

Minutes of the Group Corporation Board Meeting

Held on 14th March 2023 at 4pm

In the Board Room, Castleford College

Members In Attendance: Yasmin Ayub (YA), Ruth Baxter (RB), Nigel Brook (NB), Dmitry Fedotov (DF), Jayne King (JK), Ellie Halligan (EH), Andrew McConnell (AM - Chair), Ben Porter (BP), Martyn Shaw (MS), Richard Stiff (RSt), Vijay Teeluck (VT), Janet Waggott (JW), Neil Warren (NW) Sam Wright (SW - Principal and CEO).

Apologies received from: Claire Corneille (CC), David Powell (DP), Jess Smith (JS), and partial apologies were noted from Jayne King (JK) (arriving late) and Janet Waggott (JW) (leaving the meeting early).

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

Apologies received from: Lorraine Cross (LC)

Item		Action
1	Welcome The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.	
	Governors noted the resignation from Janet Waggott, and recorded their thanks and recognition for the significant contribution Janet had made, especially through the merger activities for Selby College and being a member of the Joint Steering Group.	
	Governors were also informed of the request for an extended sabbatical for David Powell, for an additional three-month period, and confirmed their support and approval , effective immediately.	
	Apologies were received from CC, DP, JS, and partial apologies were received from JK and JW, which were all accepted with consent. Apologies were also received from LC.	
	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.	
2	Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the board meetings on 12 th December 2022 and 19 th January 2023	

Matters Arising from the minutes on			
mend spelling of Doncaster in the September board	AP	Completed	
ninutes resent the Health and Safety Policy to the Board meeting n 19 th January	JP	Completed	
resent the Growth Strategy on 19 th January	Executive Team	Completed	
Neet to review the staff survey results from the York led urvey and the latest pulse survey	CC and KS	Met and update at F, P and R planned on 9 th March	
repare a contingency plan, for rising staff costs and resent to the Finance, People and Resources Committee	JP	Ongoing	1
resent a Reserves Strategy to the Finance, People and esources Committee in the Spring/ Summer	JP	Ongoing	2
omplete mapping exercise on 13 th December with the xecutive Team	Executive Team and AP	Completed	
rovide a report on the challenges, opportunities and onstraints and future plans for the estate	Executive Team	Estates Report will be reviewed by the board on 3 rd May	3
irculate some information about the recent ONS eclassification	JP	Completed	
Ipdate on the bus tender process		 Our agreement with Arriva for services to Selby College expires on 31 March. We have negotiated an extension to current services until 4 July (the end of teaching in the summer term). Internally we have specified 3 x new routes for dedicated services to serve Selby College. We are working with North Yorks County Council to procure private bus operators to run these routes as we think this will offer better value, be more reliable and eliminate any potential safeguarding risks that currently exist with young people using public transport. We are looking seriously at putting on additional routes (including a shuttle service between the College and Selby bus and train stations) and, next year, a service to and from 	
		Tadcaster.	4
Watters Arising from the Confidentia	l Minute	s on 12 th December 2022:	
	Executiv Team	e Will be shared if needed	5
	JP	Will be reviewed post ESFA	6

Matters Arising from the Minutes o	on 19 th Januar	y 2023:	
Formally gather feedback from	LC	Ongoing	
attendees at the external			
engagement event			
Review of the validation process	Curriculum	Completed	
	and		7
	Quality		
	Committee		
Review Estates plan and	JP	On plan	
utilisation of the estate at the			
strategy event in May			

3 Principal's Update

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs): There are two separate plans for the region the group will be engaging with (West Yorkshire, and York and North Yorkshire). Draft sectors / themes will be communicated to providers to inform Accountability Statements by 31st March. Meetings and events in April and May will inform further drafts. It was confirmed that the board will review a draft on the May development event. The current deadline for the LSIP to be submitted to the DfE is 31st May.

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Development Day: On the development event on 3rd May, Governors will also review the Estates and Infrastructure Strategy and the new Group Sustainability Strategy.

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(JK joined the meeting.)

