

Minutes of the Corporation Board Meeting

Held on Tuesday 5th April 2022 at 4pm

In the Conference Room, Beaumont Building, Wakefield College

Members In Attendance (In person): Yasmin Ayub (YA), Ruth Baxter (RB), Claire Corneille (CC), Samuel Marshall (SM), Andrew McConnell (AM - Chair), Ben Porter (BP), David Powell (DP), Martyn Shaw (MS), Richard Stiff (RSt), Neil Warren (NW), Sam Wright (SW - Principal and CEO)

Members In attendance (Virtually): Ruth Sacks (RSa), Vijay Teeluck (VT), Janet Waggott (JW)

Apologies received from: Julie Craig (JC), Dmitry Fedorov (DF), Kayleigh Hampton (KH)

In attendance: Clare Allcock (CA), Nigel Brook (NB), Lorraine Cross (LC), Lisa Macdonald (LM), Jason Pepper (JP), Antonia Praud (AP -Director of Governance), Karen Sykes (KS), Joanne Taylor (JT)

Item		Action
1	Welcome The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, especially new members Ruth Baxter, Samuel Marshall, Richard Stiff, Vijay Teeluck and Janet Waggott and welcomed Nigel Brook, attending as an observer. The full Executive team were also in attendance and they were welcomed to the meeting. It was explained that they do not always attend each board meeting, but do attend as needed. A round of introductions was made. Apologies were received from JC, DF and KH which were accepted with consent. Nigel Brook and Neil Warren declared an interest in the item from the Search and Governance Committee (item 4). There were no additional items of business to add to the agenda and governors noted the rules of confidentiality.	
2	Minutes of the board meeting on 8 th February 2022 The Board resolved to approve the minutes. Matters Arising from the minutes: 1. The update to the Health and Safety policy has now been included within the Audit plan and will be shared with the board in due course.	1

	2. KH raised the questions at the Student Union this week (30 th March)	2
	and will share their response.	
	3. Work to develop student engagement and confidence in student	
	voice activities has begun, with Hayleigh Shillito leading the process. A report will be shared at the next meeting.	3
	4. Items 4 and 5 are not due until the next governor away day.	4
	6. Nigel Brook is proposed by the Search and Governance Committee	
	(item 4)	
3	Minutes of the board meeting on 10 th March 2022	
	The Board resolved to approve the minutes.	
	Matters Arising from the minutes:	
	The award was both communicated and made in time for payroll run in	
	March.	
4	Selby Corporation Board Minutes from 15 th February	
	RS confirmed the minutes from the final meeting of the Selby Corporation	
	had been reviewed, with segments shared with the ESFA and OfS, as	
	required, to confirm due process had been followed. AM and RS confirmed the outstanding actions from the board and	
	committees had been shared with the Chairs of the new board and	
	committees for the group and actions had already been reviewed at the	
	meeting on 10 th March (Board) and Audit Committee on 8 th March.	
5	Chair's Update from the Audit Committee Meeting on 8th March	
	The Chair of the Audit Committee recorded this was the first formal meeting	
	of the new group. Minutes from the meeting had been shared in advance.	
	The Chair added the committee had had a good discussion about the increased risks post-merger, the need to review policies and had a good	
	conversation with the Internal Auditors. A useful update on apprenticeships	
	was also received. Feedback and recommendations from the Selby Audit	
	Committee were considered, with two specific areas highlighted – work	
	placements and learner experience. The board then considered follow up	
	activities for a fuller Internal Audit schedule for the year ahead.	
6	Risk Update	
	Jason Pepper drew the board's attention to three key risks:	
	See confidential minutes.	
	1. The Lightwave Centre – the group leases a significant part of the	
	building to house construction and sport courses (approx. 500	
	learners age 16-18). The team have been informed the venue may	
	now be redeveloped to create a youth hub, and access to the venue	
	for the college may be lost. This presents a material risk to two	
	important curriculum areas and an urgent project has begun to	
	locate suitable alternative accommodation. Whilst the timescales	
	may not be as imminent as initially thought, the college wishes to be prepared and avoid disruption to learning.	
	prepared and avoid distuption to learning.	

