Board meeting, Marc Balshaw [co-opted member] confirmed his willingness to transfer from the Finance Committee to Audit Committee with immediate effect and that Chair's Action was taken on this for speed.

The Board were requested to ratify this action and subsequently confirmed their agreement.

Decision: CB D69: The Board agreed the transfer of Marc Balshaw from the Finance Committee to the Audit Committee.

7.3	Committee Terms of Reference

The Head of Governance confirmed that new terms of reference had been drafted for the Finance and people Committee and that the terms of reference had been amended for the Audit Committee and Remuneration Committee and advised that the relevant committees were now recommending the revised Terms of Reference to the Board for approval.

Decision: CB D70: The Board agreed the revised terms of reference for the Finance & People Committee, Audit Committee and Remuneration Committee.

Action: CB A82: Public Information in relation to the terms of reference for the Finance & People Committee, Audit Committee and Remuneration Committee to be updated [Owner: Head of Governance].

7.4	Progress against Governance Quality Improvement Plan

The Head of Governance summarised the progress to date against the actions identified within the Governance Quality improvement plan for 2024/25 which had been developed following completion of the External Board review, a review of the new AoC Code of Good Governance and Board reflections on the previous year. The Head of Governance confirmed that good progress has been made against all objectives identified for completion to date whilst a number of others with a later completion date are in progress.

The Board received the report.

7.5	Plans for Governor Strategy Development Meeting

The Head of Governance sought the views of Board members in relation to delaying the above meeting, which had been planned to take place on 23 January 2025, until after the College's Ofsted inspection which is expected to take place in the Spring term. Following a discussion, it was agreed to delay this meeting with a view to it taking place on or around the date of either the March or May Corporation Board meetings, depending on the timing of inspection.

It was further agreed to use the time on 23 January to ensure that governors who are particularly involved in the inspection are provided with any relevant updates.

Finally, the Head of Governance confirmed that key documents to support governors to prepare for the inspection would be circulated prior to the Christmas break

Action: CB A83: Strategy Development Meeting to be delayed until after inspection. Meeting of governors involved in inspection to take place on 23 January 2025 [Owner: Head of Governance]

7.6	Governor Declarations

The Head of Governance confirmed that a governor declaration form had been sent to all governors and co-opted members for signature which included a new governor code of conduct, the annual declaration of interests, declaration of eligibility, KCSIE declaration and DBS declaration. The Head of Governance confirmed that responses remain outstanding from 5 governors which are in the process of being followed up.

The Board receive the update.

7.7	Governor Training, Development and External Activity

Governors were reminded to inform the Head of Governance of any relevant training, development and/or external activities undertaken since the last meeting in order that this information can be included on the Governor Training Log.

In addition, the Head of Governance confirmed that she would be contacting each governor and co-opted member to discuss and agree the training modules to be undertaken from the suite contained within the ETF Governor Development Programme.

The Board received the update.

8.	**Reports from Committees of Corporation Board:**
8.1	**Audit Committee**

The Chair of the Audit Committee provided a summary of the work of the Audit Committee, referring particularly to the discussion in relation to the outcome of the recent External Audit conducted by Beever & Struthers. The Chair of the Audit Committee also referred to the very positive outcome of the internal audits carried out during the last academic year, 6 of 7 of which had resulted in substantial assurance with the remaining audit receiving an outcome of moderate assurance.

The Chair of Audit Committee confirmed that the committee had spent some time discussing plans in relation to disaster recovery and had agreed that this be the subject of further discussion by the Board. It was agreed that best practice in this respect would be to undertake any testing in a controlled environment, taking the system down in stages to assess the ability of the system to recover.

A governor asked if there were any examples of good practice from other organisations in terms of disaster recovery testing and it was suggested that the possibility of seeking support from an external organisation be considered. Following broad support for this proposal it was agreed that this be investigated further, potentially through the creation of a discrete task and finish group.

Action: A CB A84: Proposal in relation to Disaster Recovery Testing to be discussed at next Audit Committee meeting [Owner: Vice Principal/Head of Governance}

Danniella Sillence Benson joined the meeting at 6 pm.

A governor raised a query about information security, particularly in relation to information sharing with public sector organisations such as the Police. The Vice Principal confirmed that this had been highlighted at a recent conference as a sector wide risk.

Finally, the Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that the committee had discussed Phase 2 of the Internal Audit Plan for the current academic year which was now being recommended to Corporation Board for approval. The Board reviewed the proposal and approved the recommendation.

Decision: CB D71: The Board approved Phase 2 of the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25.

The Board received the report.

8.2	Search & Governance Committee

In the absence of the Chair of the Search & Governance Committee, the Chair of the Corporation Board summarised recent discussions, highlighting particularly the revised terms of reference for the committee which includes oversight of progress against the strategic plan prior to review by Corporation Board. The Chair confirmed that the committee had agreed that a new monthly report has been prepared by the Principal which will be circulated to governors to include progress against Quality and People related KPIs in addition to the management accounts.

