

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

**Board of Governors ('Group Board')**

**Finance, People and Resources Committee ('Committee')**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 November 2024 ('Meeting')**

**Present:** Stuart Brenton, Claire Corneille, Andrew McConnell and Neil Warren ('Chair')

**In attendance:** Head of Governance and Legal Services ("GP"); Karen Sykes, Group Executive Director of People ("EDP"); Sam Wright, Principal and CEO; Lorraine Cross, Group Executive Director of External Relations & Development ("EDER&D"); Clare Allcock, Group Executive Director of Student Experience & Support ("EDS&S") (minutes 12 and 13 only)) and Dawn Hartley, Director of Finance ("DF").

**Apologies:** None

**1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

The Committee formally appointed Neil as Chair and Claire as Vice Chair for 2024/25.

**2. Welcome and apologies for absence**

- 2.1. The Chair confirmed that the Meeting had been called in accordance with the Group's Instrument and Articles, that it was quorate and he welcomed all attendees, including Stuart who was attending his first meeting.
- 2.2. No apologies were received.

**3. Declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest were disclosed.

#### **4. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2024**

- 4.1. The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and accepted as accurate.
- 4.2. IT WAS RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2024.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

- 5.1. The GP gave updates on key matters including:
  - 5.1.1. MA1 - Sickness absence costing: A performance indicator proposal was to be made during the meeting.
  - 5.1.2. MA2 - Ethnicity and disability data collection: No further actions were required following discussions between the EDP and Claire.
  - 5.1.3. MA3 - Legionella issues at Jubilee: This matter had been resolved.
  - 5.1.4. MA 4 - Estate schedule update: The schedule would be circulated after the Meeting.
  - 5.1.5. MA5 - Construction workshop risk: This matter would be addressed during the Meeting.
  - 5.1.6. MA6 - Reserves Policy: Further refinements were required. Members requested that the policy be brought back to the next meeting. Members discussed setting minimum and maximum reserves, highlighting the need for a structured approach year-on-year.

#### **6. People and Culture Annual Report**

- 6.1. The EDP referred to the annual report which provided insights into performance against the initiatives of the People Services team during 2023/24.
- 6.2. Members asked the following questions:
  - 6.2.1. Q: Is a Pulse survey engagement score of 50% satisfactory?  
A: The EDP determined it was not. It was agreed the aim would be to meet or exceed 75%. The EDP suggested that governors might lobby the AoC for a survey tool used across the sector which might provide a benchmark response rate.

6.2.2. Q: Is a professional development review completion rate of 85% too low?

A: Members agreed that 85% high quality reviews was better than 100% poor quality reviews.

6.2.3. Q: Are there common themes causing exit payments?

A: The EDP referred to some legacy issues because of merger and gave assurance that the managing public fund requirements had been taken into account. It was agreed to remove the appendix and include it in the Finance report in 2024/25.

6.2.4. Q: What is the benchmark for turnover?

A: The EDP explained that there was no FE sector benchmarking data and therefore a number of benchmarks were looked at including the CIPD survey and Local Government benchmarks. The EDP noted that around 11% was the aspiration.

6.2.5. Q: What percentage of managers had gone through the leadership programme?

A: The EDP confirmed she would return with the figure.

6.2.6. Q: Could the next iteration of the report include targets and actuals in a separate section rather than throughout the report?

A: The EDP agreed.

6.3. Members asked that the report be published subject to necessary redactions and that consideration be given to the document's photography.

## **7. People Update (KPIs)**

7.1. The committee reviewed detailed People KPIs:

7.2. Members agreed on an ambition to eradicate the gender pay gap (although they noted this may be impossible) and asked for an action plan.

7.3. Members asked for ethnicity gap data as soon as it was available.

7.4. Members asked for a target to reduce the salary cost of sickness and days lost over a rolling 12-month period.

7.5. Members agreed a higher target of 80% for 'Proportion of staff who indicate they feel valued in the College' due to the 2023/24 outturn for 'Proportion of staff who indicate they feel proud to work for this organisation'

7.6. Members agreed a slightly higher target of 80% for 'Improve the perception that the Group takes their wellbeing seriously by 10%'

7.7. Members agreed a target of 11% for staff turnover.

## **8. Finance Update**

8.1. A financial summary for the first quarter showed a positive variance of £62,000.

8.2. Areas of concern included underperformance of certain provision types, but it was expected these would be offset.

8.3. Members asked the following questions:

8.3.1. Q: How does staffing expenditure align with ESFA benchmarks?

A: The EDP noted staffing costs as a percentage of turnover exceed the ESFA target, partly due to a lack of subcontracting and investment in inclusive services. Members asked for the difference between the Group's staffing expenditure and the target in pounds and the sum spent on support staff to confirm and asked for a deep dive meeting to discuss the issue.

8.3.2. Q: Are there any other issues of concern?

A: None were given.