SEND: The SEND Reform Strategy was published at the start of March. Changes will be required, including the way staff work with SEND students. There is a commitment to include funding for supported internships. Updates include:

- EHCPs (Education and Health Care Plans) are to be standardised and digitised
- Transitions into Post 16 and adulthood need focus for SEND
- Colleges need a lead governor for SEND, and volunteers were requested to inform the Chair.
- National Standards for intervention will be introduced
- Laura from the Inclusion Team has applied to join the National Standards Board

Attendance: There is still more work to do to build resilience and raise attendance across the group. Latest figures by college, and across the group were shared (16 - 18 is 80%, 19 + is 79%, HE is 85% and Apprenticeships is 88%). Assurance was given that staff are focussed on increasing attendance across all provision types.

Retention: This has improved (16 - 18 is 95%, 19+ is 93%, HE is 88%). Apprenticeships are not where the group hoped it would be after a number of withdrawals are required.

Recruitment: 16-18: Overall and at each College, figures are up across the board on applications, and by more than 10% for the results for the Group, Selby and Wakefield. Interview evenings are going well and with higher attendance than in previous years. Open day attendance figures are down on last year, but governors were reminded there were inflated numbers of attendees at open days last year due to no Year 10 taster days taking place the previous year.

Curriculum Development: A new Level 1 Programme is being introduced at Selby College and the launch event, attended by Heads, confirmed there is extensive interest in the locality.

Programmes include -

- Art, Design & Media
- Computing & Digital Design
- Construction Skills Bricklaying, Plumbing, Carpentry & Joinery
- Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy
- Land-based Studies
- Care and Early Years
- Health and Social Care
- Achieve, Celebrate, Excel (ACE)

New Branding: Having launched the Group Logo, further work is now planned to promote three subgroups at each college:

- The Sixth form
- The University Centre
- Apprenticeships

New websites will go live next term too.

New look Vision, Mission & Values: Governors noted the refreshed group statements that have had a soft launch with staff and are being incorporated into all induction materials.

Staffing Update: Christopher Baker will join as the new Director of Apprenticeships on 24th April. Chris spent 5 years at Hull College and has a wealth of experience. Governors also noted Graham Sherwin, Head of Engineering, will leave in May 2023 to go to Barnsley College as Head of Engineering. Assurance was given that interim arrangements are in place whilst the team recruit for a new Group Head.

Two other Senior members of staff have provisionally notified the team of their intention to leave the group.

Emerging Risks/ Challenge: Governors received an update on:

- ILR funding audit
- Recruitment and retention
- Staffing budget the pay award will be higher than in the original budget
- Staff wellbeing, and the results of the latest pulse survey
- IT Items (recruitment and retention of staff, network development (especially at Selby), availability of kit/ infrastructure items, and move to a group network)

New devices will be distributed to staff at Selby College after Easter. **Good news items:** Governors noted the good news items that had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Governors challenged reasons behind the recruitment difficulties in some parts of the group, and whether other options were being considered.

Governors also asked for an update on the IT Infrastructure on the 3rd May.

4 Student Update

The student governor provided an update, noting:

- The Student Union are going to run some awareness raising/recruitment for arts ambassadors after the group spoke to the Youth Voice Coordinator at SPARK who are recruiting arts ambassadors to try and further engage young people with galleries, museum, arts and culture.
- They are planning an end of year celebration event and party in May.
- There have been 2 further class rep meetings at Wakefield and this has led to: wrist rests being purchased for IT classrooms, a 'spotlight' on curriculum areas to share the work that is being done across the college and a change in location of the smoking shelter.
- The Youth Association came in on mental health awareness day and our wellbeing officers raised awareness of support services and self care strategies.
- The Student Union have prepared a disability podcast and are also planning a LGBTQ podcast and a mental health awareness podcast.
- The Union will hold tributes for Brianna Ghey and Nichola Bulley in the reading room in the next couple of weeks.
- They are also supporting Planet Earth Games and sold valentines cards on seeded paper with the promotion of physical activity/being outdoors to plant these once used.
- Easter cards and the colour run are planned at the end of this month.

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- 2 members of the SU at Wakefield are going to the NUS conference this week in Harrogate.
- There are plans in place to appoint Class reps at each college, with a plan for those appointed this year to fulfil a student governor role next year.
- Students are training to be sports activators.

Governors noted the range of activity and engagement from the Student Union this year, and recorded their thanks to the students involved.

5 Chair's Update

The governor training event, "Preparing for the Ofsted monitoring visit", was a very useful session, and gave much food for thought. The importance of the Curriculum and Quality Committee was noted.

