

LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING

CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 27 April 2021 at 3.45 pm via Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT:

Julia Evans (JE) Chair
Peter Norris (PN) Vice Chair
Simon Bray (SB)
Ian Frear (IF)
Oliver Harding-Jeans (OHJ)
Andrew Kenny (AK)
Rachel Lindley (RL)
Caroline Meehan (CM)
Derek Packer (DPa)
Mark Roper (MR)
Mark Scott (MS)
Derek Whitehead (DW)
Jackie Wignall (JW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

David Pullein (DP) (Vice Principal – Finance & Resources)
Nikki Davis (ND) (Vice Principal – Teaching, Learning & Quality)
Michaela Beardsall (MB) (Clerk to the Corporation)
Brian Duffy (BD) (Faculty Director) - Item 7 only
Wayne Chappelow (WC) (Faculty Director) - Item 7 only

**ACTION
BY AND
TARGET DATE**

1. CHAIR'S AND GOVERNORS' COMMUNICATIONS

JE welcomed Ian Frear, a new Governor. Debbie Forsyth-Conroy has also been appointed but is unavailable this evening. The Board members are very much looking forward to working with them.

JE reminded the link Governors that any final Governor link activities would need to be completed during the summer term.

**All Govs
Summer
Term**

MR gave an update on the link meeting undertaken with Vicky Patterson and Sarah Sullivan. The meeting proved very useful and gave MR full confidence in the ongoing work within the department. The benefits of using digital communication during lockdown, including mentoring activities, was discussed at length.

MR fed back that staff are keen to utilise digital enrolment in the future as it was very successful; as were the online parents' evenings, which were better attended. MR requested that SMT consider the use of the above (or a hybrid model for harder to reach parents) in future years.

**SMT
12 July 2021**

The Mental Health awareness and support offer for staff was also discussed and praised, however, due to the increased frequency and severity of mental ill health in students, staff have requested that a policy is developed. ND confirmed that Sharon Ryan is developing a mental health strategy. The range of mental health issues being presented is increasing and changing daily.

IF concurred that, in his experience, more mental health issues are being presented now that students have returned to College and they tend to be increasingly more complex issues. He said that nationally it appears to be the same picture.

1. CHAIR'S AND GOVERNORS' COMMUNICATIONS (continued)

JW informed the board that she is a member of the College's Mental Health working group which is attended by staff and students; the first meeting was held last week and was very positive. ND would present the Mental Health Strategy to Governors at the July meeting.

**ND
12 July 2021**

JE noted that LCB has always been proactive in addressing mental health and thanked staff for the ongoing work in increasingly difficult circumstances.

External Verifiers have reviewed the digital provision and have reported back positively. As a matter of course, safeguarding was discussed and MR is confident in the provision. Staff also requested that the marketing of specific courses was reviewed.

MR affirmed how useful the link meeting was for him both personally and professionally. SB has received feedback from the staff involved in the link meeting and they concur that the meeting was very useful.

AK gave an update on the Student Liaison Committee held 20/04/21. He said that it was a good meeting although the timing could have been better, as it was too close to the Easter Holidays to gather more feedback. The dates have been reviewed and amended for next academic year, so this is not repeated. OHJ, Denis Metcalf and Julie Theakston attended this meeting and Denis Metcalf relayed the student feedback including:

- They are missing site visits.
- They are finding it difficult to wear masks in classrooms.
- Enrichment activities have been well attended since students have returned to College.
- The Quality Manager has received feedback from 25 focus groups, which was largely very positive.
- Digital Strategy developing including a blended learning approach.

IF queried how enrichment activities have been implemented. ND explained that sports activities, gym memberships, 5-a-side and GO-ape have all been launched and are well attended. During lockdown various online activities were offered but not well attended as students were keen to get away from their screens.

AK assured the Board that the relevant staff in College are continuing to address the negative responses in the SPOC.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Prof. Dave Russell, Sarah Wilson, Debbie Forsyth-Conroy and Derek Packer.

