

LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING

CORPORATION MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 17 December 2024 at 4.00pm, Meeting Room 1, North Street / Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT:

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| Steve Carmody (SCa) | Acting Chair of the Corporation / External Governor |
| Sandra Burnhill (SB) | External Governor |
| Nikki Davis (ND) | Principal & Chief Executive |
| Rachel Lindley (RL) | External Governor |
| Mobin Negareshfard (MN) | Student Governor (<i>appointed and from Item 24-122</i>) |
| Caroline Meehan (CM) | External Governor |
| Sean McDonagh-Rushfirth (SMc) | Student Governor (<i>appointed and from Item 24-122</i>) |
| Peter Norris (PN) | External Governor |
| Michael Norton (MN) | Staff Governor |
| David Russell (DR) | External Governor (<i>joined via Microsoft Teams</i>) |
| Javaria Sabar (JS) | External Governor (<i>appointed and from Item 24-122</i>) |
| Matthew Shields (MS) | External Governor (<i>joined via Microsoft Teams</i>) |
| Julie Tolley (JT) | External Governor |
| William Wallace (WW) | Staff Governor |
| Sarah Wilson (SW) | External Governor (<i>joined via Microsoft Teams</i>) |

ATTENDANCE: 15 / 18 = 83% (KPI 80%)

Cumulative attendance: 29 / 34 = 85%

IN ATTENDANCE:

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| David Pullein (DP) | Vice Principal – Finance & Resources |
| Rob Holmes (RH) | Vice Principal – Curriculum, Quality & Innovation |
| Steve Connell (SCo) | Assistant Principal – Study Programmes, English / Maths, High Needs & Construction Crafts |
| Chris Tunningley (CT) | Assistant Principal – Adults & Apprenticeships |
| Richard Lewis (RLe) | RSM (Item 24-129 e) |
| Sara Mitchell (SM) | Management Accountant (<i>Observer</i>) |
| Jane Taylor-Holmes (JTH) | Director of Governance |
| Nancy Fearnside (NF) | PA to Strategic Leadership Team (Minutes) |

Agenda: *There were no changes to the agenda.*

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
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| 35 | JTH welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that unfortunately Mark Roper was unwell and unable to attend the meeting. Steve Carmody had kindly agreed to deputise as Chair for the meeting and members were requested to approve SCa as Chair for the meeting. | |
| 36 | Resolved: The Board approved the appointment of SCa as Chair for the meeting. | |
| 37 | 24-117 – Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were received from James Dunford (External Governor), Wasim Feroze (External Governor) and Mark Roper (Chair of the Corporation / External Governor). | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
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| 38 | <p>24-118 – Determination of Observers / Attendees</p> <p>The Board agreed attendees / observers at the meeting as per the attendance list. JTH explained that SM (Management Accountant) was attending the meeting as observer.</p> | |
| 39 40 41 | <p>24-119 – Confirmation of Eligibility, Quorum and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No notice had been received of any member becoming ineligible.</p> <p>The meeting was quorate.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> | |
| 42 | <p>24-120 – Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>Resolved: The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 September 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> | |
| 43 | <p>24-121 – Matters Arising</p> <p>Governors noted the updates recorded against the matters arising.</p> | |
| 44 45 46 47 48 | <p>24-122 – Appointment of External Governor and Student Representatives</p> <p>JTH explained that two students had volunteered to join the Board as Student Governors - Sean McDonagh-Rushfirth and Mobin Negareshford; both were in their second year of the L3 BTEC Construction & Built Environment programme.</p> <p>Javari Sabar had responded to an advert for an External Governor distributed through the Search & Governance Committee network. Javari is a Quantity Surveyor and relatively new to construction. PN commented that he had spent some time with Javaria prior to the meeting discussing her experience and the skills she could bring to the Board. It was agreed that, following appointment, there would be a discussion around Committee membership with the option for Javaria to observe Committee meetings to gain an understanding of the work of the Committees.</p> <p>JTH explained that the Search & Governance Committee had considered Javari's application and recommended that she be appointed to the Board.</p> <p>SCa commented that engagement with students was critical to the Board and it was essential that the students understood the discussions taking place and provided any feedback as appropriate. JTH explained that she had held an induction meeting with students and would arrange a meeting with the Student Governors in January to follow up after the meeting.</p> <p>RL queried the position with regard to DFC; JTH explained that DFC had resigned due to work commitments. SB had been appointed as Chair of the QC&P Committee (having previously been Vice Chair) and JT had been appointed as Vice Chair.</p> | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
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| 49 | <p>Resolved: The Board approved the appointment of Sean McDonagh-Rushfirth and Mobin Negareshfard as Student Governors from 17 December 2024 to 31 July 2025. The Board also approved the appointment of Javari Sabara as External Governor for a period of four years from 17 December 2024 to 17 December 2028.</p> | |
| 50 | <p>SCa welcomed Javari Sabara, Sean McDonagh-Rushfirth and Mobin Negareshfard to the Board and introductions were made. SCa commented that if any of the new Governors had any questions or needed clarification on any points they should feel free to raise these during the meeting.</p> | |
