

Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Corporation ('Corporation')

Board of Governors

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 18 March 2025 ('Meeting')

Present:

Duncan Agnew, Mohammed Ayub, Ruth Baxter, Stuart Brenton, Nigel Brook, Addison Coudette, Dmitry Fedotov, Jayne King, Sara Lewis, Wiktoria Loc, Andrew McConnell (Chair), David Powell, Martyn Shaw, Vijay Teeluck, Neil Warren, Tim Welton and Sam Wright (Principal)

In attendance:

Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources (DFR), Group Executive Director of Student Experience and Support (DSE), Group Executive Director of External Relations and Development (DER), Group Executive Director of Curriculum and Quality Standards (DCQ), Group Executive Director of People (DP) and the Head of Governance and Legal Services (Clerk).

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, he declared the Meeting open;
- 1.1.2. noted that Louise Elkington had given her apologies;
- 1.1.3. recorded the Board's thanks to Claire Corneille following her retirement from the Board. Her significant contributions were acknowledged, and a card was to be circulated for signature; and

1.1.4. welcomed Tim Welton and Caroline Carter (the new DFR) to their first Board meetings.

2. Declarations of interest

A declaration was noted regarding the staff governors' interest in staff pay award discussions. It was confirmed this issue, which would be addressed during the Principal's Update, would not require discussion or a decision, so no conflict arose. No further declarations were made.

3. Minutes of Meetings held on 11 December 2024

3.1. The Board reviewed the minutes for accuracy.

3.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2024 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

The Clerk confirmed that all previous action points had been addressed.

5. Chair's Business (inc. Chair's Action for Anti-Slavery Statement)

5.1. The Chair gave an update as follows:

5.1.1. Chair's Action had been taken to approve an update to the Anti-Slavery Statement due to a procurement need.

5.1.2. Governors were reminded to submit any outstanding skills audit forms.

5.1.3. The Principal's annual appraisal had been undertaken (he noted it had been conducted in January and described her performance as exemplary) and the Remuneration Committee had made its decisions

regarding the Principal's and Clerk's remuneration on behalf of the Board, which were outlined.

6. Student Update

6.1. The Student Governors gave their update with highlights including the following:

- 6.1.1.** Improvements to enrichment posters had been suggested to make them more effective.
- 6.1.2.** Requests for more informal lunchtime activities to support friendship-building were being explored.
- 6.1.3.** Improvements to the issue of ID badges were being considered to relieve queues and minimise negative first impressions.
- 6.1.4.** Changes to the student app were being considered for ease of navigation.
- 6.1.5.** Positive feedback was given on tutor support.
- 6.1.6.** Vaping remained a concern.

6.2. The following questions were asked:

- 6.2.1.** Q: What is being done about ID delays?
A: A new badge issuance process is in development for day-one delivery.

- 6.2.2.** Q: Is the app being replaced?
A: Yes – a new app is being implemented across the Group.

- 6.2.3.** Q: Are vaping concerns being formally managed?
A: Yes – new bins and designated zones are being introduced.

6.3. Governors asked that they be updated on progress relating to ID delays and the student app.

6.4. Governors noted that the student engagement session, held with Selby College students prior to the Meeting, had been comprehensive and informative.

However, they explained that some students did not understand the purpose of the session at the outset. It was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with the relevant Local College Directors to ensure students are prepped for student engagement sessions.

6.5. The following questions, which related to issues raised by students during the student engagement session, were asked:

6.5.1. Q: Students noted that some elements of induction were repetitive. Why is this?

6.5.2. A: Some important issues must be reenforced, but the process is tailored wherever possible.

6.5.3. Q: What has been the impact of agency staff on learning?

6.5.4. A: The matter is under consideration by the Finance, People and Resources Committee but some hard to recruit areas required agency staff although permanent staff would be preferred.

7. Principal's Business (inc. Emerging Risks and Pay Award Update)

7.1. The Principal gave an update with the following highlights:

7.1.1. The Apprenticeship Audit had concluded, and no further audit was expected. The final repayment figure was given.

7.1.2. Upcoming apprenticeship reforms were outlined. English and Maths were set to no longer be mandatory for adult apprenticeships and new foundation apprenticeships were to be introduced.

7.1.3. 16-19 growth funding was to be cut by up to two-thirds although adult allocations remained stable.