Governors received an update from the Search and Governance Committee and members **approved** the appointments of:

- Annabelle James to the Curriculum and Quality Committee
- Jayne King to the Remuneration Committee
- Dmitry Fedotov will continue as the Interim Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee
- The recommendation of student governors appointed from nominations from the Class Reps at each college

Governors were informed that Gordon McAlpine had resigned. They recognised the significant contribution that Gordon had made, formerly to the Selby Board, and since merger to the Local College Board Selby, and the Curriculum and Quality Committee. It was noted his retirement was a loss to the board.

Governors were also informed that Yasmin Ayub would be leaving the group, and her role as a staff governor, for an exciting new opportunity with the AoC. Yasmin would continue working with the group, in her new role.

This leaves three Lead Governor vacancies, and governors were asked to note their interests in these vacancies with AM and AP:

- Equality and Diversity Governor
- Careers and CEIAG Governor
- SEND Governor

6 Director of Governance Update

Governors confirmed receipt of the updated FE Governance Handbook.

An update was given on the proposed AoC Code of Good Governance Consultation, and governors noted the dates for response.

Governors noted various training updates

- New log ins on personal email to the Virtual College
- The change of platform for the ETF Training.

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The importance of confirming attendance at the online safeguarding sessions for those who could not attend the in person safeguarding training with 12 Vicki Maybin. Governors agreed to email their availability for sessions. Upcoming one off ETF training sessions were shared. All governors were asked to review and confirm their Annual Declarations 13 of Interests. Governors noted the development session on 3rd May at Wakefield District Housing. Governors received the updated Governors Expenses Policy. One error was noted, in the mileage between college sites. 7 **Emerging Risks and Risk Register** Governors noted the impact that the audit was having on capacity in the team and on staff morale, and asked that this be noted in the strategic annual conversation with the ESFA. Governors noted the importance of concluding the audit in as timely a period as possible, as the focus should be on development 14 and improvement of joint processes for the future, rather than reviewing processes in the past. Recruitment: Governors also noted that there were a number of areas where it was proving challenging to recruit experienced staff, and the group were engaging with agencies. It was reported that some agencies are also struggling to recruit some specialist staff. IT Infrastructure, capacity and migration continues as a high risk. Using consultants, the planned migration over the summer is still running to plan. Operating costs: Whilst savings are being made, and roles are not being automatically replaced, and planned efficiency savings were currently ahead of plan, increased costs for agency staff is impacting on operating costs. Additional pressures from rising utility costs, the higher pay award, and the group's commitment to pay the increased national living wage, are all impacting on rising operating costs. 2023-24 budget and beyond: It is likely that there will be a "real term" reduction in ESFA funding, due to lagged funding, reduced student numbers, and the impact of inflation. However, a number of unanticipated grants, means some funds the group intended to use from reserves, can instead be protected. Likelihood of ILR Audit: It is anticipated the group will be chosen for an ILR audit again next year. **Strategic Objectives** 8 SO1 – Develop a Skills Offer that is aligned to the needs of the areas we serve through partnership and collaboration

Governors congratulated the team for the professional and positive employer engagement event held on 19th January, including stakeholders, key employers, civic and community partners, educational providers and skills support networks.

Governors **approved** the Stakeholder and Employer Engagement Strategy and confirmed that the positive testimonials really brought the document to life.

Governors then reviewed the Curriculum and Skills Strategy and noted:

- References to the District and County Councils should be removed and amended, with the creation of the new North Yorkshire Council 1st April.
- Governors asked for assurance that the strategy was still fit for purpose with the latest publication of the SEND reform.
- Governors noted the challenge (page 69) of attracting specialist staff, and the challenge of schools now looking to recruit SEND staff, and further increasing the level of demand for good staff.

Subject to the amendments above, governors **approved** the Curriculum and Skills Strategy.

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9 Strategic Objective 2 – Ensure our Curriculum Delivery is high quality, inclusive and ambitious and we provide an outstanding student experience

The Curriculum and Quality Committee noted the desire to increase the teaching and learning experience on the committee.

Annual Student Experience and Support Update: Governors received the report, which had been discussed in advance with DF, as Lead Governor. Support continues at high levels with some differences in the level of support from the previous year relating to recovery from the pandemic, staffing challenges and also the demand from student need. Ensuring safeguarding measures are in place remains as the priority. Improving attendance continues to be a key focus for the team.

