

Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Corporation ('Corporation')

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 July 2025 ('Meeting')

Present:

Mohammed Ayub, Stuart Brenton, Nigel Brook, Louise Elkington, Jayne King, Andrew McConnell (**Chair**), David Powell, Neil Warren, Tim Welton and Sam Wright (**Principal**)

In attendance:

Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources, Group Executive Director of Student Experience and Support, Group Executive Director of Curriculum and Quality Standards, Group Executive Director of People and the Head of Governance and Legal Services.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1. The Chair:

- 1.1.1.** 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.
- 1.1.2.** Noted that Vijay Teeluck, Dmitry Fedotov and Duncan Agnew had given their apologies.
- 1.1.3.** Acknowledged Nigel's final meeting and thanked him for his diligent service as Governor and Audit Committee Chair.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1.** The Chair asked for declarations of interest. It was noted that Duncan had an interest in agenda item 12, regarding his appointment to the Curriculum and

Quality Committee and could not, therefore, count towards the quorum or vote on this matter.

3. Minutes of Meetings held on 13 May 2025

- 3.1.** The Board reviewed the minutes for accuracy.
- 3.2.** IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2025 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1.** The Head of Governance and Legal Services reported on matters arising, including:
 - 4.1.1.** Outstanding skills audits: Only one remained outstanding.
 - 4.1.2.** Pay award: Update to be provided under item 11.
 - 4.1.3.** Incident response plan: A working group had been set up to cover evacuation and lockdown policy, with ongoing work over the next two years.
 - 4.1.4.** Committee Chairs' meetings: Structured meetings with executive presence had commenced.
 - 4.1.5.** Schedule of business/calendar: The calendar had been included for approval, but the schedule of business was to be finalised.
 - 4.1.6.** Away Day programme: This was to be shaped with reference to the strategic plan.
 - 4.1.7.** Strategic Plan: An update on the TEF Gold target and circulation of SMART KPIs was to follow.

5. Chair's Update

The Chair highlighted a letter received from Minister Smith thanking governors for their efforts for Volunteers Week; mentioned his appointment as a National Leader of Governance; and noted the absence of student governors, proposing feedback be collected.

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

6.1. The Principal reported (referring to the performance dashboard, where appropriate):

- 6.1.1.** The Annual Accountability Agreement and Local Skills Duty had been submitted.
- 6.1.2.** The annual strategic conversation with DfE and FE Commissioners had focused on local and regional needs, strengths, opportunities, risks, and support available.
- 6.1.3.** The Modern Industrial Strategy Policy Paper had been published, highlighting eight key sectors for growth and targeted investment.
- 6.1.4.** National skills priorities: The DfE's new priorities were outlined, and assurance was given regarding the College's ability to meet these.
- 6.1.5.** Construction skills initiative: The Government would be launching 10 technical excellence colleges; Leeds College of Building was applying to be the hub, with support from the Group.
- 6.1.6.** 3G pitch at Selby: The grant application had been submitted, and the terms and conditions had been reviewed by legal. The risks were carefully considered, and discussions were had relating to the maintenance fund and clawback provisions and IT WAS RESOLVED TO accept the grant and proceed with the project.

- 6.1.7.** Student retention and attendance: There had been positive impact from targeted interventions, especially for 16–18-year-olds and apprenticeships.
- 6.1.8.** Enrolment: Applications and acceptances were up, with a strong position for the coming year.
- 6.1.9.** Staffing: 97 vacancies were noted, with recruitment and analysis of needs ongoing.
- 6.1.10.** Student experience: Showcase events, adult learning guide launch, and children's university activities were highlighted.
- 6.1.11.** Diversity and inclusion: Silver Investors in Diversity accreditation had been achieved, with plans to work towards gold.
- 6.1.12.** Emerging risks: The outcome of the Wakefield Futures Commission, Selby transport, post-16 construction delays and parking at Castleford were noted as risks.

6.2. Questions and answers:

- 6.2.1.** Q: As part of the annual strategic conversation, were the Group's support needs discussed and was the Wakefield Futures risk considered?
A: No confirmation was given relating to funding and there was no Wakefield Futures update.
- 6.2.2.** Q: What is the conversion rate for student acceptances to enrolment?
A: High, but exact figures are to be checked.
- 6.2.3.** Q: What are the risks to delivering a positive student experience with increased numbers?
A: The main risk is the delay to the Post-16 Construction Centre but contingency plans are in place and we are confident of delivering a positive student experience. Governors discussed the causes of

increased numbers which were attributed to more school leavers, targeted recruitment and improved reputation. Governors asked to be kept up to date regarding capacity risks.

