

LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING

CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 23 May 2023 at 4.00pm, Meeting Room 1, North Street / Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT:

Mark Roper (MR) – Chair
Elaine Armitage (EA)
Nikki Davis (ND)
James Dunford (JD)
Wasim Feroze (WF) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
CJ Montgomery (CJM)
Katherine Naisbitt (KN)
Peter Norris (PN)
Derek Packer (DPa)
Dave Russell (DR) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)
Matthew Shields (MSh)
William Wallace (WW)
Sarah Wilson (SW) (*attended via Microsoft Teams*)

ATTENDANCE: 13 / 17 = 76% (KPI 80%) Cumulative attendance: 79 / 99 = 80%

IN ATTENDANCE:

David Pullein (DP) (Vice Principal – Finance & Resources)
Steve Connell (SC) (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)

ACTION
BY AND
TARGET DATE

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

MR thanked PN for his contribution as Chair of the Corporation and noted that they were big shoes to fill. He confirmed that PN was remaining on the Corporation as a Governor.

MR informed Governors that an election had recently taken place for a Staff Governor and William Wallace, who is a Lecturer in the Plumbing Department, has received the most votes.

The Board confirmed William Wallace as a Staff Governor.

WW joined the meeting and all present introduced themselves.

MR notified the Board that DPa had decided to leave the Corporation at the end of July 2023 after five years as a Governor. MR thanked DPa for his support.

MR also informed Governors that CM was currently unwell and would be taking a short leave of absence from the Board for the rest of the academic year. She would relinquish her safeguarding duties for the time being and JD would kindly pick these up in the interim.

The Board noted CM's short leave of absence for the remainder of the academic year.

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

MR stated that due to DPa leaving and the increase in Governors that recruitment will soon take place for up to 3 new Governors. He also informed Governors that he would carry out one to one reviews with Governors in July 2023 and KR would send out individual self-assessment forms in preparation for this.

KR
30 June 2023

1B) PRINCIPAL UPDATE

ND provided Governors with an update in relation to some recent success in recruiting staff. She confirmed that appointments had been made to the Director of Governance; 2 x Head of Behaviour & Engagement; Head of Marketing & Student Recruitment; Estates Manager. She said that the College had received some good applications from high quality candidates. She felt that there were still some issues recruiting to some teaching vacancies but hoped the tide was turning with better quality and quantity applications being received.

ND noted that Shelagh Legrave, the FE Commissioner, would visit the College on 26th June 2023 for up to 1.5 hours and it was hoped she would meet with students if possible.

ND informed the Board that the College had been shortlisted for training provider of the year at the West Yorkshire Apprenticeship Awards which were being held on 24th May 2023 alongside 4 students who had also been shortlisted in a variety of categories.

ND stated that the UKREiiF event was held in Leeds the previous week and was very well attended. The College was well represented at the event and ND had been on a Panel with Zara Dupont (Award winning dry lining student) and Tracy Brabin (West Yorkshire Mayor).

ND noted that the College had students placed in all categories at the recent Guild of Bricklayers event that was held at the College. She also confirmed that she had circulated a link with a video regarding the WoW Barn noting what a great success it had been. The College had received lots of great publicity with some good outcomes including short courses held at the College and lots of free PPE.

1C) GOVERNOR UPDATES / HORIZON SCANNING

MR informed Governors that he had chaired an Employer Advisory Board recently which had been a good meeting.

DR noted that he had been to the WoW Barn Andi Oliver event, which had been an impressive event with huge attendance. He felt that it was good to see this developing and the goodwill it was generating.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Debbie Forsythe-Conroy, Mick Norton, Caroline Meehan, Rachel Lindley, Sufyaan Akhtar and Liam Mogan.

3. DETERMINATION OF OBSERVERS / ATTENDEES

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

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Ref Min 11 (summary of action points 22 March 2022)

This will be included in any future salary assessments across the College.

6.2 Ref Min 11 (summary of action points 22 March 2022)

Carried forward.

6.3 Ref Min 5 (summary of action points 5 November 2022)

Carried forward.

6.4 Ref Min 14 (summary of action points 31 January 2023)

Carried forward.

6.5 Ref Min 1A)

Actioned – the nomination process for a Staff Governor commenced in April 2023 and an election followed in May 2023.

6.6 Ref Min 1B)

Actioned – ND informed relevant Governors.

6.7 Ref Min 6

Actioned – the two remaining Governors have completed the declaration.

6.8 Ref Min 8

Deferred to July Board meeting when the People Strategy is also being considered.

6.9 Ref Min 9

Carried forward.

6.10 Ref Min 9

Carried forward.

6.11 Ref Min 10

On July's agenda – any further feedback to ND is welcomed.

6. MATTERS ARISING (continued)

6.13 Ref Min 12

Actioned – Agenda Item 20.

6.14 Ref Min 12

Actioned – Agenda Item 20.

6.15 Ref Min 14

Actioned – Agenda Item 13c).

6.16 Ref Min 14

Actioned – Agenda Item 13d).

6.17 Ref Min 15B)

RH would arrange to meet with DFC when both are free to discuss.

6.18 Ref Min 15C)

Actioned – meeting arranged with key Governors prior to May's Board meeting.

6.19 Ref Min 16A)

Actioned – Agenda Item 13.

6.20 Ref Min 16C)

Actioned – issued with Board minutes of 28 March 2023.

6.21 Ref Min 16E)

Carried forward.

7. STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

DP informed Governors that the Staff Development Policy had been reviewed annually as required and the changes proposed were cosmetic.

The revised Staff Development Policy was approved by the Board.

8. ESTATES STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

DP provided an update to Governors in relation to the Estates Strategy progress. He said that the strategy was moving at pace and in addition to the progress highlighted in the report the College had submitted a SALIX Bid and had met with Leeds City Council in relation to linking into the Carbon Exchange Network. DP said that this would not necessarily save lots of money but it would significantly decrease our carbon footprint. He noted that the lights were being replaced at North Street with LED lights. He also confirmed that a new Head of Estates was starting at the College on 5th June 2023. He felt that the £850k of grants will achieve a lot in terms of what we wanted to do with the aim being that North Street Campus has parity of esteem with the South Bank Campus.

DP said that a bid would be developed in relation to an extension to the front of North Street to house the University Centre and confirmed he would share more details in the future as they became available.

8. ESTATES STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT (continued)

DPa asked if a Governor Task & Finish Group would be set up to oversee the Estates Strategy. It was confirmed that the type of work involved would not necessitate a T&F Group, however, DP confirmed that he would bring regular reports back to the Board.

**DP
September
2023**

EA asked that the name & details of the new Head of Estates be forwarded to her as her link Manager.

**DP
June 2023**

PN asked if the £500k per year commitment from the College was affordable. DP replied that it was, due to amount of cash available each year. He confirmed that cash was being used to service the College loan which took about half of what was available but there were sufficient funds to commit £500k. He noted that a discussion about paying off some of the College loan was an outstanding action and would be considered at the Board meeting in July as part of the budget discussions. MR noted that the strategy was about North Street students having the same experience as South Bank students.

The Board noted the Estates Strategy Progress Report

9. STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS 2022-23

ND presented the Strategic Plan progress and confirmed that the summary data was generally a positive picture. She said that the main areas of difficulty related to staff recruitment and retention, however, this was an improving picture. She noted that it is likely that she will change the format of the report next year as she felt that it potentially underplays what is happening in year.

The Board noted the Strategic Plan Progress 2022-23

10. ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT

ND reminded Governors that the deadline for the Annual Accountability Agreement submission to the ESFA was the end of May 2023. She noted that since she had written the Agreement, the first draft of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) had been received from the Chamber of Commerce. She said the LSIP had some gaps and feedback had been sent to the Chamber. She confirmed that there was nothing that the College was unaware of in the LSIP. ND informed Governors that the importance of the Accountability Agreement would grow. She felt that engagement with the Chamber had been positive, and they were on board with the challenges that colleges faced. However, she also noted that the 50% of the skills market is addressed by FE colleges whilst the other 50% is addressed by schools and sixth forms colleges and neither of these sectors are involved in Accountability Agreements.

DPa queried whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) is applicable within the Agreement and whether it needs to be referred to. He felt that potential changes should be monitored. KN noted that AI is mentioned in the document and felt that it was addressed in two areas and looked at from optimisation and danger points of view. CT responded that he felt that the dangers and advantages were being considered. DPa asked whether the Agreement was a draft. ND responded that it was the final document for 2023-24.

