

Minutes of the Corporation Board Meeting

Held on Tuesday 5th July 2022 at 4pm

In the J123 and J124, Jubilee Building, Selby College

Members In Attendance: Yasmin Ayub (YA), Ruth Baxter (RB), Nigel Brook (NB), Samuel Marshall (SM), Andrew McConnell (AM - Chair), Ben Porter (BP), David Powell (DP), Martyn Shaw (MS), Neil Warren (NW), Sam Wright (SW - Principal and CEO). Ruth Sacks (RSa), Vijay Teeluck (VT), Janet Waggott (JW)

Apologies received from: Yasmin Ayub (YA) - partial (Leaving at 6.30pm), Claire Corneille (CC), Dmitry Fedotov (DF) – partial (arriving late), Kayleigh Hampton (KH), Richard Stiff (RSt), Vijay Teeluck (VT)- partial (leaving at 6pm)

In attendance: Lorraine Cross (LC), Lisa Macdonald (LM), Jason Pepper (JP), Antonia Praud (AP -Director of Governance), and Karen Sykes (KS)

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Item		Action
1	Welcome The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from CC, KH, and RS, and partial apologies received from YA, DF and VT, which were accepted with consent. There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda. There were no additional items of business to add to the agenda and governors noted the rules of confidentiality. The Board noted the resignations from Julie Craig and Tom Gordon and formally thanked them for their contribution as governors.	
2	Minutes of the board meeting on 5 th April 2022 The Board resolved to approve the minutes. (DF arrived) Matters Arising from the minutes: 1. The Health and Safety Policy is almost complete and will be shared imminently. 2. KH has confirmed the Student Union did not have any specific feedback for the board.	1.

	and representation from groups of students. Hayley Shillito is looking at each college in turn and will work with DF before confirming plans, which will include online feedback. 4. As noted in point 2. 5. This is an emerging risk which was discussed at length in both recent Audit and Finance, People and Resources Committee Meetings. In a later item governors will receive a report, but the IT team are currently working under pressure with a smaller team, and recruitment of staff is proving difficult. 6. Vacancies will be advertised in a staff briefing. 7. KH had shared a written report with Student Update including the promotion of International Women's day. The Union tried to organise a trip to the National Pride Event but ran out of time to obtain parental consent. They hope individual SU members may still attend. They are supporting Online Safety initiatives as part of the group's Safety Week. They are also meeting with Staff to prepare for elections and plans for the Student Union next year. 8. The Chair gave a governance update at the development session on 11 th May. 9. Governors were asked to sign the Code of Conduct at the meeting in May. 10. There are two outstanding appraisals to be completed and AM has appointments with both governors before the summer. 11. All governors confirmed their details could be shared with the ETF to participate in their new training programme. 12. The meeting of the Castleford Local board was rearranged and it met last week. 13. The slides from the Principal were shared by email with the board. 14. The presentation of the Marketing and Branding Plan has been postponed to the Autumn term. 15. Governors who attended the engagement event will provide an update this evening. 16. Due to illness, the original plans for governor involvement with Hive on the group values have been revised. Governors will have an opportunity to be involved and to receive an update on staff feedback, in September.	
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N	ters Arising from previous minutes and note the board pack from 24 th 2022 ernors noted the responses in page 21-24 of the board pack.	

4 Strategic Plan

The Chair confirmed he had asked the Leadership team to present the strategic plan and the ethos for the organisation and he had requested a two-page information graphic.

Overview of the strategic plan

Everyone was thanked for their contribution so far. The detailed plan will be placed on the website and given to external stakeholders, once approved. Ideally, the strategic plan will be launched at the annual staff conference in August, subject to governor approval.

The vision is to be an outstanding first choice education group positively serving all our communities.

The mission is positively transforming our students lives and the communities we serve by putting them at the heart of everything we do

Governors reviewed them and agreed they were simple and clear, they were community focused and they were straight forward. However, Governors questioned whether the mission should also mention staff and asked the Executive team to reflect on this.

