

LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING

CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13 December 2022 at 4.00pm, Meeting Room 1, North Street / Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT:

Peter Norris (PN) Chair
Elaine Armitage (EA) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Nikki Davis (ND)
James Dunford (JD) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Wasim Feroze (WF) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Debbie Forsythe-Conroy (DFC) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Rachel Lindley (RL) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Katherine Naisbitt (KN)
CJ Montgomery (CM)
Michael Norton (MN)
Derek Packer (DPa)
Mark Roper (MR)
Matthew Shields (MSh)
Sarah Wilson (SW) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)

ATTENDANCE: 14 / 17 = 82% (KPI 87.5%) Cumulative attendance: 40 / 49 = 82%

IN ATTENDANCE:

David Pullein (DP) (Vice Principal – Finance & Resources)
Steve Connell (Assistant Principal – Study Programmes)
Rob Holmes (RH) (Assistant Principal – Quality & Student Experience)
Chris Tunningley (CT) (Assistant Principal – Adults & Higher Education)
Karen Rolinson (KR) (Director of Governance)
Nancy Fearnside (NF) (PA to Strategic Leadership Team)

**ACTION
BY AND
TARGET DATE**

1A) CHAIR, SUB COMMITTEE CHAIRS & SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR UPDATE

ND stated that two students have agreed to join the Board, CJ Montgomery as the Student Governor and Sufyaan Akhtar as Student Observer.

The Board approved the appointment of CJ Montgomery as Student Governor and Sufyaan Akhtar as Student Observer.

CJ Montgomery joined the meeting at this point and introductions were made.

PN noted that he had attended an update on the FE Accountability Changes. SW had also attended and the slides would be added to the Portal for information.

**KR
January 2023**

ND stated that she had attended the FE Commissioner Roadshow and the key issues were the accountability statement (which would need to be signed by 23 May 2023), curriculum and quality. Ofsted have introduced Skills Inspectors who would look at the skills plan. DFC noted from a Skills Inspector perspective that it needed to be clear that the College knew who it was interacting with, what the impact is and why we are working with them. She said that she was happy to work ND / RH in relation to this.

1A) CHAIR, SUB COMMITTEE CHAIRS & SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR UPDATE (continued)

Performance & Remuneration Committee

MR gave a brief update following the P&R Committee earlier today. The key items discussed were a review of Senior Postholder Performance and Targets update, approval of Remuneration Policy for Senior Postholders and cost of living payment for Senior Postholders.

Audit Committee

MSh gave a brief update following the Audit Committee meeting earlier today. The main item was a review of the College accounts; he confirmed that there had been no surprises following the external audit and RLe had presented the Audit Findings Report.

Safeguarding

RH stated that there had been no real changes on Safeguarding cases since the last meeting. He had met with CM previously and will be doing more verbal updates with CM and giving her a level of assurance through regular catchups. Termly reports would come to the Board.

RH noted that there have been some increased behaviour issues; there are 14 cases currently ongoing which SC would be dealing. DPa asked about the types of behaviour issues and SC gave examples of these (fighting, threatening, bullying, theft etc.). SC noted that a firm and consistent approach would be taken with all these issues, in line with the Behaviour Blueprint, which RH stated would be rolled out shortly.

PN stated that he would be setting up verbal 1:1 reviews with Governors shortly and would email individual Governors to set these up.

PN
January 2023

DP stated that the Board had previously agreed that the College should renegotiate the bank loan. He had hoped this would happen prior to the ONS reclassification announcement and whilst the College had all the paperwork in place for this to happen, the bank ran out of time to finalise this. The College is not allowed to renegotiate the loan now without the Government's approval. He informed the Board that the College would now need to wait until 2025 to renegotiate the bank loan.

1B) GOVERNOR UPDATES / HORIZON SCANNING

There were no items to report.

1C) PRINCIPAL UPDATE

ND reported the following:

- ONS reclassification of colleges – the College is now back in the public sector. A two-year consultation period would start to look at what regulations / consent were needed. There was no immediate impact on the College at the moment. Senior Postholder pay would need approval if this was above the threshold; this did not apply to LCB. Any potential borrowing would need approval. The longer-term plan would need to be monitored closely. Public sector funding regulations would need to be considered.

1C) PRINCIPAL UPDATE (continued)

- The College has been selected for an Ofsted Thematic Review on its transition programme to T Levels. This would take place between January & April 2023 and more information would be given as appropriate. Governor involvement may be needed. RH noted that this was not an Inspection, it was a Thematic Review; however it would follow a similar format to an Inspection (prior notice, 3 days of inspection) although no official feedback would be given and any findings published would be anonymised.