3. DETERMINATION OF ATTENDEES / OBSERVERS

The Corporation agreed attendees / observers at the meeting as per the attendance list.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Ref Min 6

Update received – there is no cost implication for the College.

6.2 Ref Min 10

Actioned. JE has signed off the bid as Chair.

6.3 Ref Min 11

Actioned. JE has written to the Senior Postholders to express thanks on behalf of the Board.

6.4 Ref Min 13

Actioned. MR was subsequently voted to become Vice Chair from the beginning of the next academic year.

7. TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT

JE welcomed WC and BD.

WC and BD gave a presentation to the Board; the key points in the presentation included:

Challenges

At the beginning of the pandemic the digital learning environment was in its infancy. Staff had to learn to adapt very quickly and they developed a range of knowledge, experience and confidence in a short period of time. Staff ensured that teaching and learning continued in different and difficult circumstances. WC and BD mentioned that digital poverty was an issue; some students did not have the devices needed at the start of the lockdown period for them to access the learning materials but did over a period of time. There were also issues with students logging on at 9:00am.

They said that mental ill health of staff and students during lockdown has continued and now College has reopened this is another challenge. WC has attended numerous support panels for students and has been working with HR regarding supporting staff with mental ill health.

Other issues relate to students losing / being furloughed from employment. This means that College has had to be flexible.

Limited flexibility has been extended from awarding organisations. No Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) are available for the majority of construction courses, meaning all practical assessments must be completed regardless of time missed and there is no parity with GCSEs / A Level qualifications.

Teaching, Learning & Assessment during lockdown

Microsoft Teams was set up and rolled out quickly to both staff and students and devices for the students who needed them were provided. All theory classes were taught online in all courses and 1,486 students enrolled on to the VLE SMARTSCREEN during the first week for Construction Crafts.

7. TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT (continued)

All teaching resources and assignments were transferred to Microsoft Forms for students to access digitally, and paper-based resources were sent out to students without devices. The most vulnerable students attended College on Wednesdays to maintain engagement and for staff to provide continuing support.

The enrichment at College included online virtual tours around construction sites which were very well received and helped to prepare students for employment.

The Teams chat function was used extensively, and enabled students with additional needs e.g. deaf students, to engage with the learning material that was being provided. Weekly meetings were held to monitor student engagement. A breadth of digital interactive software to support learning was used, often with no prior experience. Teaching staff adapted quickly to using a variety of packages and Apps.

The Maths and English departments continue to work flexibly to ensure student progress and are utilising GCSE pods in virtual teaching. 55% of lessons and communications were outside of College hours and weekend engagement proved popular in these areas.

Smaller assessments must also be undertaken in English and Math to allocate TAGs. A range of strategies have been utilised including the use of Learning Mentors, recording lessons, 1:1 interventions, catch-up tutorials, drop-in sessions and face to face parents' evenings to address concerns.

Following the return from lockdown a normal timetable was adopted as soon as possible and staff are utilising a comprehensive tracking system to determine student need / support and additional practical teaching sessions are offered. Recording of sessions was very useful for students to access at other points outside of the session. Regular 1:1 tutorials were held and the online parents' evening was valuable for engaging parents.

Easter sessions were delivered during the holidays; ensuring that students complete the practical sessions, which are crucial in order for them to have the skills to work on site and towards completing assessments.

Maths and English staff are reinforcing the importance of attending mocks in order for teachers to allocate TAGs. The English and Math's teaching block will be reallocated once the course is complete and will be used to deliver practical sessions. Blended learning has been received well in some areas.

JE queried the problems associated with TAGs. BD explained that in the Services area the amount of practical they need to cover is problematic, theory units could have offered TAGs, but the Awarding Bodies have given very little flexibility.

MR noted that it was a credit to staff working together across the College; the Maths team have worked particularly well with HECDM.

7. TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT (continued)

IF noted his experience of working with the Grimsby Institute and the possibility of remote learning of theory lessons in the future. IF also challenged WC and BD on the delayed assessments and if they would be completed by July? WC explained that the majority are due to complete but staff will continue to work with students.

IF queried if online live remote assessments were being used. WC noted that approval is required from City & Guilds and he would investigate this.

WC
13 July 2021

MS asked WC/BD what the feedback / support has been from employers? WC said that agreements have been made to block release students. They will remain on site for development of their practical skills, this is employer driven and has worked well.

MS noted that it is positive that employers are engaging and supporting course delivery. This provides the College with the opportunity to publish some good news. ND would ask Marketing to publish employer link stories.

ND
13 July 2021

JE gave thanks and appreciated the size of the task.

JE queried WC and BD's own development. The main development areas are IT / digital, the range of programmes used and offered by lecturers are vast and therefore it is important to keep up with them.

8. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS (MARCH)

DP said that there has been similar progress from November. The focus is on ensuring that Apprentices from this year and last year, and Adults, achieve their aims. The College is expected to pay back approximately 20% of the Adult Education Budget, providing the 80% is achieved which relies on sub-contractor delivery and achievement levels.

He noted that cash flow is positive and reflects the planned increase. It is important to note that March is the lowest funded month. The College is working its way through any bad debts, and COVID associated debts have been written off. By the 21/22 academic year, any legacy debts will have been removed.

MR recorded his thanks on the adjudication decision from Pythagoras. He said that thanks to excellent work, the costs have been recovered.

PN queried the entry relating to 70% of Apprentices completing and asked if this is appropriate. DP noted that the situation is challenging, by the time Governors meet again the College will have a clear steer. He will report back at the next meeting.

DP
8 June 2021

PN also queried the amount of additional costs faced by the College as a result of COVID. DP noted that there was £60k in direct costs although there were some savings in heating / lighting / security etc. but other lost income such as catering and short courses.

The Board noted the Management Accounts for March 2021.

9. ESFA 2021/22 ALLOCATIONS FOR LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING

DP noted the 16-19 lagged funding; there are over 1,000 students which has increased from circa. 800 around the financial crash. There has also been a huge increase in enrolments in 2020/21 therefore there will be an increase in lagged funding for next year.

The Board noted the ESFA 2021/22 Allocations for Leeds College of Building.

**10. a) ESFA ADULT EDUCATION
b) ADVANCED LEARNER LOANS ALLOCATION**

DP noted that there was £1.6m from August 2020 this year although in future years there will be significantly less (around £1.2m). The Local Authority will allocate devolved AEB funding in the future.

DP said that the Advanced Learner Loans is positive as it is at current levels and has not been rebased.

MR queried if devolution would bring opportunities? DP explained that there will be opportunities and threats.

ND also explained that it would be important for the College to stand its ground with the Local Authority and focus on LCB priorities including literacy, numeracy and digital demands. Students will be unable to study outside of their post code areas. She said that Greater London funding is higher than Leeds, demonstrating the disparity in funding levels. The College will build on and cultivate good relationships with the Local Authority to build on the opportunities. Local Skills Improvement Plans may shortly be introduced and would need to be monitored.

AK queried if the increased number of learners will impact on resources? DP explained that they are expected to rise, but it depends on easing of restrictions, particularly for full-time numbers and Apprenticeships.

ND explained that the average class sizes can be improved, and workshop space is key. SMT are monitoring conversions from applications to enrolment. ND also noted that applications have been submitted earlier than usual for full-time students, which is likely due to the pandemic and schools supporting students to make multiple applications during lockdown.

DW highlighted that if existing students do not complete by July, there will be the added issue of providing for them to complete into next academic year. This is a watching brief.

JE queried if apprenticeships would pay dividends in the future? ND noted that this is likely.

JW queried if there will be a requirement to increase staff numbers and requested HR are informed as soon as possible to begin the recruitment process. DW explained that staff recruitment in the Electrical department is proving difficult, therefore incentive payments are currently being offered and may need to be used in the future for other areas too.