## **9. Student Recruitment**

9.1. The Committee reviewed enrolment data, noting growth in 16-18 learners and high-needs learners with some areas of decline.

9.2. Members asked the following questions:

9.2.1. Q: Is the withdrawal rate for high-needs learners concerning?

A: The EDER&D noted withdrawals were highly individual and explained there was no need for concern. She explained the Group was in discussions with the Local Authority for increased funding.

9.3. Members discussed future demographics and its impact on future recruitment.

## **10. Debts Written Off During 2023/24**

10.1. It was noted that total debts written off had reduced against the previous year.

10.2. No questions were raised.

## **11. Report on Waivers from Financial Regulations 2023/24**

11.1. It was noted that waivers totalled £1.6 million, representing 3.5% of expenditure, down from 5.8% the previous year.

11.2. Members asked the following questions:

11.2.1. Q: Are recurring waivers evaluated?

A: It was confirmed that they were not. Members asked that incumbent providers, in respect of whom waivers had been made before, be flagged in the next report.

11.2.2. Q: Whether second checks were made where the authorising party was using their own budget?

A: It was confirmed there were no second checks. Members suggested this be raised with the incoming Executive Director of Finance and Resources.

## **12. Property Update**

12.1. Updates included summer works, Construction Hub progress, and renewable energy initiatives.

12.2. An incident involving contractors was reported and that corrective measures had been taken.

12.3. Members asked the following questions:

12.3.1. Q: Was the workshop incident preventable?

A: The Principal and CEO noted procedures had been considered and further lessons learned will be reviewed. Members asked for assurances regarding health and safety lessons learned at its next meeting and for the incident to be reported to the Board.

12.3.2. Q: Was the incident RIDDOR reportable?

A: The EDP agreed to discuss this at the next Health and Safety committee meeting.

## **13. Health and Safety Annual Report**

13.1. The report showed no RIDDOR incidents and increased reporting of incidents, indicating improved safety culture.

13.2. Members asked the following questions:

13.2.1. Q: Are all statutory compliance checks current?

A: Members were satisfied all checks, including Legionella, were up to date.

13.3. Members asked reported incidents to be ordered by severity not chronologically to help them focus on key issues.

## **14. Review of Committee Terms of Reference**

14.1. Revised terms were presented.

14.2. Members suggested the following amendments:

14.2.1. The frequency of meetings to be reduced to three excluding the Audit Committee meeting to which the members are invited, annually.

14.2.2. The budget and financial plan be included in the Committee's duties.

14.2.3. In addition to the Chair meeting regularly with the EDF&R, the People Lead Governor should also meet with the EDP.

14.3. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the amended Terms of Reference be recommended to the Board for approval subject to the above changes.

## **15. Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risk**

Members were satisfied the Meeting had been effective and that they had considered emerging risks and the meeting was closed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'A' or a similar character.

Signed..... Date: 10.02.2025.....

## Actions

No.	Minute	Details	Deadline	Responsibility
1	5.1.6	Members requested that the Reserves Policy be brought back to the next meeting	The next meeting	Executive Director of Finance and Resources
2	6.2.3	It was agreed to remove the appendix and include it in the Finance report in 2024/25.	The next iteration of the report	EDP
3	6.2.5	The EDP confirmed she would return with the percentage figure of managers who have gone through the leadership programme.	The next meeting	EDP
4	6.2.6	The EDP agreed the next iteration of the People and Culture Annual Report would include targets and actuals.	The next iteration of the report	EDP
5	7.2	Members agreed on an ambition to eradicate the	31 March 2025	EDP

		gender pay gap (although they noted this may be impossible) and asked for an action plan.		
6	7.3	Members asked for ethnicity gap data.	31 March 2025	EDP
7	7.4	Members asked for a target full year salary cost of sickness and days lost over a rolling 12-month period.	The next meeting	EDP
8	8.3.1	Members asked for the difference between the Group's staffing expenditure and the target in pounds and the sum spent on support staff and asked for a deep dive meeting to discuss the issue.	The next meeting – deep dive date to follow	Executive Team
9	11.2.1	Members asked that incumbent providers, in respect of whom waivers had been made before, be flagged in the	The next iteration of the waiver report	Executive Director Finance and Resources

		next report.		
10	11.2.2	Regarding waivers, it was confirmed there were no second checks. Members suggested this be raised with the incoming Executive Director of Finance and Resources.	March 2025	GP
11	12.3.1	Members asked for assurances regarding health and safety lessons learned at its next meeting and for the construction workshop incident to be reported to the Board.	The next meeting	EDP
12	12.3.2	The EDP agreed to discuss whether the construction workshop incident was RIDDOR reportable at the next Health and Safety Committee meeting.	The next Health and Safety Committee meeting	EDP

13	13.3	Members asked reported incidents to be ordered by severity not chronologically to help them focus on key issues.	The next meeting	EDP
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