| <p>24-123 - Chair's Report & Activity Report from Governors</p> | | |
| 51 | <p>SCa invited Governors to feedback from their Link Governor meetings.</p> | |
| 52 | <p>SB gave an update on her recent visits as Link Governor for High Needs. During the first visit she had received a general update on the High Needs provision. SB explained that during the second visit she had carried out a Learning Walk, which covered five lessons. She had met some of the High Needs students in an English session and then went on to a joinery lesson where the students were making little Christmas trees. SB acknowledged that improvements were being seen in this area with an action plan in place to address the areas for improvement raised by Ofsted. SB commented that staffing issues remained a challenge.</p> | |
| 53 | <p>JT commented that she had attended a one-day Safer Recruitment training event, which had been very interesting. The training had raised a number of questions which she had followed up through a meeting with Kathryn Wells (Head of Human Resources); all questions were answered, and it was reassuring to note that the College had all compliance processes and procedures in place.</p> | |
| 54 | <p>JTH gave an update on behalf of JD (Safeguarding Link Governor). There were three key points within JD's report for the Board to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College is a safe environment and has been deliberately designed and structured to make it so. • JD was proud of the way that a range of staff now contributed significantly to the overall safeguarding culture in the College. • The volume and scale of issues, plus the complexity, remains a challenge. | |
| 55 | <p>PN commented that on 4 December 2024 he had attended an AoC Network for Finance and Audit Chairs. Two things that were raised were the increase in employers National Insurance contributions and the increase in the National Living Wage. DP commented that if the College did not receive any support with National Insurance increase this would cost around £265k. DP explained that support had been discussed but as yet no details were known.</p> | |
| 56 | <p>PN commented that a presentation had been given regarding the move to the Public Sector and the impact of lower debt. There was also a section about the importance of regularity and disclosures particularly in relation to any severance payments. It was noted that this was reviewed as part of the external Audit and any relevant statements made within the Annual Financial Statements.</p> | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|--|---------|
| 57 | DP asked if any comment had been made on the financial position and debt within the sector. PN commented that there had been concerns raised about the sector more broadly and there had been some challenges reported in relation to severance payments. | |
| 58 | Resolved: The Board received the Chair’s Report & Activity Reports from Governors. | |
| | <p data-bbox="199 483 1241 544">24-124 – Principal’s Report (including KPIs) and Strategic Plan update / timeline</p> <p data-bbox="87 589 1257 987">59 ND explained that the key thing to note was the level of engagement with various levels of Government. The DfE had visited the College on 17 December to look at the challenges and issues around construction, which had been organised by SCo. Various round tables had taken place, which the College had been involved in, events had been held at Westminster and there had also been visits to the College. ND commented that it was interesting to see that people were approaching the College and asking for input on different skills strategies because of the importance of construction in relation to the achievement of strategies. Different parts of the Government were talking about the teacher recruitment process and getting more students into construction to learn the various different aspects. There was some frustration noted with the lack of progress despite the discussions and contributions being made.</p> <p data-bbox="87 1025 1257 1397">60 ND explained that locally a potential opportunity had arisen to purchase “the White House”, which was opposite the North Street campus. It was noted that, whilst this would provide valuable additional space, WYCA had utilised all their capital allocation for the foreseeable future and any investment of College funds would create risk for the College. The College would be unable to access a loan due to the requirements for consent and due to the timescale involved. Leeds City Council had had very little engagement apart from stating they had no capacity and no cash to support the purchase. ND commented that this was not unexpected but was disappointing, given the NEET crisis in Leeds and the number of students who could not access Level 1 and 2 vocational education in the City.</p> <p data-bbox="87 1435 1257 1608">61 ND commented that the next plan was that a letter (which had been drafted by the College’s PR company) would be sent to Tier 1 companies outlining an opportunity for private sector / social value investment to address the skills crisis and meet recruitment challenges. Companies (e.g. BAM) would be invited to a presentation in January 2025 to outline this opportunity</p> <p data-bbox="87 1646 1257 1771">62 In response to a question from JT about local counsellor involvement; ND explained that the Mayor and some MPs were aware of the situation, but ND did not feel there would be enough time for full engagement, contact would however be made.</p> <p data-bbox="87 1809 1257 1951">63 SCa asked if the College could just purchase and not lease. ND commented that originally the Combined Authority had said they could purchase the building and lease it to the College. The Combined Authority had subsequently claimed a lack of funds for the purchase.</p> | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|---|---------|