It was confirmed that the mission had been shared with a number of staff, who all wanted students to be put first. Governors questioned whether it could begin "through our people" and then complete the mission statement?

Governors were keen on this addition, but asked Sam right to discuss this with the project team to see whether it was clumsy, as it was a longer mission statement. They confirmed support, either way, so as not to delay the launch in August.

New group values: The college have worked with an organisation called Hive, and they have run staff workshops to reflect on values and behaviours across 3 college sites. It was confirmed that a strength from the merger was both colleges had previously had similar values but it was seen as important to review values afresh for the group moving forward.

Karen Sykes confirmed that the project had not been rushed. In phase one, there were four workshop planned, although covid illness had impacted on their delivery. There was real consistency coming through in the feedback and interestingly there had been more engagement with staff at Selby College than at Wakefield and Castleford. A keyword that has come through from the focus groups was "passion".

There had been a plan to also work with governors in the summer term and due to illness, it was now proposed to review the values with governors in a workshop in September.

Included within the strategic plan, would be positioning statements of the journey to become the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group. Governors also noted there was a statement of how the senior team intends to position the group and it includes the catchment's local, regional and government priorities. The Principal confirmed there is a real emphasis on the skills agenda, which is a priority, and also on Ofsted judgements.

Employer engagement: This needs to focus on current needs and also understanding future needs for all the communities the group serves. The strategy is making a commitment to learners that it will provide relevant work experience and enable every student to be ready for work.

Governor's received a two page document. Page 1 listed the five strategic objectives, and following feedback from the governor event that order had been changed. The order now would be:

- 1. Skills
- 2. Curriculum delivery and quality
- 3. People
- 4. Strong finances
- 5. A new objective focusing on sustainability

Governors reviewed the documents and fed back that it looks like "People" was last on the list from the way the strategic objectives were displayed and asked for this to be amended.

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The second page provided an overview of the ambition of the group and how it intends to measure the objectives. This is a work in progress and it was confirmed the board would review the proposed KPI at their meeting in September. These would then be monitored across the year via committees and the board.

Governor challenge: How does this interlink with the group's growth strategy and is this also being reviewed? It was confirmed that the new growth strategy and people strategy would underpin the strategic plan and both would be presented in a meeting in September.

Governor challenge: Governors confirmed there were other strategies that also needed to underpin the strategic plan including the curriculum statement and intent and finance strategy. It was confirmed these would both be presented to committees in the autumn term.

Governors challenged some of the wording, for example the college taking the lead role in the communities (skills), and it was suggested to change this to "within the college communities".

Governors questioned whether it was possible to add a desire to instill a love of learning for students and that the group would be inclusive and provide transferable skills.

Other proposals included the fact there is an immediate need to meet the skills required in the workforce as well as future proofing, a balance was needed and should be communicated.

Governors questioned to what extent we want the curriculum to inspire learners and was there space to include the word "inspire" somewhere within this strategy. A suggestion would be "high quality, inspiring and inclusive"

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Reviewing the vision, Governors questioned should it be, "an", "the", or include "Yorkshire"?

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Reviewing the KPI, it was noted:

- Financial health can be too vague, cash in the bank is a specific driver that should be considered.
- The need to increase student numbers is not included in the current proposal.
- Increasing various funding streams and grants should be considered.

Governor challenge: Is there enough emphasis in terms of the need to collaborate within this strategic plan? Is "to seek collaboration" too vague?

Governors expressed concern that the proposed measures all appeared to be quantitative at present. Would there be qualitative measures too? They asked how could milestones be set to track progress and how can they compare the groups impact (in comparison nationally) to ensure the group were being aspirational but fair?

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A governor noted Wakefield College had been known to be "kind and caring" but what does this look like, how is it measured and has this been maintained?

Governor challenge: For the digital agenda and innovation, there are no measures other than devices for students should be no more than four years old, does this need expansion? As this is a growing area, and key skill for our students, does the group need to be more aspirational?