Team structure: The directorate has been amended with the introduction of Local College Directors, a Group Safeguarding Lead and a Head of Pastoral Curriculum. This has meant new roles and staff but also a change in responsibilities for some roles and changes in their leads.

508 young students across the group have accessed the service with 1,500 meetings taking place since September, 68% of which is for mental health/anxiety related concerns. This is lower than the previous data recorded for Wakefield College.

The Student Support Impact Group (SSIG) continues to be the referral process for the most vulnerable students with 247 students referred in total across the group compared with 272 last year, although this includes Selby College and so is

slightly down in comparator terms on last year. 31% of SSIG referrals are mental health related (76). 19% of SSIG students have been referred for family related concerns (47).

Training has been provided and reporting systems aligned across the group focussed on sexual harassment and violence.

The number of student behaviour meetings and disciplinaries has increased, with 726 overall to date for Castleford and Wakefield, an increase of over 200 from the previous year and then a further 55 at Selby College. A large proportion of the meetings have related to attendance concerns.

Safeguarding: The staff structure has been revised, to reflect the complexities of the group. Carol Price is the Group Safeguarding Lead and a number of staff are doing DSL training.

Governors asked if there was anything they could do to support staff. It was confirmed that the group are investing in CPD and in the development of the teams. During the staff PDR's, they have identified the importance of supervision for key members of staff. The group recognises that if it does not support staff, they cannot effectively support the students.

Governors challenged the real drop in support from the SSIG, and noted it could be down to new processes for how students are referred, but is also down to capacity as the team need to recruit. Governors noted the importance of agreeing the job evaluation results and pay award as soon as possible, as the group do not want to lose additional specialist staff.

Governors noted the number of Young Carers at Selby College had appeared low in the past and were assured that more students were now being identified. By adopting the new recruitment processes within the group, it is hoped additional student information will improve this further in future years.

EDI report: Governors reviewed the infographic and noted it is a work in progress to develop and share the management information and data across the group.

Governors questioned how the group compares with other college groups and local colleges, and it was confirmed that it is difficult to compare. There is no easy benchmarking data to access.

Governors challenge the gender pay gap report and asked what the group were doing to improve the ratios moving forward. The job evaluation project, and raising salaries in line with the living wage is a step towards this.

Governors asked if there was an action plan and targets to achieve each year? No EDI KPIs have been set to date.

Governors asked if there was information for LGBTQ+ groups? It was noted that no data exists for students at Selby College but this could be developed. Governors requested the data be added into the dashboard for future reports.

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Exceptions report from the Chairs of the Local College Boards: Governors noted:

- It was good to welcome additional staff governors to meetings
- It is good to have visibility of what is happening at group level at the local meetings
- It was pleasing to see positive press items in the local press and congratulations were noted to the marketing team and staff supporting the events and activities across the group
- The importance of governor monitoring was noted, in addition to student engagement activity engagement, and monitoring from the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

10 | SO3 – Develop a strong culture and people who are effective and committed

Engagement Survey: Governors reviewed the results of the latest survey and noted three key themes:

- Pay and conditions
- Communication
- Capacity

Governors confirmed they understood the reasons why results at Selby College may be below other colleges, but asked what steps the group were taking to engage with staff. Governors were informed that Rosie Fermin had been promoted to a new role, focusing on staff development and morale.

Job evaluation and pay award: The next meeting with the union planned for today was postponed. The group have the results of the job evaluation project, and other factors to inform the pay review (inflation, real living wage, desire to match the minimum salary of £30k for teachers) and need to factor this against affordability for the group.

Governors noted the challenges, and that the more significant increases for those on the lowest pay bands, could mean there was less to offer for staff on higher bands. All staff were being impacted by the cost of living.

Governors asked what increases were being awarded and it was noted that some other colleges locally were in dispute/ facing industrial action after awards ranging from 2%.

Governors noted the Organisational Change Policy had been revised, and was being reviewed again in light of the ONS declassification. Governors confirmed their support to approve any final changes by email, if it was not possible to bring the policy to the next meeting on 3rd May.

