

LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING

CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 31 January 2023 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)
Rachel Lindley (RL) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Caroline Meehan (CM)
CJ Montgomery (CJM)
Katherine Naisbitt (KN)
Derek Packer (DPa)
Dave Russell (DR) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Matthew Shields (MSh) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Sarah Wilson (SW)

ATTENDANCE: 12 / 17 = 71% (KPI 87.5%) Cumulative attendance: 52 / 66 = 79%

IN ATTENDANCE:

David Pullein (DP) (Vice Principal – Finance & Resources)
Steve Connell (SC) (Assistant Principal – Study Programmes)
Liam Mogan (LM) (Assistant Principal – Data & Employer Engagement) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Sufyaan Akhtar (SA) (Student Observer)
Karen Rolinson (KR) (Director of Governance)
Nancy Fearnside (NF) (PA to Strategic Leadership Team)

**ACTION
BY AND
TARGET DATE**

1A) CHAIR & SUB COMMITTEE CHAIRS

PN noted that he had attended the AoC's Chairs call on 16 January 2023. The main issue raised was the ONS reclassification of colleges. A number of colleges reported that they were struggling with bank loans due to the reclassification. A national lobby is taking place on 1 March 2023 in London and ND would be attending this, meeting local MPs etc.

PN noted that some colleges are already meeting prospective parliamentary candidates prior to the next election. ND stated that Rachel Reeves MP, would be visiting the College in April 2023.

PN noted that the ESFA Annual Strategic Conversation with ESFA / FE Commissioner representatives was taking place on 1 February 2023. Feedback would be given to Governors as appropriate.

**PN
March 2023**

PN noted that Calderdale College had been inspected recently and had received some Outstanding grades, with Good overall. He and KR would be visiting them on Thursday to share best practice.

**PN/KR
March 2023**

ND stated that she had shared Hilary Benn's response to her recent letter to MPs and she would pick up on this.

1A) CHAIR & SUB COMMITTEE CHAIRS UPDATE (continued)

JD had shared details regarding changes in legislation around provider access. Schools must provide at least six encounters with approved providers of apprenticeships and technical education for all their students (two encounters for Year 8 or 9, two for Year 10 or 11 and two for Year 12 or 13). He said this gave colleges opportunities to engage with a range of schools in the region. PN asked JD to keep members updated as appropriate.

PN thanked Governors for engaging in the 1:1 calls recently. These had been very interesting and very positive. Three key messages had come through clearly: Quality and Curriculum, Staffing and Apprenticeships (processes and the 12-week reviews).

ND stated that discussions had taken place regarding the Apprenticeship grade in the SAR. The Apprenticeship grade would be changed and because we are so far in the year the SAR would be parked now. An updated position statement would be given to Governors in March 2023. ND thanked DFC for her input and meeting with RH.

**RH
March 2023**

PN noted that no sub-committee meetings had taken place, therefore no updates were available.

1B) GOVERNOR UPDATES / HORIZON SCANNING

ND reported that MR had chaired the recent HE Employer Advisory Board and very good feedback had been received.

1C) PRINCIPAL UPDATE

ND stated that the TEF submission had been shared with Governors and she thanked DR for his help on this. The application was submitted on 18 January 2023.

ND reported that she, LM and CT had attended the WYCA Strategic Delivery Agreement meeting which took place on 20 January 2023. The meeting had been useful and generally positive. She stated that the College has a good relationship with WYCA.

ND stated that she had attended Evershed's ONS update. She noted that the DfE had issued guidelines for colleges today and there were more controls than previously.

SW joined the meeting at this point.

ND noted that LSIPs were moving slowly. They were surveying employers and providers locally and the results would be available in March 2023. Priorities would need to be agreed by May 2023 and an annual review would be carried out in March 2024.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Simon Bray, Michael Norton, Debbie Forsythe-Conroy, Wasim Feroze, Mark Roper, Rob Holmes and Chris Tunningley.