| 64 | SCa asked if the College could lease the building with an agreement to purchase. DP commented that any lease would go through the Statement of Comprehensive Income / Balance Sheet and put pressure on the bottom line. DP commented that the NEET problem in Leeds was a whole Leeds problem and it would be high risk and potentially damage the College's good financial position to invest in this independently. SCa agreed that this was a challenge for the College. SCa raised the question of the Mass Transit Scheme; ND commented that all those funds had been allocated. | |
| 65 | RH commented that there were barriers in meeting national priorities from the College perspective. If the College could not borrow, it could not grow. RH felt that the system was overly complicated and local Combined Authorities were not reacting quickly enough to provide skills that would be required in the future. SCa acknowledged that the College was willing and prepared to make a difference but did not feel it could under the circumstances. | |
| 66 | SCa queried whether the College could adequately resource the project if it went ahead. ND explained that more staff would need to be recruited and there would be costs involved in the fitout. ND explained that Groundworks, Roofing and some Brickwork etc. could be delivered there but a growth strategy would be required, tied into the Mass Transit and house building. | |
| 67 | ND explained that a conversation had taken place with NHBC, through a contact made by RH whilst at Westminster. Essentially the College would not be eligible to become a Hub as the College was already delivering capacity / training. The CITB bid being submitted related to expanding their existing operations. | |
| 68 | ND referred to the continued development of the relationship with the CBI and Chamber of Commerce and explained that there would be a meeting held in January to discuss the development of MMC training. | |
| 69 | ND went on to explain that the paper outlined lots of external engagement across the College. Dates for student forum and other events and activities were included and if Governors were invited to attend. Governors who wanted to attend any events were encouraged to contact NF or JTH. | |
| 70 | ND commented that feedback from the female focus groups was positive and suggestions made were detailed in the paper. Feedback from the EDI focus group had also been received and was generally positive. An interesting comment made was that students would like more time in the workshops learning the trade that they wanted to do. | |
| 71 | PN raised the question of community engagement and commented that there had been mention of a teacher shortage event. ND commented that she had met with WYCA earlier in the week and a paper would be released in January 2025 from the Combined Authority / Chamber. This would detail 10 options where help from the Combined Authority could be offered. ND commented that there were some reasonable suggestions in the paper and the Combined Authority wanted colleges to prioritise the ones that they could put work into. The issue was that they could not resolve this (referring to salary issues amongst other things) but at least there was recognition that this was a major issue. Lobbying by the Chamber would take place through the LSIP route. | |
| 72 | It was noted that there would be a focus on HR at the next Finance & Resources Committee meeting. | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|--|--|---|
| 73 | <p>JTH commented that SCo had asked Governors for support with T Level work placements. SCo explained that he had met with the employer engagement team recently and due to the number of T Level students on Design, Surveying & Planning (Civil Engineering) it was becoming more challenging to obtain work placements. He asked if any Governors could offer support or had any contacts that could help. SCa commented that better engagement at the right levels was required. A number of Governors offered support and SCo agreed to follow up after Christmas.</p> | |
| 74 | <p>Resolved: The Board received the Principal's Report</p> | |
| 24-125 – Staff Survey Results | | |
| 75 | <p>ND presented Item 24-125 and provided an overview of the Staff Survey outcomes form 2023/24.</p> | |
| 76 | <p>The top five positive variances were detailed and ND commented that it was pleasing to see that positive responses to Q30 (I am not thinking of leaving the College) had increased by 27%. Other increases were seen around management support staff views being sought and considered and teachers / managers were considerate of staff's workload and wellbeing.</p> | |
| 77 | <p>The top five negative variances were detailed. A key issue raised was communication. A follow up survey had been completed with regard to communication and the themes from that survey were detailed in the paper (e.g. communication not being timely, no answer to emails / too many emails etc).</p> | |
| 78 | <p>ND commented that a number of things had been put in place to improve communication including; the introduction of a College events calendar; staff / team presentations at the end of each term (with an opportunity for questions at the end, via a QR code); a staff update was circulated regularly; notes from CLT and CMT were shared. ND commented that, it was hoped that, due to the measures which had been introduced, the responses in relation to communication would improve. Training programmes had been organised for managers, which outlined their role in cascading information to their teams.</p> | |
| 79 | <p>SB asked if there was any help or support required from Governors. ND commented that when Governors were participating in events on site such as link Governor visits, if they could encourage staff to engage that would be helpful. SB commented that sometimes staff did not know who the Governors were. ND explained that she had included dates of student activities in the previous paper for Governors' information. The Open Day in March 2025 would be a good event for Governors to attend if they were available.</p> | |