Governors were informed that Sam Wright had signed off a new post in this team and potentially further PI were needed rather than having another KPI, that would provide assurance to governors that the offer is improving.

A governor also questioned whether there was any external validation that could be included, for example external awards or validation? It was confirmed that Matrix Accreditation would be added. Some staff had

recently received awards for excellence in teaching and learning and in the future the group would be keen to put staff forward for these external awards.

Subject to the recommendations above, Governors gave provisional approval for the strategic plan and it was confirmed a final version would be shared with board members before they staff development day. Measures would be reviewed in the meeting in September.

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

Student Experience and Support:

MS, BP and DF attended the student engagement event with Samuel Marshall and Kayleigh Hampton. They fed back that they would highly recommend other governors attend if they have an opportunity. There had been a lot of activity on the day. One highlight was to see members of the Police doing Bollywood dancing. Key themes were:

- students felt very well supported,
- students felt safe and
- it was encouraging to hear this from members of the LGBTQ community where some students had initially struggled.

There was a request for gender neutral facilities. This request had significant buy-in from those leaving the Student Union who all said it would really make a difference for students.

Dmitry confirmed that as part of his Lead Governor role he had also met with Claire Allcock and Hayley Shillito. He confirmed it had been a successful year for student voice and they had had good attendance across the year at Student Union meetings. Behaviour is more of a concern - normally incidents of behaviour tail off after half a term however poor behaviour did not reduce at any time across this year. After questioning, it was confirmed this is not linked to staff having higher aspirations, but is potentially more closely linked to the prolonged periods where students were at home in the preceding years due to lockdowns.

The diversity day was great and the group hope to run an event twice a year.

Particular thanks were noted to Kaylee Hampton and Samuel Marshall who had been excellent student governors and advocates for their colleges.

Update from Chair of the Curriculum & Quality Committee

Governors were informed the committee had had a very successful first committee meeting, receiving reports from qualitative deep dives into the curriculum at all sites and received reports on each of the six strands. Both quality improvement plans had been reviewed and most actions are

progressing but attendance and retention continued to be challenging. It was noted that other colleges are having similar challenges and the teams are working hard to reach out to students.

There was a lot of information provided to Governors and they reinforced the message that staff have a relentless focus on quality. The team were able to provide confident responses to a number of challenges presented at the meeting and confirmed that at each site they had evidenced a lot of good teaching and a commitment to improve. The committee were assured the college group has the people and systems in place to provide a high quality education offer for its students.

In particular, Kim Chafer had provided a great level of detail of the QER (Quality of Education Review) process at Selby College, confirmed actions are being taken when needed, and provided some informative case studies. A specific example was an NQT (Newly Qualified teacher) who was thriving as a result of their induction and the support programme in place. Claire Hagerup provided a report on Higher Education which has been impacted by the pandemic this year, which will follow through to our achievement results.

Joanne Taylor provided a report on apprenticeships. Processes are improving at Selby College and the group achievement rates overall will be above but close to the national benchmarks.

The committee wanted to thank Lisa McDonald and her team for excellent reports. Governors from the previous Wakefield board confirmed the committee process would be more informative than the previous deep dives they had conducted and they were encouraged and excited for their roles on the committee in the next academic year. Without a report from the local boards or input from students, they still had a fully packed 2 hour meeting. The committee have agreed to have an additional meeting to review the SAR, and the chair of the committee would also meet with Lisa McDonald.

Even more encouraging, staff had spoken about the synergies from the merger they are already benefitting from and Kim Chafer confirmed support from the High Performance team meant staff members were progressing and benefitting from their support. It was clear the curriculum team are harnessing the potential of both organisations that have come together. Governors will have opportunities from September to take part in learning walks which will be held on each site and have opportunities in these meetings to speak to students and staff. Lisa McDonald is developing a plan of monitoring which will be confirmed at the next committee meeting.