The Board approved the Annual Accountability Agreement for 2023-24

11. ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

CT provided an overview of the Access & Participation statement noting that the reference to BAME would be change to ethnic minorities. He highlighted the mix of staff that were employed within the UC. He stated that an area for improvement was to increase the number of full-time students within the University Centre (UC). He also noted that 61% of students come from outside the region due to the national employers that the College works with and felt that there was work to do to increase the numbers from within the region.

DR commented that he had experience over a number of years in relation to these statements and said that it was not a high risk area for the Office for Students (OfS) as the College is not charging fees above the expected. He said that some things had moved on regarding the Statement and suggested that the term 'minoritised ethnicity' should be used. He also said that OfS attention is on 'Continuation, Completion and Progression' and the Statement needs to reflect this and any employment gaps needed looking at. DR stated that this was not necessary for this Statement but future ones needed to include this. CT agreed to discuss with DR outside the meeting. DR also noted that the reference to NCOP in the document should be changed to Uni Connect. CT confirmed that he would make the necessary changes.

CT
June 2023

The Board approved the Access & Participation Statement subject to the necessary changes being made.

12. LEEDS CITY COUNCIL – ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING RETURN

RH informed Governors that he had updated and submitted the Annual Safeguarding Return and a summary was provided in the Report for noting. He said that he had met with CM to discuss safeguarding and would meet with JD after the GCSE exam period was over.

RH/JD
September
2023

The Board noted the Annual Safeguarding Return for 2023.

13. PROGRESS UPDATES

13A) ADULT & HIGHER EDUCATION

CT presented the update report in relation to the University Centre, Faculty of Sustainable Building Services and the Adult Education Budget & Free Courses for Jobs. CT stated that the most problematic issue continued to be with End Point Assessments (EPA) which was impacting students and employers significantly. CT also said spend against the Adult Education Budget and Free Courses for Jobs funding had been impacted due to the agreement to focus on full-time courses and Apprenticeship programmes. He informed Governors that the College had been allocated the same amount of money in these areas for next year and this would be a focus in 2023-24.

PN queried the difficulties regarding the EPAs and wanted to know more about the problems and asked CT to quantify this in terms of students. CT provided an example of 8 students failing and 6 students were on their 5th attempt through the EPA. He said that 90% of the issues rest with the assessment methods. He provided an example where in one exam students were asked to calculate heat loss in a room without being given the measurements of the room. He felt strongly that standardisation was needed, and feedback was being given to IFATE. SC commented that the national average for pass rates in low.

13. PROGRESS UPDATES (continued)

13A) ADULT & HIGHER EDUCATION ((continued)

KN clarified whether the change of regulations in industry could be having an impact. CT replied that it possibly could, but the assessments are asking tasks that cannot be carried out. He also said that the EPAOs were not ready in some cases and did not have the right equipment to carry out the assessment and the College is being asked by EPAOs what equipment is needed. CT stated that the EPA needs standardising like 'A' Levels.

ND stated that the lack of consistency / standardisation had been raised with Ofqual and also made the point that this would not happen with GCSEs and A levels. She reiterated that it was not good enough for apprentices. ND noted that the responsibility for EPAs had only just been passed to Ofqual and they appeared to be trying to sort it out. MR confirmed that it was a problem for employers when apprentices cannot get through the EPA.

13B) STUDY PROGRAMMES

SC presented the Study Programmes update report. He highlighted that retention remains very high at 90% and was pretty consistent across all levels. He provided information relating to diversity and noted the College has improved greatly in ethnicity amongst full-time students, however, he felt that there was work to do with employers as there was a much higher proportion of apprentices that are White British.

He said that predicted achievements were looking very positive and are currently up by 8.2% overall compared to the projection in 2021-22. He stated that all Curriculum Managers (CMs) have a detailed knowledge of their students and he gave particular praise to the Skills Academy and their CM for retaining some of the most challenging students and driving high levels of achievement. KN asked whether this would be recognised. SC confirmed that he and other managers ensure that the CM is aware of the praise and also that he needs to be sharing the good practice with others.