| 80 | <p>SCa suggested that 4/5 standard questions linked to the staff survey would be helpful for Link Governors to ensure consistency. ND agreed that she would action this.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">ND January 2025</p> |
| 81 | <p>RL commented that there was a significant amount of useful information in the survey. She suggested it would be helpful to review the questions and results and provide Governors with some suggestions for where improvement, and to what level, was sought. ND agreed that she would action this.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">ND January 2025</p> |
| <p>Resolved: The Board received the Staff Survey results.</p> | | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|---|---------|
| | 24-126 – Quality, Curriculum & Performance | |
| | a) Overview from Committee Chair | |
| 82 | SB provided an overview of the Quality, Curriculum & Performance Committees held on 22 October 2024 and 3 December 2024. | |
| 83 | On 22 October 2024 the Committee discussed the Ofsted monitoring visit, the six areas for improvement and progress against those. A discussion took place regarding attendance and the key parameters being looked at to improve this. English & maths was discussed and SB commented that the Governor training session on English & maths had been very good. The Committee had discussed the QIP and the work being progressed on the actions. The Safeguarding Annual Report and action plan was received by the Committee, who noted the areas of focus and progress. | |
| 84 | On 3 December 2024 a significant discussion took place regarding the Self-Assessment Report and proposed gradings, which RH would present under Item 24-126 c). A presentation was received from the Quality team in terms of improving the quality processes and the student voice annual report. A presentation was also provided by the Head of Inclusive Learning regarding SEND / High Needs; the Committee noted the issues regarding staff recruitment in this area. The University Centre SAR was approved. A discussion took place regarding OfS registration requirements and more detail regarding this would be presented at the next QC&P meeting. The Student Union Policy and the Single Equality Scheme were approved by the Committee. | |
| 85 | Resolved: The Board received the update from the QC&P Committee. | |
| | b) Minutes from the meeting held on 22 October 2024 | |
| 86 | The minutes from the Quality, Curriculum & Performance meeting held on 22 October 2024 had been uploaded to the Governor Hub under the Full Governing Board folder / 17 December 2024 for all Governors information. | |
| | c) Self-Assessment Grading Paper | |
| 87 | RH gave a brief explanation of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) process for those that were not familiar with this. The SAR identified strengths and areas for improvement from 2023/24. | |
| 88 | RH commented that at the last Ofsted Inspection in March 2024, the College was graded Requires Improvement. RH explained that Ofsted had looked at the 2022/23 data during that visit. | |
| 89 | RH explained tht the 2023/24 data had now been validated and was included in the SAR. A draft SAR had been presented to the Board in July 2024. A finalised version was presented to the QC&P Committee on 3 December 2024 and a long discussion took place regarding the content and proposed grades. Following suggestions made by Committee members RH had revisited the SAR (which was available on the Governor Hub). The main discussion at the QC&P meeting was around the proposed grades. RH explained that the College was proposing to grade as good overall in the SAR, based on last year's results. | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|---|---------|
| 90 | The QC&P Committee had raised four key points during their discussion. | |
| 91 | RH commented that the first point related to how the College was judging itself in the SAR. RH explained that the College only offered Construction & the Built Environment and if the College compared itself to GFEC national rates that left the College at a disadvantage as it only operated predominantly in two sector skills areas. RH explained that the College was judging itself against Construction & the Built Environment sector skills areas. RH commented that JT had raised the point that if this was how the College was judging itself then this needed to be made clear in the SAR; RH confirmed that this had been addressed. | |
| 92 | RH commented that the second point related to the fact that some of the outcomes or judgements were based on the College outperforming other Construction & the Built Environment areas. The national rates and comparisons were missing in the SAR. RH commented that these had now been included (Page 20 for EPYP and Page 26 for Adults), giving a clear indication of where the College was outperforming when measuring itself against Construction & Built Environment areas. | |
| 93 | RH commented that the third point questioned whether the SAR was supportive and representative of the whole College. RH explained that the SAR had been presented to SLT on 27 November 2024 for approval; it had also been circulated to the College Leadership Team and College Management Team, with a further discussion taking place on 13 December 2024. An employer board had also taken place on 13 December 2024 and the SAR was shared with the Board to test its validity. RH commented that he had also found an external colleague who was willing to validate the SAR for the College; he was the Principal / CEO of a nearby College and had also been an HMI with Ofsted. | |
| 94 | RH commented that the final point related to the risk around grading or not grading the SAR. RH explained that Ofsted would expect the College to grade itself. RH commented that there was an equal risk in grading and getting it wrong, or not grading. Leadership & Management would come into question either way. | |