Update from the Local College Board meetings from their Chairs:

Walk-round at Castleford: A number of governors had attended the visit at Castleford College and there had been opportunities to meet with staff and students. There was a great atmosphere walking round, it felt very calm, students had supported a taster day earlier in the day, and staff confirmed discipline was improving. It was a good opportunity for governors to get to know the college. Governors confirmed their desire for more student voice opportunities.

Local Board meetings had taken place and Governors reported back that they too had provided opportunities to learn about the wealth of experiences and good news stories at each site. They would all benefit from student input in the future.

SO3 – Have a skilled, engaged workforce who feel safe and promote College values and Strategic Objective 4: Resource a high-quality student experience

Feedback from the Finance, People and Resources meeting: Governors received and approved the proposed name change of the

committee.

Andrew McConnell had stood in as the temporary Chair at the last meeting. The group recommended Neil Warren become the chair of the committee and move across from Audit Committee with immediate affect. Governors approved this recommendation.

The committee terms of reference were reviewed and are being amended to ensure the balance is correct between finance, people and estates responsibilities.

The people strategy will be reviewed in an additional meeting in September and the recent staff survey will be reviewed in detail by this committee. Governors will also review the output from the values workshops before they are presented to an additional meeting of the board in September. The committee also reviewed the financial report from May and confirmed the group are forecasting outstanding financial health (ESFA) for the current year. There have been some changes within individual lines however overall the group results balance out. It has been a turbulent year and there are some specific merger costs that the group have asked should be pulled out and separated within future reports. The committee confirmed staff should be congratulated for what they have achieved overall this year.

There is a lot of work ongoing on structures and staffing levels and this will be reviewed by the committee in the autumn term. The key messages are the finances will help to deliver the group strategic plan, and will deliver a high quality student experience across the group, and additional costs have been found for additional staff and investment to help the group deliver the growth plan.

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Plans also include building capacity, for example the IT infrastructure.

Positive messages:

- Over £42 million turnover.
- Growth income across most income streams including 16 to 18, apprenticeship's, adult skills and a successful distance learning programme adopted from Selby College, High Needs.
- The group has good employer relations.
- All colleges are well thought of by Ofsted.
- There is good curriculum breath and diversity.
- The group will deliver at least good financial health (top end) until July 2025.

Challenges:

- Rising inflation.
- Utility costs forecast to increase by up to £600k.

Details in private business.

Merger and structural costs:

• Details in private business.

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Overview of key metrics:

The committee reviewed the level of cash reserves and noted that if £2.5 million is spent on those plans it does deplete group cash reserves. The committee confirmed it needed to review the reserves policy.

Following their robust discussion at the last meeting, there is confidence

the committee can provide robust challenge and have an impact. Governors confirmed the variance analysis very useful too.

The committee also challenged whether it should change the focus on maintaining outstanding financial health in the future, and acknowledged it would only be 10 points off outstanding financial health by year three. This will be considered by the committee and presented to the board.

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There is a plan to merge the financial systems from the start of August.

Governors questioned where results had deteriorated and asked if there were any lessons to learn from this. It was noted that where lessons could be learned they would, however it had been an exceptional year. The group had asked Jason Pepper to look at cost planning and identify risks and assumptions under it's contingency planning to mitigate key risks. It also asked for a second plan, to respond to some key inflationary pressures.

The board reviewed the reports and approved the budget.

Risk Register:

The new Risk Register was presented to the board and it was confirmed there was a need to review the group risk appetite again. This had also come up at the recent Audit Committee meeting. Members confirmed there may be a need to be less risk averse for the next couple of years as the merger beds in and Jason Pepper confirmed he would present a paper in the Autumn term.

Emerging risks:

Inflation - the AOC are recommending a 2.25% overall pay increase, plus £750 pounds for all staff on under £25,000 a year and £500 pounds to staff (on a locally determined threshold) which potentially equates to a 5.5% to 6% pay award overall.

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Retention and recruitment is also challenging. There is increased competition, and significant turnover in key areas. In particular, there have been changes in the IT team. As a result, the group migration project has now been delayed to summer 2023. This may impact on teaching and learning.