3. DETERMINATION OF ATTENDEES / OBSERVERS

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

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Staff members declared an interest in Item 9.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 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)
Actioned – Agenda Item 13D.

6.4 Ref Min 5 (22 November 2022)
Carried forward.

6.5 Ref Min 9 (22 November 2022)
Actioned – Agenda Item 11.

6.6 Ref Min 10 (22 November 2022)
Actioned – Agenda Item 12.

6.7 Ref Min 1A)
Actioned - slides added to the Portal.

6.8 Ref Min 1A)
Actioned – Governors emailed.

6.9 Ref Min 1C)
Actioned – update to be provided under Agenda Item 12.

6.10 Ref Min 7
Actioned – session to be delivered by RSM on 28 February 2023.

6.11 Ref Min 8
Actioned – issued with Board minutes and available on the Board Portal.

6.12 Ref Min 10
Deferred to March Board meeting.

6.13 Ref Min 12
RH has contacted RL via email regarding this.

6. MATTERS ARISING (continued)

6.14 Ref Min 12

Actioned – Agenda Item 13.

6.15 Ref Min 18

Carried forward.

7. A) ESTATES STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

DP stated that the summer estates work had been completed and the grant of £700k had been utilised at North Street with the refurbishment to the Reception and other works. The College had match funded this with approximately £130k. The College has received two further grants: £278k Condition Grant and £111k Energy Efficiency Grant. He is currently in talks with Leeds City Council regarding the District Heat Network project to extend this to the College which will help significantly with our carbon footprint.

The extraction issues at SB2 are still ongoing. The Administrators for Clugston (Acasta) have contacted the College requesting information and this is being dealt with. SW asked whether the Administrators were looking at the retention monies only. DP responded that they are information gathering at the moment and it is early days.

DP noted that Leeds City College (Luminate Group) were working closely with the College on the Master Plan for North Street. Details would be brought to Governors as appropriate. KN queried why Leeds City College were helping and if they expected anything in return. DP explained the situation previously regarding the merger of various colleges in Leeds. Leeds City College are working in collaboration with the College and DP did not feel this was an issue. SC noted that Leeds City College are also collaborating on the welcome days / IAG etc. PN noted that the collaboration with local providers would be a good point for Ofsted.

JD stated that he had attended a Leeds Learning Alliance breakfast event recently and a key priority is improving collaboration across Leeds.

DP noted that the College is also collaborating closely with the Leeds Anchors Network.

DP noted that the Environment & Sustainability Policy had been approved by SLT and a Carbon Management Plan would be brought to the March Board meeting for approval by Governors.

**DP
28 March 2023**

7. B) UPDATE ON STAFFING / HR CHALLENGES

DP reported that turnover of staff was slightly down on the previous year. The number of vacant posts had reduced from 47 pre-Christmas to 35 currently. The College has recently recruited to some difficult posts including in Electrical where a female Electrical lecturer has been appointed, together with a female Workshop Facilitator. However, there are lots of other posts that still need recruiting to.

7. B) UPDATE ON STAFFING / HR CHALLENGES (continued)

DP noted that sickness was concerning. He said there was some long-term sickness and also some staff supporting partners who were very ill. There has been an increase in mental health issues and strategies to deal with this are being discussed by SLT. The increase in sickness was also partly due to COVID now being counted as sickness.

DP stated that recruitment of new staff and retention is still very difficult, as was pay issues. However, this was not unique to the College, there are problems nationally.

PN queried whether there were any high-risk areas. DP stated that all of it is high risk and nothing sits in isolation. He said fundamentally getting people in front of classes was priority. He felt that there had been some improvement in recruitment recently. ND stated that currently no classes have had to be cancelled due to lack of staff but they were experiencing difficulties in specialist areas, for example quantity surveying. SC stated that he is attending an ETF Leadership course and similar topics have been discussed there. SW said she had heard 5-year qualified quantity surveyors were being paid £500 per day.

