

LEEDS COLLEGE OF BUILDING

FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 May 2025 at 3.30pm, North Street, Meeting Room 1 / Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT:

Rachel Lindley (RL)	Chair & External Governor
Nikki Davis (ND)	Principal & CEO
Peter Norris (PN)	External Governor
Michael Norton (MN)	Staff Governor (<i>attended via Microsoft Teams</i>)
Sarah Wilson (SW)	External Governor (<i>attended via Microsoft Teams</i>)

ATTENDANCE: 5 / 8 = 63% (KPI 80%)

Cumulative attendance: 17 / 24 = 71%

IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Carmody (SCa)	External Governor (observer)
David Pullein (DP)	Vice Principal – Finance & Resources
Sara Mitchell (SM)	Management Accountant
Jane Taylor-Holmes (JTH)	Director of Governance
Nancy Fearnside (NF)	PA to Strategic Leadership Team (Minutes)

Min. Ref.	Minutes	Actions
83	<p>FR/25/117 – Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Laurence Kendall (Associate Governor), Mark Roper (External Governor) and Matthew Shields (External Governor).</p>	
84	<p>FR/25/118 – Determination of Observers / Attendees</p> <p>Members agreed attendees / observers at the meeting as per the attendance list above.</p>	
85	<p>FR/25/119 – Declaration of Interests</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
86	<p>FR/25/120 – Minutes of the previous meetings</p> <p>Resolved: The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 February 2025 were accepted as a true record.</p>	
87	<p>FR/25/121 – Matters Arising</p> <p>Members noted the updates recorded against the matters arising.</p>	
88	<p>FR/25/122 – Financial Performance Report – Management Accounts (March 2025)</p> <p>DP explained that SM would present the Management Accounts to the Committee.</p>	
89	<p>SM presented the Management Accounts for March 2025 and provided a brief overview.</p>	

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90	SM commented that the forecast outturn for Government Grants remained dependent on the College receiving the End Point Assessment achievement for 2024/25. SM explained that 50% of estimated completion was still required to achieve the forecast position.	
91	SM commented that Tuition Fees and Contracts, and Other Income, looked positive and the forecast outturn had been increased accordingly.	
92	SM commented that there were no particular concerns within expenditure. Staff costs now included the backdated pay award and the forecast outturn had been reduced to reflect vacancy savings and the transfer of the canteen staff to the outsourced catering company.	
93	SM commented that the EBITDA percentage of income remained high (16%). It was noted that the College was graded the top financial health score of 300 points, which resulted in the assessment of Outstanding financial health.	
94	SM commented that the cash balance was high at £6.9 million. Overall the position was very positive.	
95	SCa joined the meeting at this point and JTH explained that he was attending to observe the meeting as he would be taking over as Chair of the Board next year and would be joining the Finance & Resources Committee.	
96	ND commented that there were not many colleges that had the maximum financial health score. ND commented that the financial position of 93 cash days in hand was not the sector norm and agreed the accounts provided a positive position.	
97	RL commented that it was good to see that the College was assessed as having Outstanding financial health and queried if there was anything that the College should be spending to support students further. Committee members discussed the approach to be taken and the balance between the College maintaining Outstanding financial health against any further expenditure to mitigate any risks.	
98	DP commented on the capital expenditure and improvements over the recent months and explained that capital plans for next year included the replacement and improvement of the façade at North Street, toilet refurbishment (also at North Street) and refurbishing the Refectory. It was acknowledged that further expenditure could be reviewed following the conclusion of any ESFA compliance (DfE) audit.	
99	DP explained that in terms of further expenditure, classrooms were being refurbished; 15 had been completed so far to a very high standard.	
100	DP commented that the College's Outstanding financial health had been discussed previously. It was agreed that the key priority for the College was to ensure the best facilities and resources were available for students.	
101	Resolved – Committee members received the Management Accounts for March 2025.	

