

LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING

CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 May 2022 at 3.45 pm, Classroom 3, South Bank 1 / Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT:

Peter Norris (PN) Chair
Mark Roper (MR) Vice Chair
Claire Curtis (CC) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Debbie Forsythe Conroy (DFC) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Caroline Meehan (CM)
Katherine Naisbitt (KN)
Derek Packer (DPa)
Dave Russell (DR)
Matthew Shields (MSh) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Derek Whitehead (DW)
Sarah Wilson (SW) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)

IN ATTENDANCE:

David Pullein (DP) (Vice Principal – Finance & Resources)
Nikki Davis (ND) (Vice Principal – Teaching, Learning & Quality)
Karen Rolinson (KR) (Governance Adviser & Clerk to the Corporation)

ACTION
BY AND
TARGET DATE

1. CHAIR'S AND GOVERNORS' COMMUNICATIONS

- 1.1 PN asked DW to report on some recent College news. DW reported that two students had been nominated for BTEC National awards and Rebekah Woodend was awarded the BTEC Construction Learner of the Year. Connor Coupland also won a Bronze Certificate in this category. DFC asked if a letter of congratulations could be sent from the Governors. DW confirmed that this news was embargoed until 23 June 2022 but he would draft a letter to be signed by himself and PN to be sent after this date

DW
23 June 2022

DW congratulated DP and the IT Team for achieving the Cyber Essentials certification. Governors also offered their congratulations.

DW noted that Leeds City Council Children's Services had recently achieved 'Outstanding' following an Ofsted visit. DW had passed on the College's congratulations to Cllr James Lewis and Tom Riordan at the Council.

- 1.2 PN asked KR to provide an update following her attendance at a recent Governance Professional Conference. KR stated it was recommended during the conference that if there wasn't a robust governance self-assessment in place, then it was better to get this right first before proceeding with an external board review. She noted that she was currently reviewing the Code of Good Governance and some actions would come from this; that ND was starting as the new Principal with a new senior leadership structure; and the College's governance self-assessment process was being revised this year. It was therefore suggested that the Internal Auditors carry out an audit of governance in Spring 2023 with an external review of governance being planned for Autumn 2023. DFC offered to be a 'critical friend' in relation to the governance self-assessment process. KR accepted and thanked DFC for her offer.

KR/ DFC
Sept 2022

The Board approved an internal audit of governance to take place (as part of the 2022/23 internal audit plan) in Spring 2023 and an external review of governance to take place in Autumn 2023.

KR
April 2023 &
Nov 2023

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

- 1.3** PN informed Governors that MR and himself intended to share the Governor one to one reviews after the final Board meeting in July and invitations would be sent out for this, with meetings likely to take place on Teams.

KR/PN/MR
July 2022

PN stated that a Chair's review template had been pulled together by KR and that this would be sent out by KR in June. He welcomed any feedback via this process and informed Governors that it was their opportunity to say whatever they felt in terms of PN's performance over the last year.

KR
June 2022

- 1.4** CM provided an update in relation to safeguarding. She informed Governors that she had been into North Street to meet Sharon Ryan (SR) and the Safeguarding Team which was now fully staffed. She met Katie (*Finnegan*) from MindMate and noted that this was a good service being provided and was also being accessed by tutors who referred students to the service. CM also met with Caroline (*Walker*), the College Police Officer who was having a positive impact and working with students on a restorative basis and crime prevention. CM said that SR had informed her that the team was working on a sexual harassment plan to ensure that improvements were made, with deeper dives into some areas and women's focus groups being reintroduced. SW asked if the results regarding harassment would be discussed during Item 15. PN said this would happen.

- 1.5** ND provided an update on the new senior leadership structure and said that the 2 x Assistant Principals for Study Programmes and Higher Education had been filled internally. She said that the Assistant Principal – Quality & Student Experience had attracted 23 applications which were of high quality. Ten individuals had been shortlisted and 9 confirmed they were attending an assessment / interview later this week. She stated that for the Assistant Principal – Data & Employer Engagement they had received 6 applications of which 4 were from external candidates. She felt only the 2 internal candidates met the criteria and these were being interviewed next week. She said that she would be able to confirm the appointments by the end of next week. PN asked if an update would be provided at the final Board meeting in July. ND confirmed that this would be the case.

ND
July 2022

- 1.6** MR informed Governors that he had chaired another employer forum recently.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Elaine Armitage, Simon Bray, Rachel Lindley, and Oliver Harding-Jeans. Wasim Feroze unfortunately didn't receive the details of or papers for the meeting and was therefore unaware that he needed to attend.

3. DETERMINATION OF ATTENDEES / OBSERVERS

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

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

CC declared an interest in Item 9.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

MSh queried that during the previous meeting when the liquidity challenges of the Joint Venture (JV) were discussed he raised the issue of DW taking legal advice and he wanted to ensure that he was offered the opportunity (paid for by the College), as potentially trading insolvent has implications for Directors. DW said informal advice had been obtained and he will access legal advice if he feels this necessary. He was grateful to the Board for the offer.

Following this discussion, the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Ref Min 21 (16 November 2021)

Carried forward.

6.2 Ref Min 2.1

Actioned – details sent to CM 27.04.22 and included in the PMR report.

6.3 Ref Min 2.5

Actioned – survey undertaken and schedule on Agenda (Item 10).

6.4 Ref Min 8a)

Carried forward.

6.5 Ref Min 8a)

Carried forward.

6.6 Ref Min 8b)

Actioned – DW & JW reviewed the Staff Development Policy and updated the loan agreement to add clarity.

6.7 Ref Min 10

Carried forward.

6.8 Ref Min 11

Carried forward.

6.9 Ref Min 11

Actioned – job descriptions and salary assessment undertaken and posts advertised.

6.10 Ref Min 11

Carried forward.

6.11 Ref Min 13

DP confirmed that he had met the bank and the loan had been renegotiated as agreed at the previous Board meeting.

6.12 Ref Min 15

Carried forward.

7. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS MARCH 2022

DP presented the Management Accounts for March 2022. He said that there had been very little change since the previous month's accounts were presented. He noted that it wasn't acceptable that approximately 100 apprenticeship learners still had to go onto the system and approximately 40 were in D lock. He explained the complications of D lock to Governors. DPa asked if this created additional work for staff which DP confirmed that it did. DP said that the College has invested in software which would try to improve this situation. DP noted that the April accounts were already looking better in relation to the apprentice sign ups and the focus now was next year with non-pay expenditure already looking very high.

MSh noted that the accounts presented were an excellent set of numbers and that it was good to see the cash position. He questioned the forecast increases in inflation, running costs etc. and what the understanding was for the impact on the following year. DP responded that the draft budget would come to the Board in July and this would be looked at in detail at that point. MSh noted an increased cost base with reduced income.

PN queried that in the appendix expenditure was shown to be flat over the next year. DP replied that the cashflow is behind because it is what was approved by the Board at last year's budget meeting and this would be updated for the July 2022 meeting.

DP said that he would like to raise the issue of the amount of cash in the bank as interest rates are increasing, and he felt it was important to look again at the Treasury Management Policy. He confirmed that he would bring a paper to the Board in relation to this in July.

DP
12 July 2022

SW stated that at the last meeting the Board agreed to renegotiate the loan with the bank and queried that this was a good decision. DP confirmed that the College is paying more because it has a variable rate but it is fixed at 2% over the base rate and the amount is getting smaller so overall it was a good decision.

PN asked if the April accounts looked similar. DP confirmed that the final push now was reducing the 120 day debtors for year end.

The Board noted the Management Accounts for March 2022.

8. ESFA LETTER DATED 30 MARCH 2022 REGARDING COLLEGE FINANCIAL HEALTH 2020/21 AND FINANCIAL DASHBOARD

DW noted that he had circulated the ESFA letter a couple of weeks ago and that this confirmed that the College's health rating was good and that the forecasting was right. PN noted that this was an excellent achievement.

The Board noted the ESFA letter.

9. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

See attached notes.

10. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2022/23 (CORPORATION AND SUB-COMMITTEES)

KR explained that the results of the survey into Corporation start times showed that the majority of those Governors answering wanted the Corporation meetings to remain at the same time, with a couple stating that they would like the meetings to start later. She confirmed that the Calendar of Business for 2022/23 had been drafted with Corporation meetings starting slightly later at 4.00pm due to the amount of business that the Audit Committee needed to consider. KR stated an additional Corporation meeting has been added in January 2023 to ensure that there wasn't a long period left between meetings for Governors to consider the management accounts. She explained the rationale for splitting the development day into 2 x half days, one in September and one in February.

DPa said that he would be unable to attend two of the Search & Governance Committee meetings due to holidays. It was agreed that these dates would be discussed with Committee members outside of the meeting.

KR
July 2022

It was noted that a couple of the meetings were very business heavy and it was suggested that the start time may be adjusted to accommodate the expected lengthy meeting. DR responded that it made sense to keep a consistent start time which was agreed. PN asked all Governors to put the dates in their diaries and note that some meetings make take a little longer due to the amount of business, particularly the October and July meetings.

Governors
July 2022

DPa complimented KR on the thoroughness of the calendar.

The Board approved the schedule of meetings for 2022/23 subject to potential changes to the Search & Governance Committee dates.

11. LINK GOVERNOR ACTIVITY – PROGRESS

PN introduced this item and said that he would like Governors to state what they think the benefits are of the link activity and one thing that came out of the process.

MSh said that he had been shown around the College by DW and that he had a link meeting with Phil Bray. He met some students during the meeting. He felt that he would like to do it in rotation and needed to do more of it next year.

DFC said that she had met Daniel Grimes to discuss quality and understanding the curriculum area reviews (CARs). She felt that she gained some context and wants to engage more.

CC confirmed that her link person had been absent and so she was unable to meet with them.

SW said her response was similar to DFC. She had met with Liam Mogan (LM) and obtained some context. She said this showed what Governors do in Audit relates a lot to LM's area of work and she also felt that it was a good check that what DW/DP say is happening is actually happening.

11. **LINK GOVERNOR ACTIVITY – PROGRESS** (Continued)

DR stated that he had had a conversation with Brian Duffy regarding how HE functions and how he can add value. DR said that he feels he knows the College well and the conversation was useful.

CM stated that her link with Sharon Ryan is very useful (as Safeguarding Governor). She had linked with ND too on safeguarding. She didn't feel that it was appropriate to meet students with safeguarding plans.

KN said that she had met with Ed Hodgson and had a very good afternoon where he had discussed his concerns and challenges which she had discussed with ND. KN stated that she had met with students and staff. Students had provided good feedback although they had stated that some of the tools were not so good sometimes. She confirmed that they had a high regard for the College. KN noted that it was an interesting process with her being new to further education. She felt that she needed to make more of an effort to come in as she believes it's really beneficial. DW noted that EH had done a remarkable job as his area had been short staffed for a while.

MR said that he had previously met Vicky Patterson twice and his new contact Greg Bourke once. Staff shortages were discussed and he found the links insightful. He felt that it was beneficial for him to stay linked to the same area.

PN said that he was linked with Rob Smith from the Apprenticeship Team. He found that he could triangulate information, understand the issues with EPAs and it was consistent with what Governors are hearing from the Executive Team. He said that safeguarding came up during his link visits and that he also visited an employer so that he had an understanding of what a stakeholder is looking for. The students that he met also provided honest feedback and the links are a great example of where Governors have impact.

ND reported that the Link Governor activity would tie in with the new Student Voice Strategy. She felt that there are benefits for some Governors to stay with the same link manager, particularly around HE. She said that would liaise with KR regarding who links with who next year. ND felt that the link activity demonstrates impact and this would be fed into the Strategy. She said that she needed to think about how this is fed back to students. PN asked that feedback from managers would be useful too. ND responded that she would give this some thought although anecdotally managers have been positive about the links.

ND/KR
July 2022

ND
July 2022

DFC queried the frequency of contacts with link managers. ND responded that a minimum of two contacts per year was expected.

The following is a summary of EA's report as she was unable to attend the meeting. Jim Thomas expressed some frustrations regarding room utilisation and EA felt it would be useful to open a conversation about this. They discussed the delivery of the Accommodation Strategy, also the tendering process and work involved. EA had a number of conversations with students and in general they said it was a great place to study and felt safe.