| 95 | RH explained that if EPYP had received Good and not Requires Improvement, then proportionality wise, three out of four provision types would have been Good, which would have had a knock-on effect to Quality of Education, Leadership & Management and Overall Effectiveness. The key issue regarding EPYP in March 2024 was that outcomes were not available and although the College was predicting stronger achievement rates, with retention being maintained, and a slight improvement on attendance, the evidence was not available at the time of inspection. | |
| 96 | RH commented that validated data for 2023/24 was now available, which showed significant improvements on the previous year. 16-18 Achievement rates had improved by 7.1% (5.2% above national rate) and 19+ was up by 7.7%. | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|--|---------|
| 97 | RH explained that it was proposed that EPYP was graded Good (previously Requires Improvement) and Adults were graded Outstanding (previously Good). This was based on the evidence available and the justification in the paper. RH commented that High Needs would remain as Requires Improvement but explained that this related to provision for around 70 students. | |
| 98 | Quality of Education and Leadership & Management would become Good; Overall Effectiveness would then automatically become Good. RH acknowledged that attendance and punctuality remained a challenge and the proposal was to keep Behaviours & Attitudes as Requires Improvement, as that is where attendance sat within the Framework. | |
| 99 | SB commented that in relation to the timescale the SAR needed to be signed off by the Board to ensure it could be uploaded in January 2025. | |
| 100 | DR commented that there was a very robust discussion at the QC&P Committee; a number of questions were raised, with strong responses being received. There was justification for the grades being proposed. In his view the proposed grades, based on the evidence, were sound. DR commented that, following a recent inspection, the link to attendance and Behaviours & Attitudes was confirmed. | |
| 101 | RL queried whether this paper came to the Board with the QC&P Committee's recommendation. JTH confirmed that this was correct, following the responses to the amendments suggested. | |
| 102 | JTH queried whether there was a risk that, following the external validation, there could be a recommendation to change the proposed grades. RH explained that he had sent over a number of questions to be considered and commented that it he did not feel this was a risk. | |
| 103 | SB commented that in March 2025 Overall Effectiveness was Requires Improvement and noted that the College was now fundamentally saying it should be Good. PN asked if this was because of the way the College had weighted the SAR. RH explained that it was due to the outcomes which had now been validated; showing the data had significantly improved. Small improvements had also been seen in maths / English and High Grades. | |
| 104 | Resolved: The Board approved the SAR and the proposed grades. | |
| | <p data-bbox="199 1594 635 1624">24-127 – Search & Governance</p> <p data-bbox="199 1668 699 1697">a) Overview from Committee Chair</p> <p data-bbox="199 1747 1236 1809">105 JTH provided an overview of the Search & Governance Committee held on 8 October 2024.</p> <p data-bbox="199 1854 1236 2078">106 The Committee had considered the membership and recruitment activity. A key focus for the Committee was succession planning; some key posts would need to be recruited to. The 1:1 process was considered. Governor visibility was discussed and would be taken forward into the Governance Development Plan. The Committee carried out its self-evaluation against the Terms of Reference. The Governance Development Plan was discussed and would include any areas for improvement from the External Governance Review.</p> | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
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| 106 (cont.) | The Skills Audit was discussed and would be carried out in January 2025; any potential gaps would be included in the Governance Development Plan. The Search & Governance Annual Report was recommended to the Board for approval. A review of confidential information had been carried out and recommended to the Board for approval. A schedule of business for 2024/25 was discussed and agreed. | |
| 107 | <p>Resolved: The Board received the update from the S&G Committee.</p> <p>b) Minutes from the meeting held on 8 October 2024</p> | |
| 108 | <p>The minutes from the Search & Governance meeting held on 8 October 2024 had been uploaded to the Governor Hub under the Full Governing Board folder / 17 December 2024 for all Governors information.</p> <p>c) Search & Governance Annual Report 2023/24</p> | |
| 109 | JTH presented the Search & Governance Annual Report 2023/24. She explained that this summarised the activity of the Committee during the year, including Governor attendance, membership, recruitment activity, Equality & Diversity profile of Governors, Committee structure etc. The report also outlined the key focus for the Committee during 2024/25; this included reviewing compliance with the new Association of Colleges Code of Good Governance. | |
| 110 | <p>Resolved The Board approved the Search & Governance Annual Report 2023/24.</p> <p>d) Review of confidential papers</p> | |
| 111 | JTH explained that a review of all the confidential papers and matters considered during 2023/24 had been carried out by the Search & Governance Committee. These related to Ofsted, SLT structure, pay award etc. The Search & Governance Committee had recommended that all matters should remain confidential | |
| 112 | Resolved: The Board approved the retention of all confidential papers in 2023/24. | |