Finally, the Chair confirmed that the committee were continuing to focus on governor succession planning and had identified the need to identify potential candidates with a strong education background, particularly given the recent resignation of one of the existing governors.

The Board received the report.

8.3	Standards & Curriculum Committee

The Chair of the Standards & Curriculum Committee confirmed that the most recent committee meeting had focused on the progress of learners studying A Level qualifications as well as the quality of apprenticeship provision. The Chair confirmed that the Student Governor had presented some feedback from apprentices which had triangulated with the areas for development identified on the Apprenticeship Quality Improvement Plan. The Chair confirmed that generally feedback from apprentices was positive, as was the feedback received from the link governors for Safeguarding, Careers and SEND who had identified some excellent practice as part of their various interactions. In relation to SEND, the Chair confirmed that high numbers of learners currently have inclusion plans and that the number of mental health related issues continue to rise.

The Board received the Report.

8.4	Finance & People Committee

The Chair of the Finance and People Committee summarised the areas discussed by the committee, highlighting particularly the discussion in relation to the staff pay award which had been considered by the committee in light of the current internal and external context. The Chair also advised that the College has received confirmation from the DfE that the planned increases in employer National Insurance contributions would be covered and that further information in relation to this is due in the Spring.

In relation to the staff pay award, the Chair of the Committee confirmed that, having considered the proposals submitted, the committee had made a recommendation in relation to the parameters of a staff pay award. [See item 9 below]

The Chair of the Committee further confirmed that the committee had considered the Financial Statements which were now being recommended for approval by the Board and had also recommended a change to the risk register in relation to the inclusion of a risk score with mitigations as well as without.

A governor raised a concern regarding attendance at the recent Finance and People Committee meeting as there was a relatively high number of absentees although the committee was quorate. The Chair responded that this had been recognised and that members were absent for legitimate reasons. It was further noted that a number of the People related items had also been considered as part of the task and finish group focused on the People Strategy**.**

The Board received the report.

9.	**Staff Pay award**

The Principal referred Board members to the paper in respect of the above and confirmed that a further JCC meeting will be taking place in the near future, following which unions would take the proposal back to members for a vote. The Principal confirmed that approval is being sought to offer a staff pay award within the parameters recommended by the Finance & People Committee.

The Principal confirmed that the college is already offering terms and conditions in line with the Joint National Pay Claim including closing the gap between starting salaries for teachers, sector leading pay scales and a number of actions being taken with a review to reducing workload.

A governor asked if staff are aware that the college is offering sector leading pay and conditions, and a staff governor responded that the pay award in January 2024 had been very positively received but that colleagues would not necessarily be aware of how pay and conditions differ between colleges. Likewise, it was acknowledged that perceptions would vary between teaching and support staff, particularly in relation to workload which has been exacerbated due to staffing shortages in some subject areas. A staff governor also referred positively to the Runshaw Rewards benefit although it was identified that not all staff may be aware of this.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to undertake a benchmarking exercise which could be shared with staff in order to demonstrate the positive position vs. other Colleges.

Action: CB A85: Benchmarking activity to take place in order to provide a comparison with other Colleges [Owner: Vice Principal Finance & Facilities]

Decision: CB D72: The Board agreed a staff pay award in line with the parameters set by the Finance & People Committee.

Action: CB A86: Final outcome of pay negotiations to be reported to the Board complete with rationale [Owner: Principal/Head of Governance].

10.	**Principal's Report**

The Principal provided a summary of her report, confirming that the content of the report had been revised to focus predominantly on progress against the strategic plan and associated KPIs. The Principal confirmed that the vast majority of the strategic objectives are on track to be achieved and that performance is strong. The Principal further confirmed that there are some emerging issues in relation to student progress however it is still early in the academic year and significant work is being done with students across all programmes in this respect. SRG

meetings are also taking place to scrutinise any courses with results below target at this stage with action plans being generated in response.

The Principal provided a brief narrative against any areas which are not currently rated as 'Green' on the dashboard, highlighting particularly the interventions in place to address any areas as red or amber. The Principal also confirmed that the dashboard has very recently been updated in order to improve clarity in terms of performance. The Principal also provided a summary of progress against each of the objectives identified in the strategic plan which governors confirmed was very helpful.

Having received the report, a governor queried the consequences for staff not completing mandatory training and the Principal confirmed that a range of interventions are in place. In some cases, non-completion relates to staff who are in harder to reach areas, for example invigilators, cleaners etc.

A governor asked if there was a risk of survey fatigue among staff and students given the number of surveys planned and the Principal and staff governors responded that staff were very positive about participating in surveys and appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback. Likewise, the student governor responded that there were a number of surveys however she appreciated it would be difficult to obtain information in other ways. A prize draw was also suggested as a reward for survey completion.

A governor queried the target in relation to the reduction in CFCs and, following a discussion, it was agreed that this would be clarified.

Action: CB A87: Target in relation to the reduction in CFCs to be reviewed [Owner: Deputy Principal]

Finally, governors thanked the Principal for the work undertaken in relation to the development of the dashboard and the report confirming progress against the strategic plan which they felt was very positive.