6.2.4. Q: How is the Group supporting transport for Selby students?

A: The College has entered into agreements with coach providers and negotiations with bus companies are ongoing.

6.2.5. Q: Are the targeted interventions which have led to improved attendance cost effective and sustainable?

A: It will not be affordable to employ staff for this purpose going forwards, but some practices will be carried over.

6.2.6. Q: Will the delays to the Post-16 Construction Centre threaten the completion date and are further issues expected?

6.2.7. A: Yes, the project will not meet the original completion date and is now projected to complete in November. However, there may be further issues. Governors discussed the cause of the delays and were assured that a review of lessons learned was to take place after completion.

7. Strategic Plan

7.1. The Principal presented the final version of the Strategic Plan, incorporating Board feedback from previous governor reviews.

7.2. Questions and answers:

7.2.1. Q: Can the wording be strengthened to reflect active citizenship and community contribution?

A: The suggestion was noted and would be accommodated where possible.

7.2.2. Q: Are all underpinning strategies covered?
A: Yes. These will be introduced over the next academic year.

7.2.3. Q: Should the Group aim for TEF Gold?
A: Silver is more realistic at this stage, but this will be kept under review.

7.2.4. Q: Are KPIs SMART?
A: The KPIs will be circulated once finalised.

7.3. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the Strategic Plan be approved.

8. Update from the Curriculum and Quality Committee

8.1. The Curriculum and Quality Committee Chair provided an update focusing on projected achievement rates, which were expected to improve compared to the previous year. While overall outcomes were positive, the Chair noted that achievement rates for construction apprenticeships remained lower due to challenges with endpoint assessments and for students with high grades for Maths. The Chair also highlighted a relentless focus on quality teaching, learning, and assessment, and discussed progress streamlining committee agendas based on feedback from recent meetings. Governors were assured that strengths and weaknesses were well understood, and that robust support and challenge mechanisms were in place to hold managers to account for teaching quality.

8.2. The Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee presented minor amendments to the Terms of Reference.

8.3. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the amended Terms of Reference be approved.

9. Student Behaviour Regulation Policy

- 9.1.** The Executive Director of Student Experience and Support presented the revised policy, highlighting trauma-informed approaches, expanded coverage for apprentices, and changes to confidentiality.
- 9.2.** The Board asked for a further review of the policy and gave delegated authority to the Chair of Curriculum and Quality Committee and the Lead Governor for Student Experience to help finalise the document and approve it on behalf of the Board. It was agreed that the existing policy's review date would be extended until such time, following confirmation that it remained fit for purpose.

10. Update from the Finance, People and Resources Committee

- 10.1.** The Finance, People and Resources Committee Chair reported positive outcomes in staff inclusion and data monitoring. The Committee had discussed pay award negotiations, ongoing recruitment for vacancies, and highlighted strong financial management, including updates to reserves and financial regulations. Risks related to agency staff costs and construction project delays were noted, with contingency plans in place to support continued growth and quality while continuing to prioritise the learner experience. The Committee had discussed the importance of regular health and safety reporting to identify year-on-year trends and ensure robust analysis.

10.2. Questions and answers:

- 10.2.1.** Q: How are staff pay parameters set for negotiations?
A: The Board sets the framework, and leaders implement within those parameters. The details of the negotiated staff pay award were given. It was noted that the framework and parameters for a staff pay award had been previously set by the Board and, given that an award within those

parameters had been negotiated, there was no need for the Board to approve the pay award at the Meeting.

10.2.2. Q: How are staff surveys benchmarked?

A: Against previous returns, the York College survey and Hive benchmarks. Governors discussed national surveys which the Group may use but no changes were agreed.

11. Update from the Search and Governance Committee

11.1. The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee and Head of Governance and Legal Services presented recommendations for:

- 11.1.1.** The appointment of new Governor, Tracy Tallant, following an interview with the Committee, for a period of four years subject to a one-year probation.
- 11.1.2.** The appointment of Katie-Dawn Nicoloaou as a shadow governor for a period of one year with permission for the Chair and Head of Governance and Legal Services to shape the role.
- 11.1.3.** The appointment of Tracy as People Lead Governor.
- 11.1.4.** The appointment of committee members (Tracy to FP&R, Remco, and S&G; Duncan to C&Q).
- 11.1.5.** The re-appointment of co-opted committee members (Jason Brook to Audit; Alex Miles to C&Q).
- 11.1.6.** The Board Self-Assessment Report and Action Plan.
- 11.1.7.** The calendar of meetings for 2025/26.
- 11.1.8.** The appointment of Dmitry Fedotov to Vice Chair to the end of March 2026 (with the intention that the Chair's term be extended to coincide with this (with a Board decision to be sought in due course)).