The Board noted the ESFA Adult Education and Advanced Learner Loans Allocations.

11. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS

ND highlighted that retention of students and adults is holding well

There has been a recent drop in 16-18 year olds. A significant number have enrolled into the armed forces or employment. Feedback suggests that this is due to the desire for stability in the light of the pandemic and a number of students who need to support their families financially.

Attendance has declined due to external pressures, e.g. a number of students that have been supporting their siblings with home schooling. There has also been a rise in mental ill health and anxiety.

There is a focus on Apprenticeship achievement and completion of qualifications from both last year and the current academic year. The National Achievement rate tables have been received and LCB is above the benchmark. Level 2 is above the national average for timely and overall achievement, although ND noted that there is still work to do.

There are two main areas of concern with attendance, i.e. Maths & English and Multi-skills. Maths and English attendance is currently at 56%. Students are accessing the curriculum outside of the normal College time. 75% of work is evidence gathering. TAGs are different to CAGs (Centre Assessed Grades). There is a focus on standardisation and moderation. There will be 48 hours' notice to submit student work for moderation. Results are based on evidence and not an algorithm.

Multi-skills attendance is at 74%, and there is a large volume of support for the needs across these students. School attendance was much lower and therefore students are making progress and the achievement rates are at 100%. The concerns relate to the high level of support needs that students are presenting with.

Curriculum development

ND gave an overview of new programmes including T-Levels.

ND explained the 'everyone's invited' education website logs instances of public sexual harassment. Nationally there have been 15,000 reports to date. Staff are checking policies to ensure that they are up to date with OfS / Ofsted requirements. Consent / victim blaming / normalising sexual violence will be addressed in tutorials and the College's EDI Committee will monitor this.

IF queried if the best case has been given in regard to Apprenticeships and if this was realistic? ND explained that now students are back in College, staff have a better understanding of where they are in terms of progress. In the next 4 weeks staff will be able to indicate who will complete this year. ND would produce a report showing the variation from 2018/19 and best-case -v- actual for July's meeting.

ND
8 July 2021

IF also noted that from an Ofsted point of view, destinations data is crucial. ND agreed this is critical. The College is supporting as many students as possible into industry ensuring they have the correct skills. It is difficult to note if employment into any sector is appropriate; This will form part of the end of year reporting. ND to produce destinations data for July's meeting.

ND
8 July 2021

11. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS (continued)

PN queried what the areas of concern are from CPOM's? ND said that supporting the Mental Health strategy and accessing support for students is critical. Students with safeguarding issues are being managed and supported and regular meetings are being held with the Safeguarding Manager. The volume is a concern but is being monitored.

DW noted that Governors should have reassurance from the reports. Teaching and Business Support staff have ensured that the College is in a strong position. There is a real focus on student achievement.

The Board noted the Performance Management Report.

12. JOSEPH ASPDIN SKILLS TRUST – INITIAL PROPOSAL

DW presented the proposal. Councillor Driver was a previous Governor with the College for some time and had a real passion for supporting disadvantaged students. He has set up a trust fund and this equates to £170k over three years to support LCB students.

The proposal is in its infancy and it will be managed by SMT.

JE noted that this is very special to the College and will write a letter of thanks.

**JE
13 July 2021**

The Board noted the initial proposal from Joseph Aspdin Skills Trust.

13. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Clerk presented the report and noted the vacancies. Governors are requested to contact MB if they would like to join one of the sub-committees. Matt Shields is also likely to join Audit (pending interview).

Recruitment for a Support Staff Governor will commence in May and MB will circulate recruitment documentation.

**MB
3 May 2021**

14. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2021/22

The Clerk presented the meetings schedule. A few of the Corporation meetings have been removed in line with the new I&A's. A physical Award Ceremony will not be held this year, but other options are being investigated.

The Board approved the schedule of meetings for 2021/22.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 8 June 2021 at 3.45pm.