KN asked whether more colleges could merge in the future. In industry if they cannot recruit, they acquire. She queried if this was something the College could do. DP stated that as a specialist college the College is not at that point yet. If the country goes into recession this will be a major factor. He confirmed that this issue is on the Risk Register and on the Governors' radar. SW asked if we looked at employing students; SC confirmed that this is done where possible.

DPa queried the hot spots, ie English / Maths, and asked whether these issues related to students or staff. DP stated that there were no staff issues, students were just not interested in doing any more English / Maths, following years at school.

PN asked the Student Governor and Student Observer whether they had felt any impact due to the staffing issues. CJM felt students on higher level courses had potentially not been considered when staff are not here, and the timetables had to be switched. This had a knock-on effect on their lives when they had other commitments outside of College. CJM asked about students being employed as he wasn't aware of this. SC responded that it had happened in Construction Crafts where students had been employed as Learning Facilitators and then as a Lecturer. ND noted that some Awarding Bodies ask for a number of years industrial experience.

SA stated that having done English / Maths for 11 years at school, students at College wanted to learn something different. DP stated that unfortunately English / Maths is a condition of funding and had to be done.

SC stated that he had carried out an exercise recently and students were very open about not wanting to do English / Maths. The benefit to students in future employment needed to be emphasised but SC agreed that this was very difficult. He noted that some colleges have stated that if students do not do English / Maths then they could not do the vocational side.

KN acknowledged that this did not just apply to LCB but was Government led nationally.

7. **B) UPDATE ON STAFFING / HR CHALLENGES** (continued)

SC stated that the new Head of Maths (Costina Babanau) was settling in well and he would be meeting with the Maths team to try to take the focus off achieving Grade 4 and focus more on progress.

SW asked if there were any minimum level requirements for construction sites; SC stated that there were no minimum requirements on sites. The University Centre / SBS have higher level entry criteria, compared to Construction Crafts who take all levels / abilities. He acknowledged that some students without Maths / English have gone on to have very successful careers.

CM asked about EHCP / SEND students. ND stated that we do have staff within Inclusive Learning Service (ILS) in a variety of roles that support these students and there is unfortunately an issue with staffing in that area. The College is seeing increasing numbers coming through with such issues. The demand for rooms due to 1:1 teaching has also increased.

DP noted that the Deputy Head of HR post has now been filled and she would be starting on Monday 6 February 2023. A full staffing update would be given to the Board in March 2023.

DP/JW
28 March 2023

7. **C) UPDATE ON SMARTLOG TRAINING**

DP reported that the Health, Safety & Environment Manager produces a termly report for SLT and any issues are sent to appropriate managers for them to action.

The Board noted the Estates Strategy Progress Report, Update on Staffing / HR Challenges and Update on Smartlog Training.

8. **ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT**

ND presented Item 8. This is a new document emerging from funding and accountability reforms. Part 1 is the annual Accountability Framework and Part 2 is the annual Accountability Statement which needs to be submitted by 31 May 2023 and will need to be signed off by the Board prior to this.

The current document is still draft and requires information from the LSIP to be added, which should be available in March 2023. The College's three core priorities outlined in the Agreement are people, processes and behaviour.

DR congratulated ND on the Accountability Agreement which he felt reads really well and credible. He supported the document.

ND noted that Governors may want to consider the possible duplication with other College documents, for example the Strategic Plan, as the Agreement develops.

SW was struggling with the concept of this Agreement and queried whether funding was dependent on this. ND stated that the College is required to have an Accountability Agreement and to submit an annual Accountability Statement for funding. She said that the College curriculum meets skills shortages, so she did not foresee any problems.

8. **ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT** (continued)

Any feedback should be sent through to ND.

ALL
28 Feb. 2023

The Board approved the Accountability Agreement in draft format, subject to any feedback from Governors.

9. **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**

See attached notes.

10. **SUBCONTRACTOR MID-YEAR & PARTNERSHIPS REPORT**

LM presented Item 10 and gave a brief overview, noting that nothing much had changed since last year. The College is still working with NG Bailey and two new subcontractors have been recruited for them this year.