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	<p>FR/25/123 – HR Update / Gender Pay Gap Reporting</p> <p>HR Update</p> <p>102 KW joined the meeting at this point and provided an overview of the HR activities since the last meeting in February 2025 up to April 2025.</p> <p>103 KW commented that the second annual Wellbeing Week had taken place in February 2025. Positive feedback from staff had been received, with more participation noted. Activities included smoothie making and bath bomb making. There was also an LCB Crufts with 46 entries from staff. KW commented that 81 nominations for the LCB Shout Out had been submitted and explained that this was an initiative where staff were able to praise colleagues for going above and beyond. KW commented that 18 Wellbeing kits were distributed to colleagues who worked remotely to recognise their contribution and support engagement.</p> <p>104 KW commented that the College had also hosted a Wellbeing Day on Friday 4 April 2025, which allowed staff the opportunity to spend the day independently, with colleagues or participate in the College organised coastal walk in Scarborough. KW commented that feedback from both the Wellbeing Week and Wellbeing Day had indicated a strong positive impact on overall employee wellbeing.</p> <p>105 KW commented that a review of Job Descriptions and Job Adverts was being undertaken to update and modernise them to ensure that they were correct, representative and appealing to candidates. The wording of job advertisements was also being refined to ensure a consistent and prominent emphasis on the College's strong commitment to Safeguarding and EDI.</p> <p>106 KW commented that a review of the existing Probationary and Performance Review pro-formas was being undertaken to ensure both processes were more clearly aligned with the College's Strategic Objectives.</p> <p>107 KW commented that Module 1 of the Aspiring Managers programme had now been completed. The programme would continue up to June 2025 and feedback so far had been very positive.</p> <p>108 KW commented that detailed procedures for both the monthly and annual payroll cycles continued to be documented by the Payroll Officer. KW explained this would ensure that in the event of any absences, the procedures could be followed to minimise any impact on the College's payroll operations. KW commented that it was intended that the Payroll Officer would run the June 2025 payroll independently.</p> <p>109 KW commented that the Staff Charter was currently under review to align this with the College's updated Strategic Plan and Values. A Staff Code of Conduct was also being drafted to underpin the Staff Charter.</p> <p>110 PN queried the Aspiring Managers programme and noted that this was due to complete in June 2025; PN asked if the programme would continue. KW explained that this year had been the pilot and following feedback and any refinements required, it was planned that a new cohort would start next academic year. It was noted that the next step was to ensure progression opportunities were available for staff on completion of the programme to ensure that new skills could be fully utilised within the College.</p>	

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111	SW commented on KW's report and that the steps and progress described was fundamentally supporting staff wellbeing and retention.	
112	SW asked about staff recruitment in terms of managing vacancies and how quickly these were being filled.	
113	KW explained that there were still some problematic areas, e.g. Electrical vacancies. KW commented that applications for support roles were good (over 50 applications had recently been received for an IT role) but teaching roles remained a challenge.	
114	RL raised the question of recruitment / retention Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and asked if these linked to the new Strategic Plan. ND commented that these were included in the People Strategy and would be reported to the Committee next year, it was noted that work and data collection undertaken during 2024/25 would provide baseline data.	KW/DP Autumn 2025
115	Resolved – Committee members received the HR Update.	
	Gender Pay Gap Reporting	
116	KW gave a presentation regarding the Gender Pay Gap and provided an overview.	
117	KW explained that the Gender Pay Gap was the difference in hourly earnings between male and female staff members across the College. The College reported annually on its mean and median rates of hourly pay. The report also included the percentage of males and females in pay quartiles. KW commented that it was a legal requirement to provide this report, under the Equality Act 2010, Gender Pay Gap Reporting Regulations 2017. KW commented that it was also ethically important to provide the Gender Pay Gap report to support Diversity & Inclusion, fairness, promote / improve retention, morale, reputation and social values. KW explained that the Gender Pay Gap was not the same as equal pay for equal work as roles were not being compared like for like.	
118	KW commented that the College's median pay gap was 22.55% as at 31 March 2025 and explained that this meant that every pound a male member of staff earned, a female was paid 23p less. The mean pay gap was 10%. KW commented that compared to 2024, the median pay gap had reduced by 6.3%, with the mean pay gap reducing by 6.9%. It was agreed that positive progress had been made.	
119	KW commented that there was no pay gap at management level, 2.8% at lecturer level and 4% at support staff level. KW explained that disproportionately more male members of staff were in the higher paid quartile than in the lower quartile.	
120	KW commented that the gender distribution across College was 63.73% male and 36.27% female. A breakdown by quartile was included for information.	
121	KW outlined the gender representation by role. KW commented that there were 18 males in management roles, compared to 13 females. The number of male lecturers was 142, compared to 35 females.	
122	KW outlined the College's progress from 2017 and members noted the reducing gap in the mean and median pay rates. KW commented that the number of females in management roles had increased from 3 to 13 since 2017, with the number of female lecturers increasing from 19 to 35. The gender pay gap in support roles had reduced to 4%, compared to 23.3% in 2017.	