SC presented an overview of the English and Maths area and said that there had been good attendance at the first GCSE Maths exam on 19th May. He noted that staffing difficulties had caused serious problems within English and other managers had worked together to assist with classes. He confirmed that recent applications had been strong, and appointments were being made in English and Maths. EA asked what had contributed to the improvement. DP responded there had been improvement across lots of areas. SC said that it was a combination of things. KN noted that she had felt the improvement in industry with high calibre candidates coming through.

WF thanked SC for his presentation and the good achievements so far. He raised two points: he wanted to understand more regarding the apprentices being highly skewed towards white students; and the poor retention of Irish / Traveller students and how improvements could be made. ND responded that the Irish / Traveller related to one student which disproportionately affected the %. She reiterated that in terms of ethnicity the Study Programme was a real success and outperforming the census data, particularly in relation to African / Caribbean where the high performance is a great success. She said that more needed to be done in supporting students to progress into employment and work with employers.

13. PROGRESS UPDATES (continued)

13B) STUDY PROGRAMMES (continued)

ND felt that it was not easy to change employer practices as construction is a small world and recruitment methods need to improve. She felt that the College does not directly influence who employers appoint but could provide more case studies with benefits explained. ND stated that this was a national trend and not just a local issue. SC said that in the Construction industry lots are SME employers and carry out word of mouth recruitment.

ND highlighted that the College had seen a growth of students living in areas of deprivation, with 65% in the bottom 3 deciles. She felt it was a testament to the teams who have retained these students with a number of issues. WF responded that it was important to reflect this and good to see the levels that have been retained.

13C) DATA & EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

ND presented the Data & Employer Engagement update report on behalf of LM. She covered: all processes relating to Compliance & quality are being reviewed and overhauled; currently exceeding all KPIs from the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework; the reasons for withdrawals; the difficulties with the EPAs that have been previously discussed; improvements are expected in the QAR 2022-23 outturn. ND confirmed that lots of work had been done but there was still lots to do.

13D) QUALITY & STUDENT EXPERIENCE

RH provided an update in relation to Quality & Student Experience. He gave background information to the staffing structure changes that were detailed in the report including the successful appointments that have been made to the new structure so far.

RH built on the information provided at the last Governor Development event and provided information regarding the Inclusive Classroom and what the expectations are of staff. In relation to Purlos he said all onboarding had now been done and CONVERT (admissions tool) was being trialled at the moment with a view that it would be up and running at the start of the next academic year. He stated that the destinations tool had been uploaded with the destinations from last year and this year so far and will be able to track destinations over time. The aim was to reduce the workload of staff and using some AI positively. He stated that this was a ready to go tool.

RH gave a brief safeguarding update relating to how the College engages / supports apprentices and employers with safeguarding. He confirmed that a production company had been commissioned to produce a short film to be distributed to employers. He said a challenge for micro employers was that they do not know what they need to do in terms of employing young people and it is felt that this video will help.

JD confirmed that having the destination data would be really helpful.

The Board noted the Assistant Principals progress updates.

14. LCB ENTERPRISES LTD

DP provided the background to the rationale for setting up LCB Enterprises which he stated no longer existed. He reported that it currently causes extra admin and audit that is unnecessary. He recommended that the company was closed this financial year.

The Board approved the closure of LCB Enterprises Ltd.

15. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – MARCH / APRIL

DP presented the Management Accounts for April and stated that it was comforting that everything was on track. He was expecting the EPA to be okay as long as the 70% achievement is achieved. He was confident that the College had a good chance of getting to 70% and whilst he could not say for certain he felt that it was achievable.

He noted that the fuel bill had increased from £250k to £800k and that a significant staff pay award had been paid giving a one off £1,400 payment and 4% pay rise, whilst accepting that staff wanted more, and we wanted to pay more. He felt that the College was bucking the trend nationally, where some colleges are struggling financially. He also noted that 65% of our income has not had a rate rise in a number of years, however, this has not been a major issue for the College as we have been growing but will be cause for concern if we stop growing.

MR queried the level of debtors. DP responded that comparatively at this time of year the number is quite small. MR also noted that the cash days in hand was healthy. D P commented that this helps with resilience.

The Board noted the Management Accounts.

16. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

KR noted that Internal Audit Reports would not usually be presented at Board meetings but as an internal audit had been carried out on Corporate Governance it was appropriate that all Board members received it. KR confirmed that the Internal Audit had provided a 'Substantial' Assurance Opinion and also concluded that the Application / Compliance was 'Good' and Design was 'Good'.