| 113 | <p>24-128 – SPH Employment & Remuneration</p> <p>a) Overview from Committee Chair</p> <p>JTH provided an overview of the SPH Employment & Remuneration Committee held on 8 October 2024. She explained that this Committee considered performance and the employment and terms and conditions of Senior Post Holders within the College. The Committee also discussed succession planning.</p> <p>Resolved: The Board received the update from the SPH Employment & Remuneration Committee.</p> <p>b) SPH Employment & Remuneration Annual Report 2023/24</p> | |
| 114 | JTH presented the SPH Employment & Remuneration Annual Report 2023/24. | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|--|---------|
| 115 | Resolved: The Board approved the SPH Employment & Remuneration Annual Report 2023/24. | |
| 116 | <p>24-129– Audit & Risk</p> <p>a) Overview from Committee Chair</p> <p>R Lewis (RSM) joined the meeting at this point.</p> | |
| 117 | MS provided an overview of the Audit & Risk Committee and Joint Audit & Risk and Finance & Resources Committees held on 25 November 2024. | |
| 118 | <p>The Audit & Risk Committee had received several papers from the Internal Auditors to review. MS highlighted that one of the papers covered the audit recommendations and the progress made by management in implementing these. MS commented that the Board should take comfort in the fact that 90% of the actions had been completed. This helped to suggest that the insights received from the Auditors were sensible and accurate and could be implemented by management. MS commented that the remaining 10% of actions had been completed prior to the Committee. An internal audit report on the Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment Cycle was presented by ICCA, resulting in one Low and one Medium recommendation. The report had been shared with the QC&P Committee. The final report was the Annual Internal Audit Report prepared and presented by ICCA; Reasonable Assurance was given (the highest level of assurance). DP had presented the Risk Register, together with the Risk Management Report. The Emerging Risks report from RSM was also presented. A good discussion had taken place on all the papers. The end of year self-evaluation by the Committee concluded that the 2023/24 Terms of Reference had been discharged and the 2024/25 Terms of Reference were recommended to the Board for approval.</p> | |
| 119 | <p>MS explained that the purpose of the Joint Audit & Risk and Finance & Resources meeting was to enable R Lewis (RSM) to present the draft audit findings report for the year. This was an unmodified report; the key risk highlighted by RLe was in relation to the ESFA and a potential Funding Audit. The Committee noted that there were fewer audit control points and fewer adjustments to the numbers. An update on the sampling of Apprenticeship files had demonstrated a significant improvement. The draft financial statements were discussed and a significant improvement in the profit for the year was noted. There had been some discussion around the potential impact of any risk to apprenticeship funding. The Committee gained assurance that any Apprenticeship funding risk could be afforded from reserves in the future. The Going Concern of the College was discussed. The narrative within the financial statements was discussed and it was acknowledged that this read very well. A discussion took place regarding the SAR. In summary, the audit and financial statements show an improved position with fewer control points. The Joint Audit & Risk and Finance & Resources Committee recommended the financial statements to the Board for approval.</p> | |
| 120 | Resolved: The Board received the update from the Audit & Risk Committee and the Joint Audit & Risk and Finance & Resources Committee. | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|--|---------|
| | b) Minutes from the meeting held on 25 November 2024 and Joint A&R and F&R meeting | |
| 121 | The minutes from the Audit & Risk meeting held on 25 November 2024 and the joint Audit & Risk and Finance & Resources meeting held on 25 November 2024 had been uploaded to the Governor Hub under the Full Governing Board folder / 17 December 2024 for all Governors information. | |
| | c) Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24 | |
| 122 | JTH presented the Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24. | |
| 123 | Resolved: The Board received and approved the Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24. | |
| | d) Representation Letters to RSM Tenon for LCB | |
| 124 | DP explained that the two representation letters (Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity Assurance Engagement) required signing by the Chair and Principal. The letters confirmed that all required information was supplied to the auditors. JTH explained that due to MR's absence he had sent through authority to use his electronic signature on these letters. | |
| 125 | Resolved: The Board approved the signing of the two letters by the Chair and Principal. | |
| | e) Audit Findings Report covering statutory & regularity audit for 2023/24 | |
| 126 | RLe thanked MS for his very good summary of the recent meeting. He confirmed that the representation letters were required in order for him to complete the audit. There were no particular points in the letters that the Board needed to be concerned about. | |
| 127 | RLe presented the updated Audit Findings Report, which had been considered previously at the joint Audit & Risk and Finance & Resources Committee meeting on 25 November 2024. He confirmed that all audit work had now been concluded. | |
| 128 | RLe confirmed that an unmodified opinion on the financial statements and regularity had been given and explained that this was the best opinion a College could obtain from an auditor. | |
| 129 | The Audit Findings Report, which had been received by the Audit & Risk Committee in November 2024, summarised the audit completion. The Report highlighted a small number of unadjusted misstatements; RLe confirmed these were not material and he was happy with them being unadjusted and they did not affect the true and fair view of the accounts. | |