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123	KW outlined the female pay quartiles and commented that females in the lower pay quartile had reduced to 56% from 73.70% in 2017. Females in the upper pay quartiles had increased to 28.30% from 12.80% in 2017.	
124	KW outlined what was driving the improvements, e.g. flexible working policies and practices, leadership development programmes, inclusive hiring practices, pay transparency across College, supportive parental leave and return-to-work policies and increased representation of females at College. KW commented that benefits to maternity, paternity and adoption pay has been increased and it was felt that this may encourage more females into the College, changing the perception that it was a male dominated environment.	
125	KW commented that she had carried out a benchmarking exercise on the median gender pay gap and compared to neighbouring colleges, LCB had the highest gap at 22.50%. KW commented that she had also carried out a similar benchmarking exercise against the construction industry. The College was largely consistent with these figures. It was noted that whilst there were 15% females in industry, only 2% of these were on site in roles.	
126	KW outlined the challenges for the College; the College workforce reflected the construction industry which was male dominated. KW commented that other challenges included industry-wide wage issues (the fact that higher wages could be obtained working in industry), under-representation of females in teaching roles, progression opportunities and higher part-time rate among women.	
127	KW outlined the next steps; the College would continue to drive down the Gender Pay Gap, would explore Ethnicity and Disability pay gaps, continue with EDI initiatives and utilise case studies to showcase females working within construction and the College.	
128	PN asked when the College expected / aspired to be gender pay gap neutral. KW commented that progress would continue to be targeted in this area, however, no end date had been discussed. DP commented that the key challenge was the lecturer areas, which were male dominated. DP commented that in all other areas KW had demonstrated the steps being taken to reduce the gap.	
129	ND commented that if there were more female students in College, the likelihood was that more female staff would be attracted. In terms of turnover, the gender pay gap was not cited as a reason for leaving; people were paid equal pay for equal work.	
130	JTH commented that from a governance perspective there were now more females than males on the Board.	
131	KW commented that progress to reduce the gender pay gap was steady and had been consistent since 2017. DP commented that compared to 20+ years ago the number of female staff members had dramatically increased.	
132	RL recognised the challenge for the College but commented that there were only three or four companies on the benchmarking slide that were higher than the College. RL commented that she would be interested to know what others were doing to reduce the gender pay gap. RL encouraged the College to think innovatively about tackling this issue to ensure people were retained / recruited.	

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133	DP commented that the higher number of females in support areas put the College at a disadvantage in terms of the gender pay gap.	
134	RL thanked KW for her presentation.	
135	Resolved: Committee members noted the Gender Pay Gap presentation and progress made.	
	<p>FR/25/124 a) – Health & Safety Update</p> <p>136 DP presented the paper which had been prepared by A Beckwith (Health & Safety Co-ordinator) and provided a brief overview.</p> <p>137 DP commented that the College had received the ISO:45001 accreditation with no minor or major non-conformances. DP commented that this was a testament to the time and effort that was put into Health & Safety at the College.</p> <p>138 DP commented that the number of Health & Safety instances / accidents in the College had reduced dramatically.</p> <p>139 PN noted that the Air Monitoring Report had been received and asked if there were any issues. DP commented that there were some minor areas of improvement noted but no red flags had been raised.</p> <p>140 RL commented on the ISO:45001 Audit report and acknowledged that there had been no major / minor non-conformances. RL asked DP to pass on the Committee’s congratulations on this achievement.</p> <p>141 Resolved: Committee members received the Health & Safety Update.</p> <p>FR/25/124 b) – Estates Update</p> <p>142 DP presented the paper which had been prepared by Mark Hudson (Head of Estates) and provided a brief overview.</p> <p>143 DP commented that connection to the Leeds Pipes Network was now complete; the College was now heated by steam.</p> <p>144 DP commented that the Wood Machine Workshop upgrade had been completed and suggested Governors may like to see this. It was agreed that a visit would be offered to Governors.</p> <p>145 DP stated that various work had been carried out across College, including the Immersive Classrooms. DP suggested that a visit to the Wood Machine Workshop and Immersive Classrooms could be combined.</p> <p>146 Resolved – Committee members received the Estates Update.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">DP 12 May 2025</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DP / ND July 2025</p>
	<p>FR/25/125 – IT Update</p> <p>147 MN presented the IT Update and provided a brief overview.</p> <p>148 MN commented that the IT preparation for the new website was practically completed and the new website would be going live towards the end of May.</p>	