PN reported that Governors should see the Student Voice Strategy at the July Board meeting.

ND
July 2022

The Board noted the progress on Link Governor activity.

12. HORIZON SCANNING: CURRICULUM

ND Introduced the item by informing Governors that it was a complex picture in terms of curriculum and significant changes were coming up.

She presented a Powerpoint presentation (*attached to the minutes*) and informed Governors that in the last 15 years of Government policy there had been 23 different interventions. She said that the UK is 22nd in the EU in terms of spend on employee training and whilst 90% of employees have training, this is not of high value. MR noted that the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy made no difference. DP responded that ATL (the training company that the College previously ran) was evidence that they could previously provide lots of apprenticeships but when the 10% employer contribution was introduced these apprenticeships stopped.

ND informed Governors about the policy landscape since 2013 detailing the latest changes with the Skills & Post 16 Education Act which received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022. ND said that in terms of local needs the College will need to work with partners across Leeds whilst meeting regional and, in some cases, national needs. DW confirmed that in terms of positive destinations for students the College was doing very well. MR asked how this was mapped and ND responded that this was done as students leave the College. She noted that the Act made it clear that there needed to be more information about technical education in schools, which helps the College.

ND noted that the consultation on level 2 qualifications has the potential to completely transform the College's offering. She noted that the proposal is to start with construction and the withdrawal of the qualifications. She said the focus for the College is on Group 1 & Group 2. She stated that curriculum planning is taking place for the next year and year after but as yet we don't have much detail. She said that the response to the consultation is to 'slow down'.

ND informed Governors that in terms of the level 3 consultation 38 BTECS were being defunded of which we have 162 students studying these (which is 10% of our Study Programme students). She stated that there is an appeal process against this but only exam boards can do this. DW responded that the worry nationally is that the numbers on T Levels are very low and there has not been enough time to test these. His belief was that the Government should leave alone areas that are working well. MR said that he couldn't understand why this was happening and felt that young people would end up as NEETs (not in employment, education or training). ND said that individuals at the DfE writing the policy don't understand technical education as well as they understand GCSEs and A Levels. She stated that T levels involves 5 days of study whereas students are currently doing 3 days which allows them to work whilst studying. There is concern that some students will become NEET due to a lack of available qualifications for them to access. Statistically in Leeds, 1 in 7 people who become NEET at school leaving age die within 10 years. It is vital that we have the ability to deliver the right qualifications for all of our students, not just those who can do T levels. She felt the policy impacts more on the disadvantaged.

ND's final slide related to Ofsted and she noted that whilst intent in relation to the vocational curriculum was clear the College also needs to consider the wrap around support for students and ensure that we are clear about the intent for this too. DR noted that the other side of T levels is the employment capacity. ND responded that employers are feeding back to IfATE.

12. HORIZON SCANNING: CURRICULUM (continued)

DFC thanked ND for her presentation which she said was salutary. She noted the risk around apprenticeships and was concerned about the disabling impact on apprentices and questioned who champions construction. DW responded that CITB are still involved and the Construction Leadership Council but less prominent than previously. PN said that the presentation had been very insightful related to the curriculum planning over the next couple of years and this needed to be kept on Governors' radar. DP noted that these changes would also have an impact on finances. ND stated that the College needs to move to a 3-year plan to get in front of what's happening. DR responded that the College needs to think about level 4/5 qualifications as it is well placed to develop these. ND confirmed that level 3 is the natural progression and levels 4/5/6 are a potential opportunity.

DFC enquired whether the Executive Team was informing the local MPs and Mayor about the situation. DW responded that they work with the Mayor and she has visited the College twice. DW reiterated that only the exam board is allowed to appeal. DFC felt that Governors / the Executive Team should be actively campaigning and being visible so that the politicians understand and the message is heard. SW felt that employers should be involved too and that politicians are talking about it but not joining up the data. MR said that construction contributes 7-8% to the national GDP and believed that the sector doesn't get a fair deal. He said that the HBF (House Builders Federation) and CLC (Construction Leadership Council) talk about raising standards but these changes will turn people NEET.

