

Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Corporation ('Corporation')

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 December 2024 ('Meeting')

Present:

Duncan Agnew, Mohammed Ayub, Ruth Baxter, Nigel Brook, Addison Coudette, Louise Elkington, Dmitry Fedotov, Sara Lewis, Wiktoria Loc, Andrew McConnell (**Chair**), David Powell, Martyn Shaw, Vijay Teeluck, Neil Warren and Sam Wright (**Principal**)

In attendance:

Group Executive Director of Student Experience and Support (**DSE**), Group Executive Director of External Relations and Development (**DERD**), Group Executive Director of Curriculum and Quality Standards (**DCQS**) and Group Executive Director of People (**DP**).

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1. The Chair reported that due notice of the Meeting had been given in accordance with the Corporation's Instrument and Articles and its Standing Orders and that a quorum was present. Accordingly, the Chair declared the Meeting open.

1.2. The Chair noted that:

1.2.1. Stuart Brenton;

1.2.2. Claire Corneille; and

1.2.3. Jayne King,

had given their apologies.

2. Declarations of interest

The Chair asked for declarations of interest. None were made.

3. Minutes of Meetings held on 2 July 2024

3.1. The Board reviewed the minutes for accuracy.

3.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2024 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

4.1. Updates were provided on actions from the last meeting:

4.1.1. On matter arising 3 – pay proposal impact on gender and ethnicity pay gap – The DP noted that a more detailed analysis was being conducted which would be reported to the Finance, People and Resources Committee.

4.1.2. On matter arising 4 – update on implementation and uptake of the pay award – the DP provided an update and noted there had been no formal grievances.

4.1.3. On matter arising 8 – Comments on the draft Carbon Management Plan – the DSE noted that Governor comments had been fed into the Plan.

4.2. It was noted that other actions were to be addressed during the Meeting.

5. Student Update

5.1. The Student Governors gave their update highlighting student welfare, food pricing, enrichment activities and student behaviour.

5.2. Conversations were had regarding the distribution of security guards, placement of female toilets and student behaviour issues. Officers outlined their approach to addressing the issues raised.

5.3. Dmitry Fedotov fed back on the student engagement session held prior to the Meeting. The issues discussed included personal development and enrichment activity engagement. Some inconsistencies in induction delivery were noted. It was agreed that this would be addressed as part of an induction and enrolment review and feedback would be provided to the Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

6. Chair's Business

- 6.1.** The Chair reported back on his attendance at the AoC Annual Conference. He also emphasised the importance of ensuring that Board members remain engaged and informed on key developments.

7. Governance Business

- 7.1.** The Chair outlined key governance business including a review of the outcomes of Governor appraisals, the Search and Governance Annual Report and he noted:

- 7.1.1.** Tim Welton had been recommended to fill the Board's only current vacancy and that a recommendation had also been made that Tim join the Finance, People and Resources Committee. The Board considered Tim's appointment.
- 7.1.2.** An amended set of Terms of Reference for the Finance, People and Resources Committee had been recommended for approval.
- 7.1.3.** The new AoC Further Education Code of Good Governance had been recommended for approval by the Search and Governance Committee given the imminent expiry of the previous iteration of the document.

7.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:

- 7.2.1.** Tim Welton be appointed to the Board for four years with a one-year probationary period.
- 7.2.2.** Tim Welton be appointed to the Finance, People and Resources Committee.
- 7.2.3.** The amended Finance, People and Resources Committee Terms of Reference be approved.
- 7.2.4.** The AoC Further Education Code of Good Governance be adopted.

7.3. The Chair instructed officers present to ask the Head of Governance and Legal Services to inform Tim of his appointment.

8. Principal's Update: (inc. any emerging risks)

8.1. The Principal provided an update on key areas, including enrolment, apprenticeships, infrastructure, sustainability and student success stories. The Principal reported a strong enrolment year, with improvements on the previous year, except for a slight decline at Selby College, which was attributed to demographic shifts and competition from other institutions. She noted the following key issues:

- 8.1.1.** The College had faced challenges in securing placements for apprentices but action was being taken to improve this.
- 8.1.2.** Recruitment figures for T-Levels were discussed. The College would continue to support students in making informed decisions about these pathways.
- 8.1.3.** Despite economic pressures, the College remained financially stable. Efforts to secure additional funding were ongoing, with a focus on grant applications and investment in high-priority areas.
- 8.1.4.** The College had participated in "Switch Off Fortnight," resulting in measurable energy savings. A longer-term sustainability strategy was being developed to align with sector-wide environmental goals.

8.2. Governors asked:

- 8.2.1. Q:** What was being done to support apprenticeship recruitment?
- 8.2.2. A:** The College is working closely with local employers to expand apprenticeship opportunities and address placement challenges.
- 8.2.3. Q:** Was the Castleford Construction Workshop project still on track and had there been any setbacks?

8.2.4. A: The project is still on track.

9. Update from the Curriculum and Quality Committee

9.1. The Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee outlined the key issues discussed at the Committee's last meetings including the validation of the Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan at which the documents had undergone a thorough review prior to recommendation to the Meeting.

10. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Annual Report

10.1. The DSE presented the annual safeguarding report, noting that she hoped it would give Governors assurance. Key areas included comprehensive DBS checks, an increase in interventions against the previous year, many relating to mental health, online and domestic issues, which were being appropriately handled by the College, and changes to relevant safeguarding laws and guidance which would continue to be actioned.

10.2. Governors asked:

10.2.1. Q: Why are more safeguarding concerns being reported?

A: Improved reporting mechanisms and increased student awareness have contributed to the rise in disclosures.

10.2.2. Q: Could Governor safeguarding training be included in the next iteration of the report?

A: Agreed.

11. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure

11.1. The updated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure was carefully reviewed.

11.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the updated Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure be approved.

12. SAR and QIP

12.1. The DCQ noted that the SAR and QIP had been reviewed and recommended by the Curriculum and Quality Committee at a recent validation meeting and gave a brief overview of the document.

12.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the SAR and QIP be approved.

13. HE Access and Participation Plan

13.1. The DCQ noted that the HE Access and Participation Plan had been reviewed by the Curriculum and Quality Committee at its recent meeting and gave a brief overview of the document.

13.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the HE Access and Participation Plan be approved.

14. Update from the Finance, People and Resources Committee (People Updates)

14.1. The DP noted that the People Lead Governor was not present but the Committee had been regularly monitoring the People KPIs.

15. Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Report 2023/24

15.1. The EDP presented the report explaining that it was a statutory requirement that it be published annually. She explained the College's performance against objectives and the improvements planned.

15.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Report 2023/24 be approved and published

16. Update from the Finance, People and Resources Committee (Finance and Resources Updates)

16.1. The Chair of the Finance, People and Resources Committee noted the following highlights from its recent meeting:

16.1.1. The College had enjoyed positive student recruitment.

16.1.2. Progress had been made on the Castleford Construction Workshop and it was hoped that the necessary spending would have taken place by the 31 March 2025 deadline to ensure maximum government funding.

16.1.3. The Health and Safety Annual Report and in-year report had each given positive assurances regarding College practices.

16.1.4. The financial health report had been positive and the College's financial position remained stable.

16.1.5. The staff cost ratio had been discussed and further discussions were being planned by way of a deep dive meeting.

16.2. Governors asked:

16.2.1. Q: Are there any key financial risks to be aware of?

A: No major concerns were identified.

16.2.2. Q: Could a progress report be circulated relating to the Castleford Construction project?

A: Agreed.

17. Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

17.1. The Committee received assurances from the Finance, People and Resources Committee and the Audit Committee which had attended a deep dive meeting to discuss the documents to follow.

Internal Audit Annual Report

17.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the Internal Audit Annual Report be approved

Audit Committee Annual Report

17.3. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the Audit Committee Annual Report be approved.

The Audit Findings Report

17.4. It was noted that an unmodified opinion had been given in relation to the Group's financial statements. However, a modified opinion had been given regarding regularity due to a non-contractual termination payment in excess of the delegated authority threshold.

17.5. The Board considered the modified regularity conclusion noting that RSM had confirmed this to be a technical breach only which, it was expected, would have limited, if any, negative impact on the Group.

17.6. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the Audit Findings Report be accepted.

Letters of Representation

17.7. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the Letters of Representation be approved for signing, as necessary.

Report and Financial Statements

17.8. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the Report and Financial Statements be approved.

Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire

17.9. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire be approved.

18. Update from the Audit Committee

18.1. The Chair of the Audit Committee noted the following highlights from its recent meeting including:

18.1.1. An internal audit report on 16-19 Work Placements had been reviewed with a lot of actions to complete. Work was under way and progress would be reported to the Curriculum and Quality Committee and then followed up by the Audit Committee.

18.1.2. Cyber security remained a concern in the sector and more widely.

18.1.3. There had been no surprises in the ESFA apprenticeship audit report but until the ESFA completed its audit it would remain a major risk.

18.2. Governors asked:

18.2.1. Q: How prepared is the Group for a successful cyber-attack?

A: The Director of IT would report to the Audit Committee at its next meeting regarding contingency plans.

19. Briefing Papers

19.1. The Chair noted that no questions had been received relating to the briefing papers but encouraged Governors to submit these by email to the Clerk.

19.2. It was noted that the Corporate Dashboard paper which outlined the College's progress against high level KPIs gave a positive picture of progress.

20. Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risk

20.1. The Chair asked Governors to consider whether any emerging risks had yet to be covered. It was agreed that such risks had been addressed.

20.2. The Chair invited feedback. Members acknowledged the comprehensive discussions and suggested prioritising agenda items for efficiency.

20.3. The Chair declared the Meeting closed.



Signed Date 18.03.2025

Actions

No.	Minute	Details	Deadline	Responsibility
1	5.3	Inconsistencies in induction delivery was noted. It was agreed to pick this up as part of an induction/enrolment review which should be fed back to David Powell	The next Board meeting	DSE
2	15.2	The EDI Annual Report was to be published on the website.	ASAP	DP
3	16.2.2	Governors asked for a progress report on the Castleford construction project including financial implications, next steps and health and safety updates.	ASAP	Clerk
4	18.2.1	Governors requested a	The next Audit	Clerk

		briefing on disaster recovery after a cyber-attack.	Committee meeting	
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