2. The Group MIS System. Plans for the integration, post-merger, are going well but there are increased risks to the group whilst running two systems and making significant changes to processes.

Additional update:

 Wakefield College needs to complete its cyber re-accreditation in the summer (Selby completed this process earlier in the year). This, combined with the launch of a new Windows operating system in 2025, will mean that many of the current college devices will become redundant.

Governors were informed that the approx. cost for replacements would currently be £2million and this could increase due to market factors in the future. JP had a call with the DfE today and is working on a plan to mitigate this risk.

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Governor challenge:

See confidential minutes.

7 Chair's Update from the Search and Governance Committee Meeting on 15th March

NB declared an interest and left the meeting. NW declared an interest in the first two items as he had personally recommended NB for the position.

Election of Independent Board Member: The Committee Chair confirmed that the committee had interviewed NB and recommended the board elect him as an Independent member on a four-year term. NB has the financial and audit expertise the board require, along with a good reference, and varied and relevant governance experience. The board **approved** the recommendation.

Chair of Audit and Finance Committees: The Committee recommended that NB also join the Audit Committee and, after a period of induction, NB can become the Chair of the Audit Committee and NW would move across to the Finance Committee and become Chair of the Finance Committee at this time. It was noted this was the preference of NW and NB had confirmed he was open to this proposal. The Chair of the Finance Committee is temporarily being held by AM, and as Chair of the Corporation this is not ideal so the proposal was effective in the medium term. The board supported this recommendation.

NB returned to the meeting.

Election of a Local Board Member, Castleford College: Julian Harrison (JH) is the Executive Headteacher at Goole Academy, came from Castleford and had attended Wakefield College. He had 20 years' experience as a teacher and 15 years as a member of the Senior Leadership team. The Committee Chair confirmed that the committee had interviewed JH and recommended

the board elect him as an Independent member of the local board at Castleford on a four-year term. The board **approved** this recommendation.

Staff Governor: The Committee recommended that Ruth Baxter be reappointed to the board as Staff Governor remaining on the Group Board from September 2022 as an associate with voting rights and this was **approved**.

Julie Craig: Governors **approved** the recommendation to invite Julie Craig to serve a second term of office.

Staff representation on the Local Boards: The Committee approved the recommendation for Yasmin Ayub to move to the Local Board Castleford, with Ben Porter remaining on the Local Board Wakefield and Ruth remaining on the Local Board Selby. This means that a staff member on the Group board will be represented on each local board and leaves one vacancy on each committee for staff from each college to volunteer to fill.

Gordon McAlpine: The board **approved** the recommendation for Gordon McAlpine to be the new member of the Curriculum and Quality Committee to represent the Local Board Selby College.

The board also noted the resignation from the main board of Charlie Lee Wigley.

Vacancies: SW confirmed that all staff would be informed of the vacancies on the local boards of Wakefield and Castleford. There are:

- three vacancies for Independent Governors on the Local Board of Wakefield. SW has interviewed a solicitor for one of these roles and begun the interview process.
- Three vacancies for Independent Governors on the Local Board of Castleford, plus two student governor vacancies.
- Vacancies on the Finance Committee (at least 2)
- A vacancy on the Curriculum and Quality Committee for a representative from the Local College Board Castleford
- Vacancies on the Search and Governance Committee for a representative from the Local College Board Castleford and Local College Board Wakefield.

Governors challenged the committee to ensure the recruitment processes were open, fair and transparent and to be mindful of:

- The range of skills and expertise
- The diversity of the board.

8 Student Update for Selby College:

Student Voice Groups were held on 2 December 2021 (3 staff & 25 students were in attendance) and 3 March 2022 (4 staff & 8 students in attendance).