DFC proposed that letters should be sent to local MPs inviting them to meet with Governors and DW/ND as young people will be falling through the cracks and local representatives should be rising to the challenge. MR felt that the AoC should take the campaign up. DPa noted that the situation was very real and happening soon. KN noted that during Covid Construction opened up first as it was seen as important which SW agreed with. DFC felt that a small working party may be useful to look at the concerns.

KR stated that her review of the Code of Good Governance would highlight some improvements needed and this included stakeholder engagement. DW stated that liaison with employers was good but the Executive Team would come up with a plan. PN asked DW/ND to bring initial ideas to the July Board.

DW/ND
12 July 2022

The Board noted the Horizon Scanning (Curriculum) update.

13. CYBER ESSENTIALS – NETWORK PORT GOVERNANCE

DP presented Item 13. He said that this is not a rebranding of Cyber Essentials from last year and it is a requirement of the certification scheme that College Governors discuss and approve the list of open ports on the network on an annual basis. He confirmed that 50% of these deal with the phone system and this would change when the phone system is changed next year. He reiterated that governors need to be aware of the threat and that risks are being managed. DPa clarified that various risks are caused by open ports. DP responded that half of these related to the phone system.

13. **CYBER ESSENTIALS – NETWORK PORT GOVERNANCE** (continued)

DR said that cyber essentials apply to every business but it doesn't consider that every business is not the same. PN asked if this was reflected on the risk register and DP confirmed that it was.

The Board discussed and approved the list of open ports on the network.

14. **COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS & FEEDBACK POLICY**

ND presented Item 14. The Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy has been reviewed and the only change is the inclusion of what will happen in the event of a complaint being made against the Principal and CEO. The process will be that the complaint is referred to the Governance Advisor and Clerk to the Corporation, who will support the Vice Chair to address the complaint. If this is not resolved then it would be referred to the Chair of the Board.

The Board approved the revised Compliments, Complaints & Feedback Policy.

15. **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

ND presented the Performance Management Report. She said that the College was on track to achieve the 10 CARs and that she was aware that lots of colleges had moved to this system. She noted that some students had reported harassment and that the SPOC survey had been changed to specifically ask students about harassment related to some protected characteristics. She said that there was a roll out of tutorials to address this which was important as 92% of our students are male and this will have a massive impact on them going out into the community and gaining employment. She informed Governors that the females that had raised concerns stated it was comments from males rather than anything very serious. ND stated that this was still unacceptable and although isolated there were pockets in the College that needed addressing. She noted that staff development was due to take place in relation to equality and informed Governors that Ofsted would focus on it because of our demographics but assured Governors that it was being dealt with. She noted that work placements were picking up and that predicted achievement was almost identical to last year. She felt that curriculum staff were being realistic in relation to this data but have also been cautious.

ND presented the proposed safeguarding report format to Governors for approval which covered the data that would be presented to the Board at each meeting next year. DFC asked if the data in relation to attendance and work experience could have a target against actual so that Governors could see improvement.

ND
Nov. 2022

DW said that if the predicted success rates come to fruition, then this will be a marvellous achievement. DFC said she had recently participated in an Ofsted Inspection of a large college and the behaviours / attitudes were impacted by the change from online learning at school to the in-person attendance at college. She asked if there were any reports Governors could have to see this within Leeds College of Building. ND said that this issue was seen at the College in the first term and some training for staff had been provided to try to deal with this. She confirmed that the immaturity of students and starting from a low base point was a common talking point.

15. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT (continued)

PN confirmed that the safeguarding topics were appropriate and that the Governor development day in February needed adding to the list for a safeguarding training session / update. DFC confirmed that the topics were appropriate.

The Board noted the Performance Management Reports and approved the format of the Safeguarding Report.

16. IMPACT OF DECISIONS MADE ON STUDENTS, STAFF & STAKEHOLDERS

PN asked Governors what they felt about the issues discussed today and impact of their decisions.

DPa stated that he felt that this Board meeting and others held recently were more meaningful. He felt that he does something and not simply attends. DPa continued that the Board meetings were getting better which he felt was partly due to PN's role as Chair and also that there was a positive impact on students. PN confirmed that he felt the Board did have an impact on students and staff. DFC said that the meeting had covered useful ground and everything that was talked about had the interests of the students at heart.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 12 July 2022 at 3.45pm at North Street.