ND stated that DFC had raised concern regarding the Apprenticeship grade in the College SAR and she was meeting with RH in January to look at this again and if necessary RH would bring back to the Board in January. Governors need to be confident with the grades given. DFC responded that this information from ND was helpful and that she had gone through the rest of the SAR and she would discuss in January the grade of Apprenticeships with RH and the SAR in detail.

**RH
January 2023**

ND noted that Leeds City College have made a very generous offer to help the College by producing Revit drawings of North Street and proposals. LCB have supplied three Apprentices to Leeds City College from our University Centre and they were very happy with them. DPa suggested that our students could benefit from being involved in preparing Revit drawings etc. ND said that this was good collaboration and also noted the work being done with colleges in the City in relation to Careers.

ND noted that three students had won medals at the SkillBuild final. Zara Dupont won Gold in Plastering & Drywall Systems (she also won the Governors' Award at the College Award Ceremony); Aaron Brady won Bronze in Wall & Floor Tiling (he also won the stretch (timed) test); Kyran Sharlotte won Bronze in Roof Slating & Tiling (he also won the stretch test). Aeron Murray did not win a medal but was highly commended in Roof Slating & Tiling. PN noted that it was good to see females winning awards / medals.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Simon Bray, Caroline Meehan, Dave Russell, Sufyaan Akhtar and Liam Mogan.

3. DETERMINATION OF ATTENDEES / OBSERVERS

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

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

ND, DP and KR declared an interest in Item 17.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Ref Min 11 (22 March 2022)

Carried forward.

6.2 Ref Min 11 (22 March 2022)

Carried forward.

6.3 Ref Min 1A) (22 November 2022)

Carried forward.

6.4 Ref Min 1B)

Actioned. Letter has been sent.

6.5 Ref Min 5 (22 November 2022)

Carried forward.

6.6 Ref Min 7

Actioned. Agenda Item 12.

6.7 Ref Min 8

Actioned. Standing item on Board agenda from January 2023 onwards.

6.8 Ref Min 9)

Carried forward.

6.9 Ref Min 10

Actioned. Now moved to Leadership & Management.

6.10 Ref Min 10

Actioned. RH has arranged to meet with DFC on 11 January 2023 to discuss.

6.11 Ref Min 10

Carried forward.

6.12 Ref Min 14

Actioned. Agenda Item 10.

6.13 Ref Min 16

Actioned. Financial Dashboard on the Portal from 25 November 2022.

6.14 Ref Min 18

Actioned. Audit Committee Annual Report updated.

6.15 Ref Min 19

Actioned. Agenda Item 18.

7. AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT COVERING THE STATUTORY AND REGULARITY AUDIT FOR 2021/22

DP noted that Richard Lewis from RSM had presented the Audit Findings Report at the Audit Committee previously.

7. AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT COVERING THE STATUTORY AND REGULARITY AUDIT FOR 2021/22 (continued)

The auditors have now concluded all work on the audit. A number of control points had been raised and DP would pick up some issues with RSM in January 2023. The report was unmodified and this is the best opinion a College can get from an auditor.

The Regulatory audit had found no issues to report. The Going Concern had been considered previously and Governors need to be assured that as from today the College is a going concern. There are pressures on fuel / material costs etc. but no major concerns. The adjusted and unadjusted differences noted in the report were not material. Overall the report was very positive.

MSh noted that he had asked R Lewis about the unadjusted differences and how the College compared to other colleges. R Lewis had stated that most issues related to Apprenticeship funding which is clearly a high risk for the College. Management responses to recommendations / control points from internal / external audits are a standing item on Audit Committee and progress is monitored.

Understanding of the Apprenticeship funding had been raised at Audit and KR had suggested that a training session on the complexity of Apprenticeship funding could be carried out at the Governors' Development Event in February 2023.

KR
February 2023

The Board noted the Audit Findings Report for 2021/22.

8. MEMBERS REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 JULY 2022

DP reported that all Governors present at the Audit Committee had heard his presentation relating to the members report and financial statement for the year ending 31 July 2022. The presentation would be circulated to members outside the meeting for information.

DP
December
2022

DP noted that last year was the first full year back after COVID, there has been the ATL clawback and the change from Apprenticeship Frameworks to Standards had resulted in the EPAs falling into this year so there were no Apprenticeship Standards achievements in last year.

DP noted that the underlying position of the College is very strong, although staffing issues were acknowledged.

PN passed on the Board's thanks to DP and the finance team for their work during the year.

The Board approved the Members Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2022 for signing off by the Chair and the Principal.

9. LETTERS OF REPRESENTATION 2021/22

9a) LCB Group Consolidated Accounts 9b) LCB Regularity Assurance Engagement

DP noted that both letters had been considered at Audit Committee and recommended to the Board for signing by the Chair. The letters confirm that the Board guaranteed all required information was supplied to the auditors.