EAS Mechanical are the largest single subcontractor. There have been no new starts since 2020/21 and they can now recruit apprentices directly to their provision, so this is reducing over time.

LM noted that the Project Manager is very diligent and manages the subcontractors very well.

The Board noted the Subcontractor Mid-year & Partnerships Report.

11. **2022/23 ANNUAL KPI'S PROGRESS UPDATE**

ND presented Item 11 and gave a brief overview. The curriculum related KPIs include the demographics of the College and will be analysed below headline level as data becomes available.

An area to note is the reduction in satisfaction ratings in the SPOCs. The number of questions have been reduced and the two KPI questions of "I would recommend the College" and "I feel safe" have a lower response rate. However, it is believed that this now correlates with student feedback and the changes to the questions now allow Quality to focus in on improvements.

ND noted that retention across the College is better than last year.

The Board noted the 2022/23 Annual KPI's Progress Update.

12. **QIP PROGRESS UPDATE**

ND presented Item 12. She stated that there was nothing particular to report / flag at the moment. Retention was currently good. Appendix A, the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), showed progress to date. ND acknowledged that the conversation with DFC regarding the SAR / QIP had been very helpful.

ND noted that a number of projects will come into fruition next year (eg ID cards etc.). An update on progress will be given at the next Board meeting.

RH
28 March 2023

EA clarified expected outcomes and the challenge in getting the expected outcomes. ND noted that loops will be closed as we go through the academic year. It was felt that at risk students should be RAG rated at the beginning of the year and the College needed to ensure support interventions were put in place as required.

12. QIP PROGRESS UPDATE (continued)

PN acknowledged that the QIP was work in progress to show the Strengths and Areas for Improvement.

The Board noted the QIP Progress Report.

13. PROGRESS UPDATES

A) ADULTS & HIGHER EDUCATION

ND gave a brief update on behalf of CT. There are currently 93 Degree Apprentices on programme at the moment, compared to 9 last year. The HE Employer Advisory Board had been chaired by MR and good feedback received. Full-time Level 3 students had the opportunity to use VR headsets through the CONVERT project. The team are currently exploring ways to maximise the Adult Education Budget. Additional student successes had already been shared with Governors.

B) STUDY PROGRAMMES

SC reported that the current retention rate is 98% (compared to 96% last year). Red RAG rated students are now being looked at to ascertain if they will achieve. Applications for next year are strong, 1,080 to date, with 627 offers made. The first Welcome Day would be taking place on Friday 10 February 2023.

The new Head of Maths, Costina Babanau, is settling in well and SC has a meeting planned with the Maths team to go through the results from last year etc.

SA left the meeting at this point.

SC explained that the CONVERT project involved the use of digital technology. Virtual headsets were used to give students experience of flying drones, erecting scaffolding and constructing a building. There had been some challenges IT wise but overall the project had been a success and feedback from the students was fantastic. A business case would be produced for CONVERT with a view to the College keeping this kit. The College's target had been 278 and over 340 students had taken part. Two other pieces of virtual reality kit had been provided: wood-machining (unfortunately no code was provided and therefore this could not be utilised) and paint spraying. 45 students had used the paint spraying kit and feedback had been good.

SC stated that the majority of disciplinaries had been dealt with and unfortunately some students had lost their place at the College.

KN asked why applications were up this year. SC noted that the application system had been opened earlier this year and the Welcome Days have been successful. Marketing / social media campaigns have been good and there has been improved school liaison. SC explained that it was a combination of all these things.

13. PROGRESS UPDATES (continued)

B) STUDY PROGRAMMES (continued)

KN queried the processing of applications and whether it was on a first come first served basis. SC noted that Construction Crafts allow enrolments there and then unless students had an EHCP etc. Enrolments in the University Centre / SBS are dependent on exam results which come out in August. KN suggested that the dropout could be reduced if the College was more selective.

KN noted that the virtual reality kits were good but was this truly beneficial to students who will be going out on site into real life jobs. SC stated that this was supplemental to the actual teaching / delivery on the programmes and students enjoyed the interaction. KN acknowledged that it engaged students and hopefully helps retain them.