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December meeting:

Things going well:

- Students from Health, Childcare, Construction and Engineering were enjoying placements/being out on the job/real work experience
- Practical lessons in Construction
- Sports teams
- 3-day timetables condenses the college week and enables more days for their part-time jobs/other interests

Issues:

- A lack of specialist education/ resources (electrical installation)
- Would like sessions tailored to individual needs, e.g. finance, budgeting, mortgages, looking after yourself, etc.
- Feels that equality of representation is not balanced and is one sided e.g. LGBT community. Some students need more support.
- Would prefer healthier food options and feel food in College is expensive so are choosing to eat elsewhere

Prevent:

All students felt safe in college and do not perceive any current risks.

March meeting:

Survey on catering/ Caterlink: Students completed survey and reinforced that students want more healthy food choices.

Other activities:

- Discussed developing a more comprehensive structure similar to that at Wakefield with student wellbeing reps, student E+D reps, Governor reps, and there was a strong interest in these roles among the students present at the meeting.
- Interest was seen in having a Student Union
- Keen to have joint sporting events and competitions and more interaction between the colleges in general.

It was noted that the recent inter-college sporting competition had been fun and Selby College had won! There is real appetite for a re-match!

Safeguarding: Again, all students reported that they feel safe.

CA confirmed she is looking at opportunities for student voice across the group. She is keen to expand the groups that students can be involved in.

	JP confirmed he had an update on catering. Estates have plans for an improved provision and service levels have been included in contract negotiations.	
	YA is looking at options for a joint sporting event and potentially a colour run.	
	KH will share a full update at the next board meeting.	7
9	Chair's Update AM and SW had the group's annual strategic conversation with the FEC a couple of weeks ago. SW delivered an excellent presentation, detailing what has been achieved in a short timescale and provided the FEC team with reassurance. No recommendations were made and it was a very positive meeting. They acknowledged the merger had been achieved on time and was a comprehensive and well executed project.	
	AM attended an AoC event on leadership plans and governance in relation to the skills agenda and will share highlights on the governor afternoon on 11th May.	8
	Chair's action: One item of Chair's action was noted and Governors noted the confidential report sent to Independent members. Governors questioned the impact of the decision at Selby College on staff and morale and recognised the support from the Deputy Principal, especially within the merger process.	
10	Director of Governance Update Code of Conduct: The Board approved the amendments to the Group Code of Conduct and new members were asked to sign the new form and return it at their first opportunity.	9
	Appraisals and Induction Meetings: All Governors were requested to confirm their availability for an appraisal or induction meeting with Andrew McConnell in the week commencing 25 th April.	10
	ETF Training: Governors noted the latest training update and that the ETF programme would be available on a new platform from 30 th May 2022. They were asked to confirm permission to share their details with the host provider.	11
	Website information: Governors had photos taken in advance of the meeting and confirmed changes to their pen portraits and business interests.	

Meeting dates: The board noted the latest meetings dates and times and it was **agreed** to review the date for the meeting of the Local Board Castleford.

Housekeeping: Lanyards and car parking passes have been ordered for board members. Anyone with dietary requirements that has not confirmed them to the team, should inform AP.

Terms of Reference of the Local Board: The Board **approved** the latest revision to the terms of reference.

11 | Principal's Update

External Factors:

SW's presentation highlighted external factors for the board to consider including:

- Plans to review the apprenticeship levy and the impact on employers
- Skills including the free courses for jobs offer and the government investment in skills boot camps. The group submitted a proposal for the last round of applications and it was confirmed today (5th) that the application had been successful. The college may submit another application - this time focusing on the relationship between Selby College and Drax.
- The Local Plan: There was a pilot in Wave One by the Chamber of Commerce. The intention is for 40 LSIPs to be rolled out next year.

Internal Review:

The presentation included:

- An update on progress post-merger (5 weeks on). The group is building on work developed within the workstreams and has clear action plans.
- Group Structure. Whilst the Executive Team has the same Wakefield members working together, SW has given a lot of thought to what was needed for the group moving forward and there has been a change to the responsibilities held by members of the Executive Team.
 - Underpinning the Executive team is a new structure with new teams, senior positions, and responsibilities. The new Senior roles will be internal adverts initially and offer a number of CPD and developmental opportunities for staff at each college. The local College Director roles will be advertised with a deadline of early May.
- The new group is on a journey and key milestones have changed, and significant investment is planned
- There will be opportunities for improved staff engagement, efficiency and communication.