Governors confirmed awards would be backdated to February and asked if the group could consider some award being made, in advance of the final award

	being agreed, potentially on a non-consolidated basis. They were mindful of the financial pressures on staff with the rising cost of living.			
	Governors asked for the next report to include an update on the harmonisation of pay rates at each college.	18		
11	Strategic Objective 4 – Deliver strong Finances to facilitate investment in our			
	resources and our offer			
	Governors reviewed the spring term finance report. Of note:			
	The group are confident in achieving "Good" Financial Health (ESFA) this			
	year.			
	Cash reserves are ahead of expectations. Appropriate the topic boundary of a configuration in the configuration.			
	 Apprenticeships – the team have turned on £300k of new learners in the past few weeks. 			
	 The group have been awarded capital grants of over £3 million since the 			
	last meeting.			
	An error was noted in the paper (the £110k to achieve Outstanding future			
	health, should have read £700k).			
	Covernors asked if the group would maintain a minimum level of each balances			
	Governors asked if the group would maintain a minimum level of cash balances and asked that a reserves policy and minimum cash policy be presented to the	19		
	next Finance, People and Resources Committee.			
	Governors reviewed and approved the group finance strategy.			
12	Strategic Objective 5: Commit wholeheartedly to the development of sustainability within our communities			
	Three steering groups and key leads across the group are pulling together the			
	information to inform the group's first sustainability strategy which will be			
	reviewed on 3 rd May.			
13	Policies			
	Rehavious Populations Policy			
	Behaviour Regulations Policy Governors challenged the use of acronyms in the policy and references to	20		
	Wakefield College versus the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group.	20		
	Subject to these amendments, Governors approved the policy.			
	Treasure Management Delies			
	Treasury Management Policy Governors questioned the impact of raising capital after the ONS re-classification			
	and noted the policy may need to be reviewed again after clarification is			
	received.			
	Governors also noted that certain industries were not excluded for investment			
	purposes (tobacco, alcohol, gambling and porn industry) and it was agreed to			
	add this into the policy.			

	Governors also questioned if targets could be created to enable the board to see how successful the policy has been (e.g. an annual report on how risk was spread and detailing the return on investments). It was agreed compliance and an	
	annual report could be created as an addendum to the policy.	
	Subject to the amendment, the board approved the policy.	
14	Briefing Papers	
	Governors noted the briefing papers.	
15	Thanks were noted to Yasmin Ayub for her tremendous support and contribution	
	to the board at Wakefield, the Local College Board at Castleford and the Group	
	Board.	
	Staff and Student Governors then left the meeting for the final confidential item (See confidential minutes).	
	(See connactical inflates).	I

Action Log from meeting

1	Prepare a contingency plan, for rising staff costs and present to the Finance, People and Resources Committee	JP	Summer 2023
2	Present a Reserves Strategy to the Finance, People and Resources Committee in the Spring/ Summer	JP	Summer 2023
3	Provide a report on the challenges, opportunities and constraints and future plans for the estate	Executive Team	3 rd May 2023
4	Confirm plans for transport support for the next academic year	JP	ASAP
5	Prepare a communication statement	Executive Team	ASAP
6	Review the internal audit plan	JP	Post Audit
7	Receive Estates report	JP	3 rd May 2023
8	Review the draft accountability statement	LC ALL	3 rd May 2023
9	Review the Estates and Infrastructure Strategy and the new Group Sustainability Strategy	JP CA ALL	3 rd May 2023
10	Provide an update on IT Infrastructure across the Group	JP	3 rd May 2023
11	Note interest in the Lead Governor vacancies	ALL	ASAP
12	Confirm availability for safeguarding training	ALL	ASAP
13	Confirm annual declarations of interest	ALL	ASAP
14	Raise the impact of the ILR Audit in the annual strategic conversation	AM	ASAP

15	Amend the Curriculum and Skills Strategy	LM	ASAP
16	Develop EDI KPI and reporting mechanism so more	Executive	ASAP
	regular updates are received	Team	
17	Gather and share data for LGBTQ+ cohort in future	CA	ASAP
	reports		
18	Provide report on the results of job evaluation and	KS	Summer
	plans for the harmonisation of benefits		2023
19	Present the reserves policy and minimum cash	JP	June
	policy to the next Finance, People and Resources		2023
	Committee.		
20	Make the final amendments to the approved	LM, CA	ASAP
	policies		