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149	MN commented that there was still some software to be installed to complete the Wood Machine Workshop which would be completed by the end of the week.	DP / ND / MN July 2025
150	MN commented that installation of Teams Telephony had been delayed due to BT and would be completed by 28 May 2025. MN explained that the mobile phone contract renewal was being progressed.	
151	MN commented that once the Immersive Classrooms were fully completed, he would be happy to arrange a Governor visit.	
152	Resolved: Committee members received the IT update.	
FR/25/126 – Sub-Contracting & Partnership Update		
153	DP presented the paper which had been prepared by Clare Fielding (Head of Funding and Compliance) and provided a brief overview.	
154	DP commented that the paper detailed the continuing sub-contractor arrangements and the contract value. DP explained the reducing number of students, no new students had been enrolled, and the plan was that there would be no sub-contractor provision from 2026/27.	
155	Resolved – Committee members received the Sub-Contracting & Partnership Update.	
FR/25/127 – Funding Compliance Update		
156	DP presented the paper which had been prepared by Clare Fielding and provided a brief overview.	
157	DP commented that 100% of Apprenticeship learner files had now been audited and 91% of those were fully compliant. The remaining 9% would still be progressed where possible but DP explained that some students were no longer traceable and some employers were no longer in business. DP commented that the work done by C Fielding to complete the review of all the files was remarkable and the new onboarding process would ensure that this issue would not arise again.	
158	RL raised the question of whether the new files were fully compliant and if outstanding issues related to the older files. DP commented that the issues did relate to the older files and he was confident that all new files were 100% fully compliant.	
159	PN raised the question of the timeliness of progress reviews and the expected date of July 2025; he asked if the College was reasonably comfortable with this. ND commented that there were some areas that were behind on these, e.g. Electrical, however mitigations had been put in place, and these were being picked up in Faculties. The key factor continued to be staffing issues.	
160	Resolved: Committee members received the Funding Compliance Update.	

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161 162	<p>FR/125/128 – Fees / Refund Policy 2024-25</p> <p>DP presented the Fees / Refund Policy 2024-25 and apologised for the lateness of presentation to the Committee. There were no major changes and the Policy remained fit for purpose.</p> <p>Resolved: Committee members approved the Fees / Refund Policy 2024-25.</p>	
163 164	<p>FR/125/129 – Treasury Management Policy</p> <p>DP presented the revised Treasury Management Policy and commented that the changes had been tracked. The changes reflected the Managing Public Money guidance, the Financial Handbook and removed the reference to the bank loan.</p> <p>Resolved: Committee members approved the Treasury Management Policy for approval by the Board.</p>	
165 166 167 168	<p>FR/25/130 – Consideration of risks relating to the Committee</p> <p>DP presented Agenda Item FR/25/130 and commented that no new risks had been added. RL commented that improvements had been made in including risks within papers. RL asked that the HR risk be updated to reference the mitigation mentioned in the meeting around staff wellbeing.</p> <p>DP commented that the work on the risk register had been paused due to work on the budget but would be picked up over the next few weeks and should be completed by Christmas.</p> <p>PN commented that COL45 and COL60 needed reviewing in terms of dates. DP would action.</p> <p>Resolved: Committee members noted the risks relating to the Committee.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">DP June 2025</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DP June 2025</p>
169	<p>FR/25/131 – Matters to be reported to the Board</p> <p>Committee members had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received an update on the positive position on the management accounts and noted that the College had achieved Outstanding financial health. • Received an update from HR including the work being undertaken to improve staff wellbeing and the progress of the Aspiring Managers programme and a presentation on the Gender Pay Gap. Committee members noted that significant improvements made to reduce the Gender Pay Gap since 2017 and the benchmarking data in other colleges and industry. • Received updates on Sub-contracting, Estates, Health & Safety and IT, noting the progress made in all areas; the reduction in numbers of students in sub-contracted provision, the successful connection to the Leeds Pipes Network, the IT support of the website development, and the successful achievement of the ISO:45001 accreditation with no major / minor non-conformances. • Received an update on Funding Compliance, noting the significant progress made in this area but acknowledging the challenge to achieve 100% compliance. • Approved the Fees / Refund Policy. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended the Treasury Management Policy for approval by the Board. • Considered the risks associated with the Committee and suggested an update to the HR risk to reflect the significant work being undertaken in relation to staff wellbeing and a review of dates on COL45 and COL60 risks. 	
170	<p>FR/25/132 – Any Other Business No other items were raised.</p>	
171	<p>FR/25/133 – Date of Next Meeting The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 23 June 2025 at 2.30pm (North Street).</p>	