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- LM, JT and LC are looking at the skills bill and opportunities for the curriculum.
- They are planning to broaden the curriculum offer at Selby College and have been meeting with local Headteachers to understand why numbers have been on the decline.
- There will also be a new Level 1 offer in September.
- The HE growth strategy is in the development stage too.

SW agreed to share the presentation slides.

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Strategic Objective 1: Deliver a high -quality, destination focussed learning experience for all learners.

Student Experience and Support:

The immediate focus has been on Safeguarding and Prevent – which will include introducing access controls at Selby College in the summer and developing the tutorial programme.

There will also be a focus on internal progression. The group need to secure more learners internally. There had been a process in place before but the adoption of a new system at Selby College will provide more structure and consistency and ensure staff and students are focusing on destinations.

The team are also looking at work placement models and practices.

The team are investing in the wider tutorial programme at Selby College, which will replicate the process already in place at Wakefield College.

External Partnerships and Engagement:

Selby College has strong external relationships in place already. SW has spent time meeting with key employers, stakeholders and local headteachers in the local areas to Selby since January 2022, which has been really beneficial.

There are now plenty of opportunities to continue to develop the brands (group and individual colleges), and in particular to develop the brand for Castleford College. An update on the launch of the marketing plan will be shared at the next meeting.

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Covid 19: The group is no longer required to submit regular reports to the DfE, and the colleges are not offering test kits to staff and students anymore. However, the college continues to monitor the impact of covid on attendance rates for students and staff and is seeing an increase in cases, which is in line with data from the local community.

Data Dashboards: The team explained that between now and the end of the year, the group will run with two separate dashboards (one for Wakefield and Castleford combined, the other for Selby) The Executive Team have

tried to present both sets of data in a similar way, but there are gaps in the Selby data due to the college having different targets, KPI and measurement systems.

It is the intention of the board and Executive Team to develop the Strategic Plan for the Group, with new KPIs from September, and have consistent reporting across the group.

Wakefield and Castleford: Overall Attendance (86.6% for 16-18) and retention rates were compared to the previous year's data. There has been a noticeable dip in attendance from adults and the team are constantly reviewing this data, which is likely to also impact retention and achievement rates (although retention remains slightly up on last year). Recently a number of students have withdrawn but the variation in numbers is in line with national estimates and reflects challenges including job opportunities, changing perception on apprenticeships and also the increased number of individuals suffering with their mental health. 317 students were identified as part of the latest tracking cycle and strategies for support are having an impact, with almost one third of students showing marked improvement with attendance rates.

Selby College: The Overall attendance for 16-18 is slightly down (89%) and over 19 attendance is stronger at 92.5%.

Retention – the key is to understand the pressure students are under to take on paid employment or on their mental health. The Horizon programme is being introduced. This provides opportunities to bring students back to college and the key is to keep students engaged, keep in touch and confirm they would be welcome to return as students again in September.

Professional Judgement Grades: This process looks at learners at key points in the year and at the progress they have made. It also identifies those students who are deemed at risk, and looks at the support in place for them. A real benefit of the process is it also tracks student engagement. A system to replicate the Wakefield approach will be introduced at Selby after Easter so that a consistent process can be rolled out across the group.

Staffing Update:

Michelle Jones is now the Deputy Safeguarding Lead. Beejal Petal and Rachael Walker are Student Experience and Support Leaders.

Concern had been noted at both the previous Selby and Wakefield Board meetings about recruitment to vacancies in the Health and Safety teams. The group have now successfully appointed to three roles:

Ralph Allen will be the Health and Safety Officer and has a wealth of experience to share.

Neil Clark and Chris Stuff will both be Assistant Health and Safety Officers.

Ukraine Update:

The ESFA have made an announcement that there is funding available to support adults coming into our districts and the colleges would like to offer support and training.

There are fundraising activities continuing across the student and staff population too.

There are a small number of students with Russian and Ukrainian backgrounds and staff are working with them to offer support on an individual basis.