The Board received the report.

11.	**Risk Register**

The Vice Principal Finance and Facilities summarised the position in relation to the Risk Register confirming the overall risk rating remains as medium and confirming that the risk register has also been aligned with the dashboard. The Vice Principal confirmed that additional changes would be made to the risk register following the actions requested by the Audit Committee and Finance and People Committee.

Having reviewed the report, a governor commented that the inclusion of the trend data was really useful, and the Vice Principal confirmed that future reports would include both the trend data over time and the movement since the last report which had been requested by Audit Committee.

The Board received the Report.

12.	**Termly Reports**

12.1	Safeguarding/Prevent Update

The Deputy Principal provided a summary of the termly Safeguarding and Prevent update, confirming that a number of changes have recently been made in relation to safeguarding including categorising the level of risk which will provide greater visibility in terms of reporting and the measurement of impact. The Deputy Principal also confirmed that an external audit is in progress carried out by Lancashire School Safeguarding Partnership as well as further training for staff.

The Link Governor for Safeguarding confirmed that staff are now able to see from the staff portal if anyone in their class has a safeguarding concern and can access limited additional information where appropriate.

The Board received the report.

12.2	Health and Safety Update

The Vice Principal Finance & Facilities provided a summary of the position in relation to Health and Safety, confirming that health and safety is also part of the internal audit plan for the current year.

Having received the report, a governor asked how often the fire alarm is tested and if the security gates open automatically. The Vice Principal confirmed that the alarm is tested weekly and that the gates do open automatically.

The Board received the report.

13	Annual Reports for Approval
13.1	Annual Risk Management Report 2023/24

The Vice Principal summarised the contents of the Annual Risk Management Report, confirming that this was recommended to Corporation Board by Audit Committee for approval.

Having received the report a governor queried the information contained on page 2 of the report in relation to the risk profile which appears to indicate the risk had reduced substantially between June and October 2023 and was therefore potentially misleading. It was agreed that a sentence be added to the report to explain the position.

Action: CB A88: Annual Risk Management Report 2023/24 to be amended to explain the reduction in risk between June and October 2024 [Owner: Vice Principal Finance & Facilities]

Decision: CB D73: The Board approved the Annual Risk Management Report for 2023/24 subject to the above amendment.

13.2	Annual Health & Safety Report 2023/24

The Vice Principal Finance and Facilities summarised the contents of the Annual Health & Safety Report, confirming that this was recommended to Corporation Board by the Finance & People Committee for approval.

Having received the report, a governor queried the time taken to evacuate one of the college buildings. The Vice Principal confirmed that the time taken to evacuate would be expected to shorten in the next fire drill.

Decision: CB D74: The Board approved the Annual Health & Safety Report for 2023/24.

13.3	Annual ESG and Sustainable Development Report 2023/24

The Vice Principal Finance and Facilities summarised the contents of the Annual ESG & Sustainable Development Report, confirming that the data contained within the report in relation to the Carbon Footprint still requires to be updated and that this will be updated when available.

Having received the report, a governor queried the process for validating the measures contained within the report and the Vice Principal confirmed that the KPIs are set internally but that ESG was the subject of a recent internal audit, the outcome of which was very positive.

Decision: CB D75: The Board approved the Annual ESG & Sustainable Development Report for 2023/24.

13.4	Annual Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Report 2023/24

The Deputy Principal summarised the contents of the Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report, confirming that the demographic of students attending the college was becoming increasingly more diverse. The Deputy Principal also highlighted an emerging achievement gap for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) which was being addressed, whilst also confirming that there are no significant achievement gaps between male and female learners or in terms of ethnicity and that the achievement gap had been closed in relation to learners with high needs.

Having received the report, a staff governor commented that a significant amount of staff training was being delivered in response to the growing diversity in the learner population and that the recent culture day had been excellent.

Decision: CB D76: The Board approved the Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report for 2023/24.

14	Policies for approval
14.1	LGPS Discretions Policy

The LGPS Discretions Policy was recommended to the Board for approval by the Finance & People Committee. The Vice Principal confirmed that there were very few changes to the policy with the exception of the proposed introduction of a shared cost AVC scheme which was pending treasury approval.

Decision: CB D77: The Board approved the LGPS Discretions Policy subject to treasury approval of the Shared Cost AVC scheme.

14.2	Risk Management Policy

The Risk Management Policy was recommended to the Board for approval by the Audit Committee. The Vice Principal confirmed that there were very few changes to the policy and that the risk appetite remains low.

Decision: CB D78: The Board approved the Risk Management Policy

14.2.	Governance Impact Statement

The committee identified the following in terms of impact:

- Approval of pay award parameters
- Input in relation to dashboard and measurement of progress against the strategic plan
- Approval of Financial Statements
- Approval of Annual Reports
- Approval of Policies

14.	Confidentiality

None identified

15.	Date of next meeting

Corporation Board Meeting – Thursday, 27 March 2025.