Update Items

7 Chair's Update

The group were offered six days of NLG (National Leader of Governance) support and the Chair requested to use Charles Buchanan from East Kent College, with whom he had already established a relationship.

To date, Charles has visited Wakefield College, and Sam Wright and Andrew met their Group Principal on their reciprocal visit. They explained how their local college boards report into their curriculum and quality committee. They have four full board meetings a year and their meetings last two hours. They reviewed the scheme of delegation and terms of reference to the committees, and will review the ones here to avoid any duplication.

Andrew McConnell also met with the Chair of York College and discussed the higher level of engagement required from the board outside of board meetings and that at York College they have a governor engagement policy.

Terms of Office:

At East Kent College, they reset the terms of office post -merger. AM and SW spoke to Martin Sim from the FEC who confirmed the board could decide to reset terms of office to start again for all governors from the 1st of March.

Governors questioned whether it would create a significant recruitment challenge in four years and it was confirmed that individual governors can confirm if they wish to serve a four year term from the 1st of March or would alternatively prefer to serve a shorter term, matching the term they would have been on if the merger had not taken place. Andrew confirmed he would have individual conversations. It was confirmed that Governors

	could always resign before the end of that term if they wished. Governors approved the change, with terms of office to be confirmed after individuals conversations.	20		
8	Director of Governance Update Governors confirmed their support to items in the report including:			
	 Streamlining the content of board meetings to allow time for challenge and debate on key strategic items. Receiving a written report from the Chair's of Committees. Reducing the number of schedules meetings each year. It was noted, that for specific reasons, the Audit Committee, Curriculum and Quality Committee and Finance People and Resources Committee, had all agreed to hold additional one off meetings in the Autumn term, and that Chairs of Committees would continue to request additional meetings, in the future. Resetting terms of office Governors noted various training opportunities. Received the new FE Governance guide. Update on the development of Learning walks and Lead Governor responsibilities. 			
9	 Chair of Search and Governance Committee Update Governors received a report from the searching governance committee and Governors approved: the recommendation for Tim Welton to join the local College Board at Wakefield Julian Harrison to join the Curriculum and Quality Committee as a representative of the Local College board, Castleford. Martyn Shaw to join the Search and Governance Committee as a representative of the Local College board, Castleford. Claire Corneille to join the Search and Governance Committee as a representative of the Local College board, Wakefield Neil Warren to join the Finance, People and Resources Committee and become the Chair Nigel Brook will become the Chair of the Audit Committee Richard Stiff to join the Audit Committee Dmitry Fedotov to be the Safeguarding Lead Governor Yasmin Ayub to be the Diversity Lead Governor Nigel Brook to be the Audit Lead Governor Dave Kellett to be the Health and Safety Lead Governor Particular thanks were noted to Neil Warren and Nigel Brooke who had supported the audit and finance committees recent meetings. Governors 			
10	approved the committee membership for the next academic year. Chair of Audit Committee: At the Audit Committee meeting on the 21st of June they received the last			
	internal audit report for Selby College from Audit 1. This report provided			

assurance to the committee that the new processes for the management of apprenticeships were fit for purpose.

VT left the meeting.

There was one alleged incident of fraud and governors received a report and investigation update.

Governors received internal and external audit reports which confirmed fees for both are increasing. They challenged the value for money benefit, even when separating out specific merger related activities. They confirmed they will potentially re tender to ensure they are getting value for money in the next year.

The committee recommended the plans for the external and internal audit for next year with only one change (separating out the external governance review) which were approved by the board.

The committee were also recommended to have an additional meeting with the Finance, People and Resources Committee to review separately the accounts for Selby College and for Wakefield and Castleford Colleges for the next academic year (this was a recommendation from RSM) which Governors supported.