Good news stories:

- Level 3 students have been placed in a broad variety of successful work placements
- 11 students have made it through to the Regional Finals of Skills Weld
- There was a very successful inter-college basketball match and it was great to see players and support staff coming together. Thanks were noted to YA for both this and future plans for further activities.
- Selby College and Wakefield College have both been jointly nominated for awards at the Educate North Awards being held tomorrow in Manchester.
- Kizzy Wade (Selby College) was a worthy Winner of the AoC Young Student of the Year Award.

Governors thanked the team for a full and informative report. Questions included:

What impact rising costs and inflation may have, as it adds pressure on students? This may impact retention rates, which is why keeping students engaged and offering routes to return to learning programmes in the future is vital to maintaining and improving student numbers.

What campus changes and resources are needed to support the introduction of future curriculum plans? The board will be kept informed in future reports.

Governors confirmed that, as part of the marketing and branding project, the trademarks for each individual college had been secured.

It was noted that the Student Experience report had had a more weighty slant towards Wakefield College and governors were keen to ensure that as the group move forward, consistent and accurate reports would be

developed for all sites. This intent is fully supported by the Executive Team and is based on using available data in the initial transitional period.

Overall, good progress is being made and new teams are working together well. There is a lot of joint practice already.

Priorities include:

- A focus on Safeguarding and prevent. The team are conducting a risk assessment and identifying where practice may need tightening up.
- Completing a pastoral curriculum review and a review of the tutorial programme.
- The local FE Co-Ordinator visited Selby College today to review and will comment on plans.
- Considering a holistic support project for students to support wellbeing.
- Reviewing the work experience and placement offer.
- There are a lot of policies to be reviewed.
- The group plans need to be flexible enough to address the challenges and be sufficiently robust to adapt to potential risks of the current climate.
- Maintaining high levels of support and intervention
- Strengthening the stability and resilience of the team through the period of change
- Focussing on the engagement of students
- Positive and improving Student experience and support
- Supporting the increasing number of students with vulnerable factors. It was noted the group are looking at roles and are adding additional resource in to support roles.

Lead Governor Student Support Update:

DF shared an update on his meeting with Hayley Shillito and invited governors interested to attend a governor and student engagement event. Governors interested and available will confirm their preference for 18^{th} or 25^{th} May.

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Strategic Objective 3: Having a skilled, engaged workforce who feel safe and promote college values

Governors received an update from KS on the shaping of the group's People Strategy: Its underpinning of the AoC Code of Good Governance, and plans for a three-pronged approach to its implementation.

Selby College had similar principles and values, which aids the process to consolidate and amalgamate plans together, but had more focus on affordability.

The strategy has a new context, for a new organisation and in the new climate, due to the pandemic. Challenges faced include: the move to online teaching, staff shortages, some staff feeling unsettled or less secure as a result of merger at all sites, and there are also some inequalities to address.

The group are keen to address this in a timely fashion, whilst being mindful of the impact to the financial health of the organisation. This means a phased timetable may be required.

The group need to continually evidence what steps are being taken to ensure we develop to become an attractive workforce for the future. By July, the group will present the People Strategy. Current themes will continue with an immediate focus on:

- Employee wellbeing
- Remaining as an Employer of Choice
- Staff engagements sessions have begun and the team will be running staff voice sessions for feedback after the Easter break.
- Having a fair and equitable employment model
- Investing heavily in staff development
- Sharing the increased opportunities for staff in a larger group.
- Regular communication SW has provided a number of briefings for staff.

(JW left the meeting with apologies at 7.30pm.)

Progress will be reviewed against questions used by Ofsted eg.

Are we compliant?

Are policies used consistently?

Are we improving?

Is there evidence of impact?

Governors interested in volunteering to be involved were welcomed and invited to inform KS.

Lead Governor Update:

CC met with KS last week and discussed the work on values, and the decision to not attempt to dovetail two people strategies together but look at the strategy afresh. The People strategy needs to underpin activities overall.

The role for governors will be to challenge the strategy in July and ask "Is it ambitious – for staff, and students."