The Board approved the Letters of Representation (LCB Group Consolidated Accounts / LCB Regularity Assurance Engagement) for signing by the Chair and the Principal.

10. PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE

JW joined the meeting for this item and gave a presentation outlining the current position with the People Strategy. JW gave an overview of the items still being progressed under the key strategies.

Leadership & Organisational Development

- Review CPD SEED time introduced in September (Friday afternoons are used predominantly for teaching staff).
- Effective CPD delivered – ongoing.
- Promote industrial updating (more work required).
- Digital Skills Development – ongoing.

Recruitment & Retention

- Recruitment of Apprentices (in College) – to be reviewed.

Reward & Recognition

- Non-cash rewards under review.
- Mentoring to be explored.
- Rewards to celebrate success – to be reviewed (this has been done previously with mixed success).

Engagement Inclusion & Culture

- Explore further opportunities for promotion of inclusivity.

Health, Safety & Wellbeing

- Deliver programmes / promote health activities.
- Provide a wellbeing hub.

Challenges

- Recruitment – across College and within HR team (currently 50% down on staff, which is affecting day to day provision).
- Pressure on salaries.
- 20% vacancy factor (44 jobs are currently in the recruitment process at various stages).
- Spike in casework.
- Changes to holiday pay legislation.
- Workforce Data & System management.
- Policy Management.
- Payroll Manager retiring in May; new manager in place and being trained.

10. PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE (continued)

The members of the HR Team were noted. JW stated that an L&D Co-ordinator has been appointed; the Deputy Head of HR post is still vacant.

DP stated that this was just a flavour of what is happening not only in HR but also a snapshot across the College where these issues are replicated.

WF congratulated JW on the achievements made in spite of all the challenges. He asked how the team are being supported and if team members went off absent or left it would be a business continuity challenge. JW stated that she meets with the team weekly and if necessary alternative work is given. She noted that anyone could become ill and this could cause problems. WF asked what was being done to mitigate any impact. JW stated that she shares concerns with DP weekly and issues are picked up through business continuity. DP emphasised that everything possible is being done to fill vacancies, but people are not there and this is across the board. Staff do not have spare capacity but using agency staff is not the answer.

KN stated that everyone needed to be kept up to date on day-to-day HR activities. JW noted that, if necessary, advice can be sought from the College's Solicitors. JW emphasised that the payroll will still happen. DP noted that external experts could be brought in if necessary. DP emphasised that we need to fill the vacancies and start to move forward.

SW agreed that the HR Team have done a great job even with depleted numbers. She asked how the 20% vacancies compared to last year. JW could not give an exact figure at the moment. SW asked if recruitment is an issue across the board. DP agreed that this was the case and support / curriculum areas are all difficult to recruit to.

RL noted that there was a remarkable amount of green on the presentation. One of the biggest risks the College is facing is lack of people and she felt this needed deeper considerations and radical actions to address (eg buy in services, reach out to other colleges, automation of processes). DP emphasised that every possible action is being explored and it is not just about salary. The key priority for the College is to get a full team in each area.

DFC echoed everything mentioned. The report is helpful, but she felt it was depressing. She acknowledged this is a national problem. She emphasised that the College receives income based on learners and has to find a solution so that hopefully any impact on learners is negligible.

DPa noted the problems this report presented. He asked if a spread of talents within the HR Team is already in place. DP noted that the College has been proactive and brought in someone early to replace the Payroll Manager so training can take place. JW noted that outsourcing recruitment comes at a massive cost. Options are being looked at, but nothing is a straightforward fix.

ND noted that time constraints are a key issue, there is not enough time to look at doing things differently and this is a national issue. There is no simple fix by any measure. SLT are looking at vacancies when they arise to see if anything different can be done. We need to identify the crunch points and look at fresh thoughts after the Christmas break.

10. PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE (continued)

SC noted that vacancies had been discussed in detail at the recent British Association of Construction Heads (BACH) conference but no conclusion had been reached. This issue is across the board.

SW noted that skills shortages are also rife in the private sector and they also face challenges. She said newly qualified salaries had gone up by 20% in the last six months.

EA agreed recruitment is a key issue. Staff need to be supported appropriately with an action plan to pick up critical tasks. She emphasised that the College needs to be mindful of individuals.

RH stated that the College does have a silo working environment and we need to get away from this. Processes need to be looked at to see if we can improve any of these. A culture of wellbeing and kindness etc. would help the retention of staff but this was a broader piece of work. He hoped that these discussions have provided a level of assurance that the College is looking at this.

RL asked if there were any themes affecting the spike in casework, eg stress. JW stated that there were no particular themes, but issues do take time to resolve. The majority of issues have been resolved through good management and good practice.

JD noted that they also face similar challenges at his school, both in support and admin areas. They have looked at advertising in community centres to try and attract staff with some success but he acknowledged that salary levels are an issue.

JW noted that the College has worked previously with the NHS on a partnered Apprenticeship for Facilities staff but not one person turned up.

DP noted that as an Anchor Institution, the College may have access to available people through any restructuring exercises taking place in other institutions.

DFC felt that the College should keep monitoring the impact and think outside the box. Governors need to keep on top of this.

PN thanked JW for her presentation, and all acknowledged the challenges. PN felt this should be brought back to the Board next month. KR noted that JW was already on the agenda to report on staffing figures.

JW
January 2023

The Board noted the People Strategy update.

11. REMUNERATION POLICY FOR SENIOR POSTHOLDERS

The revised Remuneration Policy for Senior Postholders had been reviewed by the Performance & Remuneration Committee and recommended to the Board for approval, subject to an addendum regarding the Senior Pay Controls.

The Board approved the revised Remuneration Policy for Senior Postholders.

12. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

RH noted that this is the first EDI Report for a couple of years and provides a comprehensive overview of the College's commitment to EDI. Staffing figures are not yet included due to the staffing issue in HR. A piece of work still needs to be done on this Report to ascertain how it ties into the QIP.

RH had spoken to WF outside the meeting and asked him to be a critical eye on this. The recommendations from WF so far have been very strong and he would be meeting WF again in the New Year to discuss the recommendations and move these forward.

RH would work with the College's Graphic Designer to produce a report that can be published. He confirmed that the Report had gone through the EDI Committee and work would be progressed through this Committee.

PN thanked WF for his assistance and comments. The key is looking ahead and concentrating on actions.

WF noted that the Report reflects the impact of COVID., however the inequalities existed before and needs to be dealt with. He felt it was a good Report that just needs refining. RH stated that measuring progress would be down to the EDI Committee.

DPa felt that it was an excellent document and an interesting read. He felt that the Report is clearly a draft and approval may be premature. RH acknowledged that staffing data is not yet included but he was looking at getting a version published next year. He planned to bring this back to the January meeting with the QIP.

RL concurred with DPa. She was happy the Report was making clear statements on the College's offer but felt it would be better to have all the staffing details in. She also queried whether we should be setting clearer targets.

RH stated that the Report would be used to formulate what the College needs to do moving forward. He acknowledged that the College is very heavily male dominated. A meeting has already taken place with National Women in Construction to see how we can set actual achievable targets.

RL queried the 10% disability figure. RH would look into this and respond back to RL outside the meeting.

RH
January 2023

The Board approved the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Annual Report 2021/22 in principle, with the Report coming back to the next Board meeting.

RH
January 2023

13. RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY & STRATEGY

DP presented the revised Risk Management Policy & Strategy, which had been considered by the Audit Committee earlier and recommended to the Board for approval. RL had raised the question of the College's Risk Appetite and this would be looked at by the Audit Committee in March 2023.

The Board approved the Risk Management Policy & Strategy.

14. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY

DP presented the revised Treasury Management Policy, which had been considered by the Audit Committee earlier and recommended to the Board for approval.

The Board approved the Treasury Management Policy.

15. VALUE FOR MONEY POLICY

DP presented the reviewed Value for Money Policy, which had been considered by the Audit Committee earlier and recommended to the Board for approval.

The Board approved the reviewed Value for Money Policy.

16. TUITION FEE POLICY 2023/24

DP presented Item 16 (Tuition Fees Policy for 2023/24) and gave a brief overview. In the current economic climate the SLT feel that tuition fees need to be increased by 5%, with the normal agreement that the Principal has overall authority to amend this where market forces dictate.

MR asked if the ONS reclassification of colleges would affect tuition fees etc. DP stated that there would be no impact at the moment.

The Board approved the Tuition Fee Policy for 2023/24.

17. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

See attached notes.

18. GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

KR presented Item 18 (Governance Improvement Action Plan). PN said that this was the cumulation of a lot of work over many months and a great team effort. KR noted that actions have been pulled from the Self-Assessment and broken down into areas. The plan was RAG rated on progress to date.

RL felt that the plan was brilliant and congratulated KR for bringing this together. RL queried the Red RAG rated actions and timelines. KR stated that the plan would be brought back on a termly basis to monitor progress. It would also be discussed at Search & Governance Committee.

KR
March 2023

The Board approved the Governance Improvement Action Plan.

19. IMPACT OF DECISIONS MADE ON STUDENTS, STAFF AND STAKEHOLDERS

PN stated that the EDI Report, People Strategy update and finances were the key issues discussed. Items to be discussed in January 2023 included KPIs, SAR/QIP, Estates Strategy, staffing figures and review of Corporate strategies.

PN thanked everyone for their contribution and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 31 January 2023 at 4.00pm (North Street, Meeting Room 1).