C) DATA & EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

LM stated that the Curriculum Planning process was being changed this year and had been launched on Friday 27 January 2023. Discussions had taken place regarding what the College should be looking at moving forward. Employer breakfast events will be taking place over the next couple of months.

LM noted that Apprenticeship numbers this year were back to pre-COVID levels and well above other providers. The vast majority of Apprentices were on the system and drawing down funding.

LM stated that he would be giving a presentation on the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework at the Governors' Development event on 28 February 2023.

Apprenticeship processes / procedures have been overhauled and are now being rolled out. He acknowledged that it would be a challenge to ensure that 12-week reviews were carried out for all Apprentices. LM stated that the WBL structure / responsibilities / workload are currently being looked at.

There is a large number of EPAs still in the Gateway. This is due to there not being enough assessors, the EPA does not yet exist, space / logistical issues etc. LM stated that the EPA process needs to be more streamlined.

PN noted that the 12-week reviews were on all the Governors' radar.

D) QUALITY & STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Safeguarding – Development Plan Progress

ND stated that the Safeguarding Development Plan had been placed on the portal for information. An update would be given at the next meeting in March 2023. She noted that two Governors still needed to confirm that they had read parts of KCSiE and asked that they do this as soon as possible.

**RH
28 March 2023
Governors
14 Feb. 2023**

EDI Report & Action Plan 2022/23 update

ND stated that the EDI Report & Action Plan is being progressed and a publishable version should be available in March 2023. She thanked WF for his involvement in EDI.

13. **PROGRESS UPDATES** (continued)

D) **QUALITY & STUDENT EXPERIENCE** (continued)

PN noted that risks were identified with mitigation in the Safeguarding Development Plan and that the progress / actions within the Plan should be RAG rated.

RH
28 March 2023

The Board noted the Progress Updates.

14. **LCB LOAN FACILITY**

DP presented Item 14. The Board had previously agreed that SLT could enter into discussions with NatWest with a view to refinancing the existing loan facility. Unfortunately, despite the College's best efforts, the renegotiation was not completed in time. Following reclassification, the Department for Education have made it very clear that existing loans should be paid to termination. SLT therefore recommend that the refinancing of the loan is terminated and existing terms continue until 2025.

DP suggested that the College could consider repaying some more of the loan off at some point. He emphasised that the College needs to ensure that the Bank Covenants are not breached.

DP
March 2023

The Board approved the termination of the refinancing of the loan facility.

15. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

DP presented the Management Accounts for December 2022. The November 2022 Management Accounts have been placed on the Portal for information.

DP stated that a number of KPIs were Amber rated; this was mainly due to paying some of the Bank loan off. He said there was positivity about the figures flowing into next year and the underlying numbers were really good.

DP noted that the 2022/23 budget on the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure was (£895,000), however the forecast outturn was better than forecast at (£606,000). A number of the EPAs will achieve in this year which will potentially increase income further.

The Board noted the Management Accounts for December 2023.

16. **IMPACT OF DECISIONS MADE ON STUDENTS, STAFF AND STAKEHOLDERS**

PN stated that staffing issues / pay award, Estates update etc. were the key issues discussed which had an impact on staff and students.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 28 March 2023 at 4.00pm (North Street, Meeting Room 1).

The Governors' Development event will take place on Tuesday 28 February 2023 from 8.30am (North Street, Meeting Room 1).

PN noted that MR would be resigning as a Governor from the end of this academic year but he would still continue to Chair the HE Employer Advisory Board. This means that a Vice Chair would be required; if anyone was interested they should contact PN to discuss further. Alternatively, the Search & Governance Committee would be asked to progress this.

**ALL
March 2023**

KR reported that this would be her last year at College and she would be retiring at the end of this academic year. This would be discussed at the Search & Governance Committee in March 2023. ND noted that the Committee structure had been discussed and various options were being looked at. Further details would be given at the Governors' Development Event.

PN thanked KR for her contribution and hard work during her time as Director of Governance.