7.1.4. Castleford College was reaching site capacity, but the new Construction Centre was due in August 2025.

- 7.1.5. *Please see the confidential minutes.*
- 7.1.6. The proposed new Ofsted rating system was outlined.
- 7.1.7. Retention was positive compared to the same time the previous year and there was a focus on supporting at risk learners.
- 7.1.8. The College continued to enjoy strong employer partnerships and curriculum development was continuing.
- 7.1.9. The FE Commissioner had visited the College in January. It was noted that the College had been delighted to welcome her and that she had reflected positively on the College and its benefit to the community.
- 7.1.10. Apprenticeship achievements had been celebrated with the annual apprenticeship awards.
- 7.1.11. *Please see the confidential minutes.*

7.2. The following questions were asked:

- 7.2.1. Q: Are you confident of apprenticeships compliance moving forward?
A: Yes. Internal reviews suggest very small error rates and employer feedback is positive.
- 7.2.2. Q: Is recruitment underway for increased demand and the bigger estate?
A: Yes. Advertising is being undertaken early, and we are considering logistics.
- 7.2.3. Q: Is Castleford College coping with increased demand?
A: It is challenging, and some delivery is being spread to Wakefield, but the College is coping.
- 7.2.4. *Please see the confidential minutes.*
- 7.2.5. *Please see the confidential minutes.*
- 7.2.6. Q: Are there any updates regarding the pay award?

7.2.7. A: Limited progress has been made with the Unions. It is expected that a resolution will be reached before April, and no award will be imposed at this stage.

8. Update from the Employer Strategy Event

The DER gave an update on the Employer Strategy Event noting there had been 74 attendees, including governors, senior leaders, and 48 partners. The session focussed on skills development and curriculum alignment with sector needs and much useful feedback had been received from employers. The DER explained that this feedback would feed into the production of the College's upcoming strategy.

9. Update from the Curriculum and Quality Committee

9.1. The Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee gave an update from the committee's recent meeting noting:

9.1.1. The I-Innovate initiative was bedding in well, retention and predicted achievement for apprenticeships were good, there had been improvements in attendance in Maths and English, and retention had improved across several programmes.

9.1.2. GCSE Maths high grades (1-4) had been below target in the November re-sits.

9.2. The following question was asked:

9.2.1. Q: Are students prevented from progressing if they fail English and/or Maths.

A: They may progress but will continue to study the relevant subject.

10. Preparing Teachers to Teach Young People to Live Well in 2050 Event Feedback

10.1. David Powell gave a presentation on an event he recently attended entitled 'Preparing Teachers to Teach Young People to Live Well in 2050'. He noted the following highlights:

- 10.1.1.** The importance of scientific literacy for students.
- 10.1.2.** Questions arising around AI and teaching needed to be tackled and the need for curriculum innovation.
- 10.1.3.** The key issue of sustainability.
- 10.1.4.** The importance of citizenship and the necessity to enable students to live well and flourish within the workplace.

10.2. The Board engaged in a discussion around how best to support generation Z to thrive given the difficulties they have faced due to COVID-19 and other social issues. It was agreed that effective student engagement was vital as was compassion and empathy and a willingness to adapt to change. The importance of educating employers on student needs was noted.

11. Update on Approach and Current Practice in relation to Prevent

11.1. The DSE noted the following:

- 11.1.1.** The report had been requested by governors in response to the recent events in Southport and the national climate relating to violence and knife crime.
- 11.1.2.** Local threats were regularly reviewed with input from external networks.
- 11.1.3.** Policies, support and collaborative working, specialist staff and appropriate staff training had been proving effective in identifying and addressing relevant issues. Governors noted that safeguarding reports

and feedback from the student engagement session appeared to support this view.

11.2. The following question was asked:

11.2.1. Q: Does the College practise incident response and are procedures well known?

A: Yes. Regular drills are undertaken but improvements are to be made regarding guidance to staff and training. Governors stressed the importance of implementing any necessary incident response changes given the apparently worsening situation.

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

(inc. approvals made on behalf of the Board)

12.1. The Chair of the Finance, People and Resources Committee gave the following update from the committee's recent meeting noting:

12.1.1. Better completion of staff surveys.

12.1.2. An improved gender pay gap position.

12.1.3. A stable financial position with risks continuing to be monitored.

12.1.4. Effective Health and Safety reporting and responses.

12.1.5. That a detailed conversation had been had regarding the College's staff cost ratio and the rationale for it being above the sector benchmark. It was agreed that a deep dive into the College's staff cost ratio would be scheduled.

12.1.6. The DFR noted proposed changes to the sector financial health indicators which she anticipated would have a negative impact on the College's financial health grade due purely to the proposed change in assessment criteria. She explained that she would keep the matter under

review and governors informed as appropriate and lobby against the changes.

13. Update from the Search and Governance Committee (*inc. approvals made on behalf of the Board*)

13.1. The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee gave an update on the committee's recent meeting noting:

- 13.1.1.** Training and development had been reviewed, and a revised skills audit had been agreed.
- 13.1.2.** That good progress had been made on the governance improvement action plan.
- 13.1.3.** That the governor appraisal process had been reviewed and approved.
- 13.1.4.** That the Board's diversity had been mapped against the student population.
- 13.1.5.** That there was one Board vacancy to fill following Claire Corneille's departure. The Clerk agreed to report back on progress recruiting to fill the Board vacancy at the next Board meeting.
- 13.1.6.** That there were a large number of governor terms ending in March 2026 and that a plan would be formulated to mitigate any negative impact.