| 130 | RLe commented that there were a small number of control points and data quality points highlighted in the report. He acknowledged that the College was working through the Apprenticeship challenges and noted that 75% of the Apprenticeship files were wholly compliant, which was very encouraging and an improving position. | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|---|---------|
| 131 | RLe commented that Apprenticeship funding was a very complicate income stream, with the rules regularly changing and sometimes being retrospective. However, from a true and fairness perspective of the financial statements, based on the testing carried out, there were no material misstatements to bring to the Board's attention. As previously highlighted, there was a potential risk in relation to apprenticeship funding. | |
| 132 | RLe brought the Board's attention to the Going Concern statement. The College had produced a financial forecast for two years to July 2026, which was submitted to the ESFA, concluding that the College was a going concern. RLe confirmed that he concurred with this. Taking into account the repayment of the bank loan and the projected forecast he concurred that the College had sufficient funds to meet its liabilities until July 2026. | |
| 133 | Resolved: The Board noted the Audit Findings Report covering statutory & regularity audit for 2023/24. | |
| 134 | RLe left the meeting at this point. | |
| | f) LCB's Members Report and Financial Statements July 2024 | |
| 135 | DP provided a presentation on the Members Report and Financial Statements July 2024 and gave a brief overview. | |
| 136 | The Audit Findings Report confirmed an unqualified opinion, the financial statements gave a true and fair view, the Regularity Audit had found no issues to report, the College was assessed as a Going Concern and had sufficient funds to meet its liabilities to July 2026, and the adjusted and unadjusted differences were not material. | |
| 137 | DP explained that the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Expenditure needed to be prepared in a certain way. The key items: Income, Expenditure and Operating Surplus, were shown first. A surplus of £2,472,000 was noted. | |
| 138 | SCa asked SM if she had any comments to make. SM noted the movement from previous years to now. DP commented that the College has had a remarkable journey from 2016/17 to date and was now back in Outstanding financial health. He thanked SM for her work on the financial statements. | |
| 139 | The Consolidated Balance Sheet was noted. DP commented that the College loan was paid off in the summer; the current assets / liabilities had remained roughly the same. The College's position had not been weakened by repayment of the loan. Cash had gone down but at the same time the loan had been repaid. Creditors due after one year had gone down to (£14,754,000) from (£18,072,000). Net assets had increased to £17,184,000 from £14,774,000. | |
| 140 | Last year the College had a cash balance of £3.6m, with £2m on deposit, i.e. £5.6m. This year the College had £4.6m, with £1m on deposit, i.e. £5.6m. The College therefore had the same amount of cash even though the loan had been repaid. The current ratio had dropped but was way ahead of the FE Commissioners Benchmark. The financial health score for 2023/24 was Outstanding. ND commented that it was worth noting that 20% of college were in Inadequate financial health. | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|--|---------|
| 141 | DP noted that the FRS102 pension charges had disappeared and was now an asset; this had impacted positively on the bottom line. | |
| 142 | In terms of key facts, DP explained that the financial health of the College was measured by three areas: EBITDA (100 points), current ratio (60 points) and borrowing (100 points). Overall the College had 260 points which equated to Outstanding financial health. | |
| 143 | JT queried what was the question members should be asking, i.e. what don't we know? DP explained that FE funding worked in one-year cycles, last year was fantastic and the College now needed to concentrate on this year and next year. He commented that National Insurance was increasing, the National Living Wage was also increasing and a pay award for staff needed to be considered etc. DP confirmed that the College was in a very good position at the moment. | |
| 144 | DP commented that the key risk for the College was an ESFA Funding Audit. There had been significant focus on this area to ensure compliance however explained that this still remained an area of risk. DP commented that if the College was going to have an Audit in April / May 2025 then notification would have already been received. He commented that an Audit would probably now take place in September 2025 and would look at this year's Apprenticeships. | |
| 145 | RL noted the good financial position and the potential opportunity regarding The White House (which had been discussed earlier), and queried if any assessment had taken place on the risk the College may be willing to take. DP explained that the College did not feel it should be taking any risks, apart from employing more staff. DP commented that he did not feel it was not sensible to jeopardise the College's financial health. RL asked about the target for financial health; DP explained that there was no target for this, the key aim was to ensure the College was financially stable. SCa acknowledged that the College had no appetite to invest further with no guarantees of support or income. | |
| 146 | Resolved: The Board approved the Members Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 July 2024 for signing off by the Chair and the Principal. | |