11 | Principal's Update

SW provided an update on the in-depth monitoring of attendance and retention for both Wakefield and Castleford combined. It has been challenging all year and the group had set an aspirational target of 95%. Similar patterns of decline have been seen across all three colleges as the pandemic has had an impact. The group have put in additional support to support students but a dip in retention figures has still been identified.

In terms of student feedback there has been a lot of activity and the student survey results are now in. Positive results have been seen for the following responses:

- I would recommend my course or college to a friend 86% (SC) and 92% (WC and CC)
- Teaching is good 89% (SC) and 90% (WC and CC)
- I feel safe 96% (SC) and 95% (WC and CC)

It was confirmed that the curriculum and quality committee will review the results in detail at their next meeting.

Staffing Updates:

 The staff survey closed on the 24th June and 412 members of staff took part. The results have not been evaluated and so the full results will be reviewed at the Finance, People and Resources Committee. 21

The report will then highlight the top level responses and actions at the preceding board meeting.

- Staff briefings took place at all sites on the 23rd of June. At these meetings staff received the proposed staff structures for the next academic year. Staff have also been taking part in values workshops and enjoyed feel good days on the 7th and 15th of July.
- Diversity training is planned for all staff.
- There is an all staff BBQ and staff recognition awards on the 8th July.
 The event is being held at Castleford College.
- The staff conference has been confirmed on the 23rd August at Elland Road.
- New college directors have been appointed and once the new director for Castleford College has confirmed they have accepted the post, their details can be shared with board members.

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Policy and funding landscape:

The team have continued to ensure the group is well placed for funding and to work collaboratively with external partners.

- The group are hoping to secure funding in a SDF bid with both West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire County Council (for green technology)
- LSIPs Funding is chamber led and the group have been included in submissions from both local authorities.
- The group have also done well and secured funding for adult education for next year.
- New funding will be available (levelling up agenda) through consortium bid
- There is also a bid ready for submission through the OFS for carbon capture.

Ofsted:

There will be enhanced inspection results for post 16 and there will be a real focus on how colleges are meeting the skills needs of their area. This is a major change in focus.

It was confirmed Lorraine Cross and her team are focusing on stakeholder engagement and are reviewing the various regions and challenges within the college footprint. Regular reports of progress will be shared with the board.

Ofsted are updating their EIF, with the new version due on 30th June. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

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Recruitment update:

- Members of the team have been busy getting to know Headteachers in the Selby, Howden and Goole areas.
- For 16 to 18 provision, it is a positive picture. Staff have also completed a robust internal progression exercise.

- HE results are looking positive overall but it is a mixed picture by course. Construction and engineering have seen a dip and therefore a lot of work is being done to promote these opportunities.
- Apprenticeships recruitment is very positive.
- The college has also successfully received its matrix accreditation.

YA left the meeting.

Items to celebrate:

- It was Mental Health Awareness Week recently and staff and students came together to complete a number of activities. There has been great feedback from both groups.
- Students also put on fantastic end of year performances and exhibitions.
- Other student activities include significant fundraising for the Ukraine.
- Cultural awareness is strong and there are great college communities at each site.
- The group also hosted the world skills semi-final for welding at Castleford College and had eight students in the semi-finals.
- At the recent award ceremony three members of staff also received awards from Pearson for outstanding teaching and learning.

Governors noted there was a lot of positives in the report and a lot had been achieved, notwithstanding the merger.

As it was the last meeting of the year governors thanked the staff and in particular the Executive Leads for an extraordinary effort this year.

12 **Briefing Papers**

Governors noted the briefing papers on:

- i. Corporate Dashboard
- ii. Progress against the Quality Improvement Plan
- iii. Safeguarding Update
- iv. Report on Governor Attendance 2021/22
- v. Use of the Seal of the Corporation
- vi. Plan for business flow between meetings

13 Review of the effectiveness of the meeting

Governors confirmed they would email their feedback on the meeting.

14 Any other Business

Governors noted particular thanks to the Student Governors, Kayleigh Hampton and Samuel Marshall, for their support and input and wished them both well.