14. Remuneration Committee Annual Report

14.1. The Chair of the Remuneration Committee outlined the key elements of the report which had been recommended by the Remuneration Committee.

14.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the report be approved.

15. Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference

15.1. The minor changes to the document were outlined by the Clerk.

15.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the revised terms of reference be approved.

16. Update from the Audit Committee (*inc. approvals made on behalf of the Board and Board Level Risks*)

16.1. The Chair of the Audit Committee gave an update on the Committee's last

meeting noting:

16.1.1. Significant assurance had been given relating to cyber security via a Cyber Attack Disaster Recovery Report and presentation.

16.1.2. The final audit of Selby Apprenticeships had been completed and funds to be recovered finalised and the College was in a good position.

16.1.3. Good progress had been made in relation to previous internal and financial statements audit recommendations.

16.1.4. A new Data Protection Policy had been reviewed and had been recommended to the Board.

16.1.5. The risk register, which was included with the Board papers, had been reviewed with two risks above appetite although these were moderate.

16.2. The following question was asked:

16.2.1. Q: What can the College do to reduce the over-tolerance risks including cyber security?

A: Very little. It was agreed that risk appetites should be reviewed as part of the Risk Policy update process.

17. Data Protection Policy

17.1. The Clerk outlined the changes to the Data Protection Policy noting that it had been reviewed in detail by the Finance, People and Resources Committee at its last meeting.

17.2. Governors debated whether the consequences of breach should be restated at the start of the agreement to emphasise the gravity of violation. A staff governor noted that the policy made up only one part of a data protection framework which ensured staff knew their data protection responsibilities and that such a change may, therefore, be unnecessary. The Clerk agreed to consider the suggestion.

18. Climate Action Plan Update

18.1. The DSE noted the following:

18.1.1. The College's decarbonisation plans. It was agreed that the decarbonisation plan would be discussed at an upcoming Governor away day and be presented to Board for approval once complete.

18.2. The following questions were asked:

18.2.1. Q: How will the College address the issue of public transport in relation to its carbon footprint plans?

A: Work is underway to understand the impact of public transport on the College's carbon footprint.

18.2.2. Q: Has the College looked into the use of mine water heating?

A: No. Yubi agreed to speak to the local Council about the possibility of the College being included as a partner in relation to mine water heating.

18.2.3. Q: Why are there no recycling bins in College?

A: The College's contractors sort waste and promise nothing goes to landfill.

18.2.4. Q: Has consideration been given to measuring the impact of food on the College's carbon footprint?

A: Some consideration had been given. It was noted that the local Council were looking at measuring the impact of food on its carbon footprint and that the College might consider making contact for guidance.

19. Briefing Papers

It was noted that no questions relating to the briefing papers had been received and the Chair encouraged governors to submit questions to the Clerk.

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

20.1. The Chair asked members for their opinion as to the effectiveness of the Meeting. Governors confirmed the meeting was effective and productive. It was agreed that the Clerk would send an email asking for governor opinions on the effectiveness of the Meeting the following morning.

20.2. The Chair declared the Meeting closed.



Signed Date 13.05.2025

Actions

No.	Minute	Details	Deadline	Responsibility
1	5.1.2	Submit outstanding skills audits.	Next Board Meeting	Governors
2	6.3	Governors asked that they be updated on progress relating to ID delays and the student app.	Next Board Meeting	DSE
3	6.4	It was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with the relevant Local College Directors to ensure students are prepped for student engagement sessions.	Next student engagement session	Clerk
4	11.2.1	Governors stressed the importance of implementing	Next Board Meeting	DSE

		incident response changes given the apparently worsening situation.		
5	12.1.5	It was agreed that a deep dive into the College's staff cost ratio would be scheduled.	Next Board Meeting	Clerk
6	13.1.5	The Clerk agreed to report back on progress recruiting to fill the Board vacancy at the next Board meeting.	Next Board Meeting	Clerk
7	16.2.1	It was agreed that risk appetites should be reviewed as part of the Risk Policy update process.16.2.1	Summer 2025	DF

8	18.1.1	<p>It was agreed that the decarbonisation plan would be discussed at an upcoming Governor away day and be presented to Board for approval once complete.</p>	Completion of Plan	DSE
9	0	<p>Yubi agreed to speak to the local Council about the possibility of the College being included as a partner in relation to mine water heating.</p>	Next Board Meeting	Yubi
10	20.1	<p>It was agreed that the Clerk would send an email asking for governor opinions</p>	19 March	Clerk

		on the effectiveness of the Meeting the following morning.		
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