11.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT all the above appointments and recommendations be approved.

11.3. It was noted that Jayne King had been approved as Audit Committee Chair from 2 July 2025 by way of written resolution following Nigel's departure from the Board.

12. Update from the Finance, People and Resources Committee (Finance and Resources recommendations)

12.1. The Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources presented the following recommendations for approval:

12.1.1. Reserves Policy including a minimum 40-day cash in hand with an annual review.

12.1.2. Financial Regulations 2025/26: Reviewed for clarity and compliance with a full review to take place in due course.

12.1.3. Tuition Fees Policy including an extended trial period for HE courses and the removal of the £150 deposit for advanced learner loans.

12.1.4. Amended Terms of Reference.

12.2. Questions and answers:

12.2.1. Q: Are financial risks and controls adequate?

A: Yes, with ongoing review and benchmarking.

12.2.2. Q: Is there an excess reserves maximum?

A: Yes, there is a threshold for the matter to be referred to the Board.

12.3. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT all the FP&R recommendations outlined at minute 12.1 be approved.

13. Draft Budget and Financial Plan

- 13.1.** Yubi declared his interest in the proposals relating to F Block as an employee of Lightwaves, the provider of the College's current construction space.
- 13.2.** The Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources outlined the College's financial position by reference to the management accounts before presenting the budget and financial plan for 2025/26 and 2026/27, including a request for approval for expenditure on F Block. She noted that the plan had been the subject of a deep dive meeting during which governors (including all those with finance expertise) had reviewed and endorsed the document.
- 13.3.** The Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources outlined the business case for the proposed expenditure on F-Block including the projected costs which governors carefully considered.
- 13.4. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:**
 - 13.4.1.** The Draft Budget and Financial Plan be approved.
 - 13.4.2.** The proposed expenditure relating to F Block be approved.

14. Update from the Audit Committee

- 14.1.** The Audit Committee reported progress on implementing audit recommendations and highlighted updates to the Risk Register and Risk Management Policy, including the introduction of five risk tiers. The committee also reviewed the internal and external audit plans and, referring to the Risk Register, noted ongoing attention to cyber security and construction project risks.
- 14.2.** The Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources presented the following recommendations for approval:
 - 14.2.1.** Amended Risk Register 2024/25.
 - 14.2.2.** Amended Risk Management Policy.

- 14.2.3.** Financial Statements Audit Plan, Year Ended 31 July 2025 and Engagement Letter (inc. approval of Fees).
- 14.2.4.** Strategy for Internal Audit 2025/26 and Engagement Letter (inc. approval of Fees).
- 14.2.5.** Amended Terms of Reference.

14.3. Questions and answers:

- 14.3.1.** Q: Are risk appetites constraining for the Group's ambitions?
A: The new risk register may highlight incorrect appetite at which point the matter should be revisited.

14.4. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT all Audit Committee recommendations outlined at minute 14.2 be approved.

14.5. The Chair requested that the risk register continue to be brought to each Board meeting.

14.6. The importance of feeding relevant internal audit recommendations to other relevant committees was emphasised by Governors.

15. Briefing Papers

The Chair noted that no questions relating to the briefing papers had been received by email prior to the meeting. He encouraged governors to submit questions, the answers to which would be circulated to all by the Head of Governance and Legal Services.

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

16.1. The Chair asked members for their opinion as to the effectiveness of the Meeting.

16.2. The Chair led a review of meeting effectiveness. Governors noted positive contributions and that emerging risks had been discussed.

16.3. The Chair declared the Meeting closed.

Signed  Date: 09/10/2025

Actions

No.	Item	Details	Deadline	Responsibility
1	4.1.1	Outstanding skills audits to be submitted	ASAP	Governors
2	4.1.5	Circulate final schedule of business	Next Board Meeting	Head of Governance and Legal Services
3	4.1.6	Shape away day programme for strategic focus	First Away Day 2025/26	Executive Team
4	4.1.7	Circulate SMART KPIs for Strategic Plan	First Away Day 2025/26	Executive Team
5	Policy Feedback	Revise Student Behaviour Regulation Policy as discussed	ASAP	Executive Director of Student Experience and Support
6	5	Collect student governor feedback	Next Board meeting	Clerk
7	6.2.2	Confirm conversion rate for student acceptances to enrolment	Next Board meeting	Executive Team
8	6.2.3	Update regarding capacity risks	Next Board meeting	Executive Team
9	6.2.7	Update re construction project	Next Board meeting	Executive Team
10	14.5	Risk Register to be reviewed at every Board meeting	N/A	Executive Team