| | <p>24-130 – Finance & Resources</p> <p>a) Overview from Committee Chair</p> <p>147 PN provided an overview of the Finance & Resources Committee held on 25 November 2024.</p> <p>148 The Committee had reviewed the Management Accounts for October 2024, which had now been superseded by November's Management Accounts. Government Grant income was still being accrued based on budget until all enrolments were on the system. There was no indication of any problems. 16-19 funding was lagged and therefore known. PN explained that the Management Accounts were available on the Governor Hub for information. The Committee had noted the Debtors position, which was at the lowest ever figure. DP acknowledged the work done by the Finance Team in achieving this.</p> | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|---|---------|
| 149 | The Committee received an update from HR. PN asked if the People Strategy had been finalised. ND commented that this now been reviewed by SLT and would be presented to the next Finance & Resources Committee meeting for approval. All staff had undertaken Safer Working Practices training. An Aspiring Managers programme had been developed, to aid progression and retention. | |
| 150 | The Committee received an update from Estates. The College had signed the contract to join the District Heat Network and the College expected to be connected to this by March 2025. This would result in a carbon reduction of 2,800 tonnes and a saving of £20k per year. | |
| 151 | The Committee received an IT update from MN. Immersive classrooms were being progress through funding from WYCC. MN explained how the immersive classrooms would work. He commented that other colleges using these had seen an increase of 40% in attendance. SB queried the timescales on this. MN explained that funding would need to be spent by March 2025 and a tender for the construction element had now been sent out. The hardware / software tender was being finalised. Once the immersive classrooms were in place a staff training programme would be rolled out. | |
| 152 | The Committee had considered the risks relating to the Finance & Resources Committee. A self-evaluation had taken place against the Terms of Reference. | |
| 153 | DP commented on the amount of work undertaken by IT and Estates over the summer and recorded his thanks to the teams. | |
| 154 | Resolved: The Board received the update from the Finance & Resources Committee. | |
| | b) Minutes from the meeting held on 25 November 2024 | |
| 155 | The minutes from the Finance & Resources meeting held on 25 November 2024 had been uploaded to the Governor Hub under the Full Governing Board folder / 17 December 2024 for all Governors information. c) Department for Education: College Financial Forecasting Return 2024-2026 | |
| 156 | DP presented the Department for Education letter. DP confirmed that the letter referred to the DfE budget that the Governors approved at the Board in July. The letter provided DfE confirmation that they agreed with the assessment of Outstanding financial health. | |
| 157 | Resolved: The Board received the Department for Education letter. | |
| 158 | 24-131 – Committee Terms of Reference 2024-25 a) Audit & Risk JTH explained that minor changes had been made to the Audit & Risk Terms of Reference, the Terms of Reference were recommended for approval by the Audit & Risk Committee. | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|-----------|---|--|
| 159 | <p>b) Finance & Resources</p> <p>JTH explained that minor changes had been made to the Finance & Resources Terms of Reference, the Terms of Reference were recommended for approval by the Finance & Resources Committee.</p> | <p style="text-align: right;">JTH January 2025</p> |
| 160 | <p>c) Quality, Curriculum & Performance</p> <p>JTH explained that more significant changes had been made to the QC&P Terms of Reference and these were tracked for convenience. The changes had been made to ensure the Committee was aligned with its statutory responsibilities and to make the Terms of Reference more focused. The Terms of Reference were recommended for approval by the Quality, Curriculum & Performance Committee.</p> | |
| 161 | <p>RH noted that Point 8 under Membership & Operation needed amending to reflect his correct title. It was agreed that JTH would amend this.</p> | |
| 162 | <p>d) Search & Governance</p> <p>JTH explained that minor changes had been made to the Search & Governance Terms of Reference, the Terms of Reference were recommended for approval by the Search & Governance Committee.</p> | |
| 163 | <p>e) SPH Employment & Remuneration</p> <p>JTH explained that minor changes had been made to the SPH Employment & Remuneration Terms of Reference, the Terms of Reference were recommended for approval by the SPH Employment & Remuneration Committee.</p> | |
| 164 | <p>Resolved: The Board approved the revised Committee Terms of Reference for 2024/25.</p> | |
| 165 | <p>24-132 – Tuition Fees 2025-26</p> <p>DP presented Item 24/132 (Tuition Fees 2025-26). The Strategic Leadership Team recommended that tuition fees (excluding Apprenticeships) be increased by 5.5%, with Apprenticeships being charged at 5% of the maximum of the funding band.</p> | |
| 166 | <p>Resolved: The Board approved the Tuition Fees for 2025-26.</p> | |
| 167 | <p>24-133 – Impact of decisions made on students, staff and stakeholders</p> <p>SCa commented on the significant discussions undertaken in relation to the accounts and the financial stability of the College, the Staff Survey results and the focus on communication, the improvements within the quality reporting and the outcomes for students and the link to the SAR along with discussion around the future provision for students in Leeds and the strategy.</p> | |
| 168 | <p>SCa thanked the Student Governors for their attendance. SMc commented that he had some questions following the meeting; SCa would discuss these with him after the meeting.</p> | |

| Min. Ref. | Minutes | Actions |
|----------------------|---|----------------|
| 169 | 24-134 – Date of next meeting Tuesday 1 April 2025 at 4.00pm, Meeting Room 1, North Street. | |