

**CRAVEN COLLEGE**  
**FULL GOVERNING BOARD**  
Minutes of the meeting held on:  
**THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER 2024 AT 5.30PM**

**PRESENT:** Alison Birkinshaw - Chair  
Julie Atkins  
Judith Lancaster  
Chris Morgan  
Jane Rogers  
Anita Lall - Principal and Chief Executive  
Neil Roe  
Rob Scott  
Claire Thomas  
Sara Wright

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Gareth Dixon – Deputy Principal  
Duncan Bulloch/Wesley McGlinchey – Assistant Principals  
Susan Francis – Director of Governance  
Rob Lawson – National Leader of Governance

**0.** Danielle Fox, Head of Department - Land Based did a brief presentation on the recent updates and improvements to the equine unit.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 Apologies were received and accepted from Dean Langton and Heather Kerrick. No apologies were received from John Craig or Andy Micklethwaite.

1.2 All those present introduced themselves and everyone was welcomed to the meeting.

1.3 As the term of office for Jane Rogers was ending, the Board presented her with a token of thanks and wished her well for the future.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

2.1 There was a declaration of interest from Mr Chris Morgan in relation to his role as Director of Education – Employability and Skills and Director of Relationships with WEA (The Workers' Educational Association).

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

3.1 **Resolved:** That the minutes of the last Board meeting held on 4 July 2024 were agreed as a true record.

3.2 M23/354 - Terms of Reference

This would be addressed under agenda item 8d.

3.3 M23/362- Overview of College vehicles

This would be addressed under agenda item 8d.

3.4 M23/370 – Update on Animal and Land Based provision

**Completed:** A presentation had been given.

3.5 M23/376– Update the proposed Strategic Plan

**Completed:** Actioned in July 2024

3.6 M23/377 - Re Issue of the Vision, Mission And Values

**Completed:** Actioned in July 2024

3.7 M23/380 - Share meeting dates with governors

**Ongoing:** This would be done for December.

3.8 M23/385 - Streamlined QIP (Quality Improvement Plan)

**Ongoing:** This would be done for December.

**ACTION**

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3.9 M23/387 - Marketing Report  
This would be addressed under agenda item 6a.

3.10 M23/392 - Approve Internal Audit Strategy  
This would be addressed under agenda item 7c.

#### **4. Principal's Report**

4.1 The Board had received the Principal's report and members noted the content on the key activities in relation to policy, Ofsted, skills, devolution updates, the disaster recovery plan, and student successes.

The following points were highlighted:

- The ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) would close as an executive agency of the Department for Education (DfE) on 31 March 2025.
- In conjunction with the Association of Colleges (AoC), 172 College Principals, including Craven College, had written a letter to Chancellor Rachel Reeves asking her to address a number of pressing issues for the FE sector.
- The apprenticeship levy was being reformed into a growth and skills levy, reasons why and the need for caution were given.
- College was in scope for an Ofsted monitoring visit. Good progress had been made against the recommendations and position papers showing the impact of these actions were being written.
- Key performance indicators of the strategic targets 2023 – 2024 were scrutinised by the Board.
- The newly formed York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) would launch their Skills Strategy and Adult Skills Fund (ASF) Strategic Skills Plan later this month.
- Following a desktop exercise of the disaster recovery plan, work was being undertaken to focus on lockdown procedures. The IT disaster recovery / business continuity had been highlighted as strong in a recent internal audit.
- Graduation took place in September. The whole event was praised by the Chair.

4.2 In response to a question about the YNYCA (York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority) Skills Strategy and Adult Skills Fund (ASF) Strategic Skills Plan, the Principal advised that information on this would be referenced through KPIs in the strategic plan which would be presented at Board in December. That the report would have a College focus and update on progress against the strategic aims and objective and KPIs.

#### **5. STRATEGIC MATTERS**

##### **5.1 Item 5a: Vision, Mission and Values**

Following feedback from the Board, the College's vision, mission, values had been approved via written resolution in July 2024. Details of how this had been launched with College staff were shared.

##### **5.2 Item 5b: New Strategic Aims, Objectives and Plan**

The Principal explained that much work had been done to ensure there were clear operating plans to sit underneath the strategic aims and objectives. That the objectives had been consolidated and were now all in one place.

5.3 An overview of the key metrics was shared with the Board. The College was challenged about the attendance target of 92%, the reference to high grades as well as value added. The Principal gave an explanation behind the targets and stated that a sharper target with regards high grades would be added.

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- 5.4 After some discussion, it was agreed that the top-level strategic aims would be scrutinised at Committee level.
- 5.5 Plans to create a Governor Dashboard were in the early stages. The Director of Governance was working with another College to learn from their experience.
- 5.6 The final version of the strategic plan, considering governor feedback, would be brought to the next Board meeting.

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### 6. REPORTS AND UPDATES

#### 6.1 Item 6a: Marketing Update

This paper provided an update on the College's marketing activity over Spring 2024, 24-25 enrolment and 2024-25 planned activity.

The following was noted:

- The 16-19 study programmes attracted 70 more applicants than this time last year. This had resulted in 128 more enrolments on study programmes compared to the same point last year.
- Marketing activity for 25-26 was underway with an increased focus on improving conversion engagement for young people and creation of more adult and HE recruitment opportunities in the community.
- Due to an increased presence in schools and successful Open Evenings, early applications were up 10%.
- 2025 would focus on celebrating the College's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a series of activities, PR opportunities and a large-scale celebratory event.

Governors applauded the positive start to the year in terms of applications and increased conversion rates.

#### 6.2 Item 6b: Curriculum Plan

The report covered the delivery of the curriculum plan for 2024/25 based on current enrolments up to 1 October. In addition to an update on the process for curriculum planning 2025/26.

The new provision in Foundation learning had been successful with 151 students enrolled, 30 more than the target set.

- 6.3 The College was asked that information be provided by level as well as by department to give a different perspective.

**ACTION:** To include levels in subsequent reports.

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#### Item 6c: Staff Survey Results /Action Plan

An overview of the 2023/24 staff survey carried out in collaboration with York College was presented in the paper.

- 6.4 The results showed an improved response rate of 53%, compared to 31% in 2022/23. This could be partly due to a suggestion made by the Quality and Curriculum Committee to review the questions, which was actioned.
- 6.5 Staff satisfaction across all areas of the survey had increased but overall remained behind the regional and national benchmark.
- 6.6 The decline in satisfaction related to workload, wellbeing, support from line managers and job security. As a result of this, the timing of the survey would be considered. It was noted that culture change would take time and ways in which this was being addressed explained.

6.7 A discussion took place on the reasons behind the increased response rate, the support put in place to ensure consistency of practice and actions taken following the survey results.  
The Board **noted** in the information provided in the paper on the key points and plans to effect improvements.

6.8 **Item 6d: Estates and Finance Update**

The draft financial performance and position for the College for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024 had been circulated to governors in the management accounts pack. The headline for this was the College had returned to 'Good' financial health with a score of 190 points (180 points was the lower threshold for 'Good'). A summary of the performance and associated health points was shared.

6.9 The College confirmed that the sale of the High Street was finally completing. All agreed this had been a long and time-consuming journey and were pleased to hear the news.

6.10 Following a previous request from Governors for an update on College vehicles, information showing: the number, type of vehicle, how they were used and funded had been provided. There followed a discussion on the number of tractors. Assurance was sought and provided that appropriate policies were in place to cover said vehicles, and all health and safety measures were in place, including sole use and health and safety checks.  
The Board **noted** in the information provided in the paper.

6.11 **Item 6e: Quality and Curriculum report**

The Assistant Principal (Curriculum and Student Experience) presented the report which provided a summary of the key papers discussed at the Quality and Curriculum Committee meeting. It included: the key risks, analysis of the 2023/24 achievement data, compared key performance indicators (KPIs) with national benchmarks, provided insights into Higher Education (HE), apprenticeships, adult education performance, whilst outlining the status of teaching and learning across College.

6.12 Key points to note were:

- An increase in overall achievement rates to above the national rate at 86.1%.
- 16 – 18 achievement increased from 76.7% in 2022/23 to 86.1% in 2023/24.
- 19+ group achievement rate saw an increase from 84.8% in 2022/23 to 86.3% in 2023/24, only slightly below the national rate of 87%.
- High Needs retention and achievement rates had grown from 64% to 83.6% in 2023/24. This was 1.1% above the national rate.
- HE was had met the achievement target of 96%.
- Apprenticeships were above the national rate at 71.1%

The improved picture was as a result of the hard work put in by all staff the previous year, coupled with the more robust Observations of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) system that had been implemented.

6.13 The Board **noted** the information in the paper and commended the College on the improvements shown.

6.14 **Item 6f: Quality Improvement Plan close-down 2023 – 24**

The paper provided a summary of the progress made with the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2023-24.

The report was presented, and the Board **noted** the summary of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), the implications of performance trends, key risks and actions.

6.15 **Item 6g: Safeguarding Update**

The Safeguarding/Prevent Annual Report 2023-24 had been considered by Quality and Curriculum Committee at its meeting on 9 October 2024. It had been agreed that a more complete version be tabled at the next Quality and Curriculum Committee meeting on 5 December before coming back to Board. The Head of Student Services presented the paper which provided an annual report to Governors in terms of how the College was discharging its duties under Safeguarding and the Prevent Duty legislation.

Key points from the report were highlighted including:

- A rise in requests for counselling sessions
- Changes to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Staffing concerns
- Safeguarding incidents to date
- Numbers of staff and students accessing support
- Staff training

6.16 Given the increased number safeguarding incidents reported, Governors asked how staff were coping with the demand for their services, to which the Head of Student Services explained that it presented challenges and went through the strategies and support available for staff.

6.17 **Item 6h: Student Activity Report and Plan**

The Board **noted** the comprehensive and useful information provided in the paper on the overview of student engagement activities with data on enrichment activities undertaken since September.

7. **FINANCE MATTERS**

**Item 7a: Funding update including Adult Skills Fund update (replaced the AEB) including sub-contracting and apprenticeships**

7.1 The Assistant Principal presented an update on the College's funding position for 2023/24 for AEB (Adult Education Budget) as at the end of August 2024 along with an early view of 2024/25 funding from a mid-September funding update.

The College had met both the ESFA and WYCA AEB core allocations for 2023/24. It was stated that the 2024/25 performance was ahead of 2023/24 for ASF (Adult Skills Fund) allocations demonstrating a positive start to the year. Apprenticeships were also ahead of the 2023/24 performance.

7.2 In terms of apprenticeships, recruitment had been positive with enrolments for construction standards exceeding target. The Board **noted** the information provided.

7.3 **Item 7b - Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2023-24**

The Deputy Principal presented the paper which provided an update on the background and detail of the Self-Assessment Questionnaire.

**Resolved:** The Board approved the Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2023-24, noting that it would be signed by the Chair of the Governing Board and the Principal.

7.4 **Item 7c: Internal Audit strategy**

The Deputy Principal advised that following the appointment of new internal auditors (Wbg, formerly Wylie Bisset) a revised internal strategy and plan for the current year (24/25) and next three years had been prepared. The paper

provided an overview of the plan for 24/25 and rationale for each audit in the plan as well as an overview of the 3-year plan. The Audit Committee had recommended the strategy to the Board for approval.

**Resolved:** The Board **approved** the Internal Audit Strategy 2024-25 as recommended by Audit Committee.

## 8. GOVERNANCE

The Board were notified that as part of updating systems and processes to ensure compliance and a streamlined system, the Director of Governance had reviewed at the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Committee Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation.

8.1 **Item 10a – Resolved:** The Code of Conduct was **approved**.

8.2 **Item 10b – Resolved:** The Standing Orders were **approved**.

8.3 **Item 10c – Resolved:** The Committee Terms of Reference were **approved**.

8.4 **Item 10d – Resolved:** The Scheme of Delegation was **approved**.

8.5 **Item 10e – Written Resolutions**

The Director of Governance presented the paper which provided an outcome of written resolutions circulated since the previous Board meeting.

**Resolved:** That the written resolutions were accepted by the Board.

## 9. POLICIES

9.1 **The Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy**

This policy had been considered by Quality and Curriculum Committee at its meeting on 9 October 2024. The Committee had agreed to recommend the Policy to the Board for approval.

**Resolved:** The Board approved the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, as recommended by Quality and Curriculum Committee.

9.2 **Item 10e –The Complaints and Compliments Policy**

Following a discussion at the Quality and Curriculum Committee on 9 October 2024, it had been agreed that the policy be reviewed and tabled at the next meeting.

**Deferred:** The Complaints and Compliments Policy was **deferred**.

9.3 The Whistleblowing Policy had been considered by Audit Committee at its meeting on **25 September 2024** and the Committee had agreed to recommend it to the Board for approval. The Board noted the updates as detailed in the paper.

**Resolved:** The Whistleblowing Policy was **approved**.

## 10. RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 The Principal presented the report which provided the Board with an update on the College's strategic risks and the actions being taken. Two risks had increased. That following the Ofsted inspection, the achievement rate risk had increased but mitigating factors were in progress.

The stakeholder views and skills risk had also increased. The action plan associated with these risks had been shared.

10.2 The Board discussed a number of the risks and asked that actions be added for any rated as red. Additionally, a request that high grades be added to the risk around achievement was acknowledged.

**ACTION:** Add actions for red rated risks and include high grades on the achievement risk.

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**11. REVIEW OF MEETING**

11.1 Governors reviewed the effectiveness of the meeting, whilst recognising that work had taken place on revising the format of the reports there was still more to do with regard to data and analysis.

Board members agreed that they had all the information needed to participate fully in discussion, that the issues discussed were appropriate, that they had had enough time for thorough debate, that all decisions had been made in an appropriate manner and that there were no new risks which the Board felt needed to be addressed nor any other risk changes that had not been discussed.

**12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

12.1 The next meeting was to be held in College on Thursday 12 December 2024 at 5.30pm.

<b>Board Meetings in College</b>	<b>Away Days in College</b>
Thursday 3 April 2025 at 5.30pm	Thursday January 23, 2025 2pm – 7pm.
Thursday 3 July 2025 at 5.30pm	Thursday 26 June 2025 at 2pm – 7pm.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.