Strategic Objective 4: Resource a high-quality student experience

The combined group are on track to achieve "Outstanding Financial Health" (ESFA) for the current year. Whilst there are some issues to overcome, none are identified as a deal breaker at this time and there is approx. £250,000 headroom in the accounts at present to achieve this outcome.

The group is highly solvent, and continues to invest in staff and infrastructure.

There are also a number of good news items to note:

 It has been confirmed that the college will receive £2 million increase in ESFA funding based on the current curriculum footpath 16

- The group have been successful in their re-application to be an apprenticeship provider
- HE applications are up on figures at this time last year

However, the group need to develop their strategic plan so that a resource plan can be developed.

Of note:

- Key risks were flagged. These include:
 - i) The potential impact from implementing the HR Strategy including removing variations in contracts for staff from Selby and Wakefield (pay, holidays, terms and conditions); the future strategy for Supporting Futures Selby (SFS), the challenge of the living wage versus minimum wage, inflationary pressures Teaching Unions are asking for 10% pay increases and this could exacerbate the already sizeable differential between staff and college teaching staff salaries.
 - ii) Increased competition for students
 - iii) Costs to support the infrastructure policy.
- Work is ongoing to finalise the closing financial statements for Selby College
- A more limited number of business reviews have taken place, informing the schedule, due to the demands from the merger.
- All FE Commissioner benchmarks will be met, with the exception of the staffing costs ratio.

The Internal Auditors will be invited to complete checks in the group's internal controls.

Lead Governor Update:

NW had challenged the assumptions made for escalating utility costs and the exposure for the group, with large and diverse estates across the region. JP confirmed that there is some protection as both colleges had fixed their utility supplies until 2024 and only a small amount of gas comes from a Russian source.

Finances are stable, the risks from merger and use of varied management systems had been highlighted.

13 **Policies**

The board received the recommendation from the Audit Committee and approved:

- The Risk Management Policy
- The Anti-Fraud Policy
- The Anti-Bribery Policy
- The Safeguarding Policy Selby College

14 Briefing Papers

	Governors noted the briefing papers on:	
	Corporate dashboard	
	Progress against the Quality Improvement Plan	
	The Property/ Estates update	
	The Safeguarding Update	
	The Interim report on Governor Attendance	
	The use of the seal of the organisation	
	It was agreed that answers to the questions presented in advance of the meeting will be circulated.	17
15	Review of the effectiveness of the meeting and Emerging Risks	
	Governors summarised areas for improvement including:	
	The timing assigned to items	
	The use of technology	
	The time to provide context for items rather than strategic conversation	
	Papers were sent out in more than one pack	
	Would prefer more time for the report from the Principal and CEO	
	and shorter presentations to achieve a better balance of activity	
	 There was a very full board agenda, albeit reflecting current demands from the Sector. 	
16	Next meeting	
	Development session on 11 th May, 12.30 – 5pm in the Reading Room,	
	Wakefield College.	

List of Actions from the meeting:

1	Share the updated Health and Safety Policy	JP
2	Share feedback from the Student Union at the next	KH
	meeting	
3	Feed back on Student voice activities and engagement at	SW
	the next meeting	
4	Share feedback from the Student Union at the next	KH
	board meeting	
5	Develop plan and share to mitigate the risk from IT	JP
	developments	
6	Promote the vacancies for a staff governor on the Local	SW & AP
	Boards of Castleford and Wakefield Colleges	
7	Share the Wakefield report on Student activities at the	KH
	next meeting	

8	Provide an update on governance items at the	AM
	Development afternoon on 11 th May	
9	Governors are requested to sign the Code of Conduct	New
	and return this to AP at their earliest opportunity	Governors
10	Confirm availability for appraisal/induction meetings	ALL
11	Confirm personal details can be shared with the ETF for	ALL
	training purposes	
12	Re-arrange meeting date for the Castleford Local Board	AP
13	Share the slides from the presentation from SW	AP
14	Present the new marketing and branding plan	LC
15	Confirm availability if wanting to participate in the	ALL
	student engagement event	
16	Inform KS if governors wish to be involved in staff voice	ALL
	activities	
17	Share the questions and answers on the briefing papers	AP