KR also confirmed to Governors that the two 'low' recommendations from the Audit had been accepted and would be actioned as detailed.

The Board noted the Internal Audit Report – Corporate Governance.

17A) INSTRUMENTS & ARTICLES

KR informed the Board that quoracy of meetings had been discussed during her meetings with the Internal Auditor who had stated that 40% was more usual amongst colleges for quoracy at meetings rather than 50% currently at the College. KR said that she had discussed this with ND and both agreed that 40% may be more appropriate, particularly with the move to a Committee structure which has smaller membership.

The Board approved the changes to the Instruments & Articles.

17B) STANDING ORDERS

KR detailed two suggested changes to the Standing Orders following the Internal Audit. One related to changing the quoracy of meetings to 40% and the other was a 'low' recommendation from the Audit which suggested that the Board members' attendance KPI should be included within the Standing Orders.

The Board approved the changes to the Standing Orders.

18. MEETING SCHEDULE & CALENDARS OF CORPORATION & COMMITTEE BUSINESS 2023-24

KR presented the meeting schedule and Calendars of Corporation & Committee Business for 2023-24. She reminded Governors that there would be less Corporation meetings and more Committee meetings following the decision at the last Board meeting to move from a Carver model to a Committee structure. KR stated that the calendar of business detailed most items that will be discussed over the year but it may change as circumstances arise.

ND highlighted the introduction of regular Teams updates on specific issues, however, if Governors wanted development in other areas, then they could suggest these.

The Board approved the Meeting Schedule and Calendars of Corporation & Committee Business for 2023-24.

19. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

KR informed the Board that the Scheme of Delegation had been agreed in October 2022, however, following the Board decision in March 2023 to change to a Committee structure of governance, the Scheme of Delegation had been reviewed and amendments suggested which delegated some activities / decisions to Committees as appropriate.

MS queried individual payments over £30,000 and asked that this is clarified to state that this referred to payments to employees. This related to the Finance & Resources Committee Terms of Reference. KR said that she would look into this and amend as requested.

KR
11th July 2023

ND gave an example to Governors of how she envisaged that the Scheme of Delegation would work in practice. She said that the Pay Award was a good example – if the staff pay award was approved in the annual budget by the Board, then the SLT would not seek further Board approval to pay what had already been agreed within the budget. She reiterated that she would come back to the Board if anything was outside what had been approved or there were any issues with it. MR thanked ND for the useful clarification.

20. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2023-24

KR presented the revised Committee Terms of Reference for: Audit & Risk; Finance & Resources; Curriculum, Performance & Standards; and People & Governance which had been required following the Board decision to move to a Committee structure.

20. **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2023-24** (continued)

DPa asked about co-opted members sitting on the Committees as each Term of Reference allowed up to two co-options. KR responded that there would be a Governor recruitment exercise over the summer to fill not only the Board vacancies but also seek applications for Associate Governors who would be co-opted onto Committees. KR said that she would also speak to WF regarding contacts that he had in the city as a community member was needed.

KR
30 June 2023

The Board approved the Committees Terms of Reference 2023-24 subject to the minor amendment to the Finance & Resource Terms as highlighted under the Scheme of Delegation discussion.

21. **WRITTEN RESOLUTION – APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE**

KR thanked Governors for approving the appointment of the new Director of Governance, Jane Taylor-Holmes (JTH), by written resolution. She confirmed that JTH was due to start at the College on 5th June 2023 with a handover of 4 weeks.

The Board noted the outcome of the written resolution dated 24th April 2023 regarding the appointment of the new Director of Governance.

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

MR commented that he felt that none of the decisions made today by the Board were to the detriment of students, staff and stakeholders.

ND asked if she could make two quick points. She informed Governors of the excellent results in the plumbing technical exams, which far exceeded the national average results. At level 2, all students passed with 40% receiving a distinction compared to 6% nationally. At level 3, 94% passed with 50% receiving a distinction or merit compared to 20% nationally. ND also noted that this meeting was KR's last Board meeting before her retirement in July. The Board gave a vote of thanks for KR's contribution to the College over 28 years and more recently in her role as Director of Governance.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 11 July 2023 at 4.00pm (North Street, Meeting Room 1).

The meeting finished at 5.50pm