**Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Corporation (Group)**

**Group Board of Governors (Corporation)**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 19 May 2026 at 4.00PM**

**Via MS Teams**

Present:

- Dmitry Fedotov
- David Powell
- Neil Warren
- Andrew McConnell
- Sam Wright
- Rachael Martindale
- Julie Lawson
- Tim Welton
- Vijay Teeluck
- Tracy Tallant
- Stuart Brenton
- Harry Gunson

In attendance:

- Caroline Carter, Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources
- Karen Sykes, Group Executive Director of People
- Clare Allcock, Group Executive Director of Student Experience and Support
- Lorraine Cross, Group Executive Director of External Relations and Development
- Sam Cremore, Head of Governance and Legal Services

Apologies:

- Jayne King
- Adam Greenwood
- Isabelle Boocock
- Ellie Thomas

- Freddie Cleaver

**1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

1.1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, which had been called in accordance with the Instrument and Articles and Standing Orders, and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Apologies were noted as above and the meeting commenced.

1.2. The Chair noted that Jayne King had expressed her thanks for the quality of the papers, a sentiment with which, he said, he was sure the Board agreed.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair invited declarations of interest. No additional declarations were made.

**3. Minutes of Meetings held on 24 March 2026 and 22 April 2026**

3.1. The Board reviewed the minutes of the previous meetings. No inaccuracies were identified and members confirmed that the minutes were an accurate record.

3.2. IT WAS RESOLVED TO approve the minutes of the meetings held on 24 March 2026 and 22 April 2026.

**4. Matters Arising**

4.1. The Head of Governance and Legal Services presented the matters arising. Updates were provided on enrichment data work, link governor visits, progression of the Board Assurance Framework, and review of the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice. The Board noted that the remaining action from April related to the F Block contractor appointment, to be addressed under the Chair's update.

4.2. Questions and answers:

4.2.1. Q: Was the Vice Chair recruitment progressing?
A: This had not yet been launched but interest in the role would be sought following the meeting and considered at the Search and Governance Committee.

## 5. Chair's Business

The Chair reported on action taken between meetings to appoint a contractor for the F Block project. The Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources explained that Lodestone Projects had been selected following evaluation of bids, despite not being the lowest cost submission, due to the strength of its proposal, shorter programme and greater confidence in delivery. Concerns had been identified with the lowest cost bid, including deliverability and pricing certainty. The appointment had been made under delegated authority and works had now commenced on site.

## 6. Principal's Business

6.1. The Principal presented a verbal update supported by slides. The Board noted strong performance, including achieving the highest 16–18 achievement rates in Yorkshire and the Humber. Retention had improved across all provision types against the same time the previous year, particularly in 19+ provision following targeted interventions. Updates were also provided on curriculum reform, stakeholder engagement activity, new facilities, sustainability successes and recent awards for which governors offered their congratulations. Ongoing risks remained broadly unchanged, although local political developments and the use of AI were being monitored as emerging risks. Overall, the organisation was reported to be in a strong position and on track against its strategic objectives.

6.2. Questions and answers:

6.2.1. Q: What had driven improvement in 19+ retention?
A: Improvements to course structure, longer induction processes and enhanced monitoring arrangements.

6.2.2. Q: Were there any risks from curriculum reform?
A: No immediate risks; a transition planning statement would be brought forward to the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

6.2.3. Q: What engagement had taken place following local elections?
A: Engagement had not yet taken place but meetings were planned once governance arrangements had been confirmed. The potential impact of changes was unknown.

## 7. Annual Accountability Statement 2026–27

7.1. The Group Executive Director of External Relations and Development presented the final draft, noting that it had been refined following Board feedback at the last Governor Strategic Planning Workshop and stakeholder engagement. Amendments included recognition of transport and logistics and additional focus on workforce recruitment challenges. The document set out measurable objectives aligned to strategic priorities.

7.2. Questions and answers:

7.2.1. Q: How were growth targets determined and how had ambition and realism been balanced?

A: A written response would be provided setting out the underlying assumptions.

7.2.2. Q: Was CPD targeting sufficiently robust?

A: The stated requirement represented a minimum, with broader CPD activity taking place across the organisation. Impact was stated as the priority not hours.

7.3. A discussion was had regarding the apparent omission of AI and technology from the document. However, it was noted that this was covered by the Curriculum and Skills Strategy and was, in any event, included in the document itself.

7.4. IT WAS RESOLVED TO approve the Annual Accountability Statement 2026–27.

## 8. Curriculum & Skills Strategy 2026–30

8.1. The strategy was presented following refinement from earlier drafts and extensive stakeholder consultation. It set out four strategic objectives supported by external drivers and internal priorities, with delivery through detailed operational plans. The Board noted the increased ambition within the revised objectives.

8.2. A conversation was had regarding the Group’s responsibilities to the regions it serves and to prepare students to live well in the world and it was agreed that the inclusion of suggested wording would be considered.

8.3. IT WAS RESOLVED TO approve the Curriculum & Skills Strategy 2026–30.

## 9. Stakeholder & Employer Engagement Strategy 2026–30

9.1. The Board considered the strategy and noted its role in evidencing stakeholder engagement and supporting inspection and external scrutiny. The document included case studies and stakeholder feedback.

9.2. Questions and answers:

9.2.1. Q: Could further focus be given to demonstrating impact of our work with external stakeholders within their case studies?
A: Impact had been requested from contributors, although responses varied. This would be considered in future iterations.

9.3. The Board agreed that the interests of Dmitry Fedotov and Alex Miles, Board member and co-opted governor, respectively, each of whom had been included as case studies in the document, be noted.

9.4. The Board endorsed the strategy.

## 10. Briefing Papers

10.1. The Board received the Corporate Dashboard, Safeguarding Update, Finance Update, Risk Register and Governor Attendance report.

10.2. Questions and answers:

10.2.1. Q: What had driven the significantly improved financial position since the last meeting?
A: Reduced pay costs, vacancy savings and pension contribution changes.

10.2.2. Q: Were vacancy levels a concern and are some teams fully staffed with agency staff?
A: Vacancy levels were being actively managed, with further detail on hard to fill vacancies to be provided to the Finance, People and Resources Committee, with the Board to be kept updated, as appropriate. It was noted that the number of vacancies referenced in the finance paper were for the whole Group, but assurance was given that no single team was predominantly filled with agency staff though it was acknowledged some teams, for example Construction and Engineering, were using more agency staff at present.

10.2.3. Q: How many of the budgeted vacancies are being actively recruited to?

A: The detail would be shared with the Finance, People and Resources Committee at the next meeting and information provided to Board, as appropriate.

10.2.4. Q: How prepared was the Group for recovering from a cyber incident?
A: Assurance was provided regarding monitoring, controls and cyber/disaster recovery planning to Audit Committee in the spring term. Further reporting to Finance, People and Resources Committee and the Board would follow. Governors asked for assurance to focus on disaster recovery arrangements.

**11. Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risks**

The Chair invited feedback on the meeting, noting the limitations of virtual meetings. Emerging risks had been covered within earlier discussion. The meeting was then closed.

**Signed:** ………………………………………………. **Date:** 07.07.2026

**Actions**

| No. | Item | Details | Deadline | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4.2.1 | Circulate Vice Chair expression of interest and consider at Search and Governance Committee | Next meeting | Head of Governance |
| 2 | 6.2.2 | A transition planning statement would be brought forward to the Curriculum and Quality Committee | The next C&Q meeting | Group Executive Director of Curriculum and Quality |
| 3 | 7.2 | A written response was to be provided regarding the method by which growth targets had been determined. | The next Board meeting | Group Executive Director of External Relations and Development |
| 4 | 10.2.2 | Provide detailed analysis of vacancies and agency usage to the Finance, People and Resources Committee. | The next FP&R meeting | Group Executive Director of People and the Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources |
| 5 | 10.2.3 | Provide assurance on cyber incident response and disaster recovery planning to Finance, People and Resources Committee and the Board | Next Meeting | Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources |