

LUMINATE EDUCATION GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEEDS CITY COLLEGE BOARD HELD ON MONDAY 18 MARCH 2019

Present

Colin Booth	CEO & Principal
Danielle Choma	Staff Member
Salman Daji (item 10)	Acting SU President
Ken Morton	Governor
Stella Owen	Co-optee
Tina Turnbull (Chair)	Governor

The quorum for the meeting was three members (including at least one governor)

In Attendance

Lydia Devenny	Deputy CEO Services
Janet Faulkner (item 7)	Dean of HE & Professional Studies
Melanie Halstead	Clerk to the Board
Bill Jones	Deputy CEO Curriculum & Quality
Richard Lewis (item 5)	Director of Student Recruitment & Marketing
Steven Richards (item 10)	Activities & Engagement Manager
Gemma Simmons-Blench	Executive Director Curriculum & Quality
Ann-Marie Spry (item 6)	Director of Adult, Community & ESOL

The meeting was held at the Printworks Campus and started at 4.30pm

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Garratt and Jonathan Pryor (co-optees).

2. Determination of Observers/Attendees at the Meeting

The board agreed attendees/observers at the meeting as per the above attendance list.

3. Declaration of Interests in any Agenda Items

Board members were reminded of the requirement to declare their interest in any agenda items. Tina Turnbull declared an interest in the FE fees policy in her capacity as Chief Executive of People Matters (Leeds) CIC, People Matters being a subcontractor of the college.

4. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on Monday 28 January 2019 and Rolling List of Actions and Matters Arising

Members considered the draft minutes of the previous board meeting and the rolling list of actions and matters arising from previous meetings. With regard to the latter, it was noted that all identified items were on schedule to be completed.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the board held on Monday 28 January 2019 be approved as an accurate record and that these be signed by the Chair.

5. Communications

The Director of Student Recruitment & Marketing presented to the board on the new branding for the Luminare Education Group. Members were particularly interested in the emerging sub-brands for the college's sixth form and higher education provision. It was clarified that whilst having separate branding, the governance of this provision remains with the Leeds City College (LCC) Board.

Board members provided feedback from their recent visits to the college. A further governor link visit to the Sixth Form noted that Russell Group applications had seen a significant rise, indicating the positive progress being made. Board members were also notified of an ongoing review of Sixth Form staff terms and conditions of employment, on which trade unions were being consulted.

As link governor for safeguarding, the chair provided feedback from the most recent meeting of the safeguarding strategy group. The group had carried out its termly review of safeguarding concerns and considered feedback from individual campuses.

STRATEGY AND POLICY

6. Property Strategy and Curriculum Mapping

The board devoted a significant amount of time to considering an updated property strategy and in particular the curriculum mapping and student growth driving the college's increased space requirements. Board members discussed the forecast student numbers based in each LCC building up to 2023/24 and the proposed projects to create space on a 'just in time' basis to meet the forecast student growth over the next 5 years.

A discussion also took place regarding the board's appetite to risk, noting that the key risk was the college increasing the size of its estate but then failing to increase student numbers and therefore not filling the space. The CEO & Principal outlined the mitigation in place relating to this risk which included detailed data collection and analysis around student numbers, capital projects spread over 4 years allowing for adjustments to meet actual growth and the plan including a reasonable proportion of leased space. Board members were also mindful that to not progress the property strategy would result in student growth being restricted and, in some areas, withdrawal of the curriculum offer.

Having asked a number of questions and challenging the accuracy and alignment of the forecast student growth by curriculum area with the capital projects proposed for Leeds City College, the board supported the current iteration of the property strategy, it being consistent with the college's vision and strategic aims. It was acknowledged that the final decision, including financing options, was a matter for the group board and it was confirmed that the updated property strategy would be presented to the group board for consideration/approval in April 2019.

RESOLVED:

To support the current iteration of the property strategy and to recommend to the group board that work on the list of potential capital projects continues.

7. Higher Education (HE) Fee Rates

At its previous meeting the board had considered and agreed a detailed fees and refund policy relating to the college's HE provision. Members now discussed a proposal to increase full time fees and queried whether such an increase would affect student recruitment. The Dean of HE advised that feedback from students suggested that the fee level was not the determining factor. Having considered competitor fees the board approved the proposed fee increase (to £7,950 and £9,250) for 2020/21.

It was noted that the college's Five Year Access and Participation Plan would be presented to the board for consideration and approval in June, prior to it being submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) in July; the plan would reflect the fee increase agreed by the board.

RESOLVED:

To approve the Higher Education fee rates for 2020/21 as detailed within the circulated report.

8. Further Education (FE) Fees Policy

The Deputy CEO Services introduced the college's FE Fees Policy for 2019/20. There were no changes proposed to the fee rates for 2019/20 but changes to the policy wording were agreed by the board in order to provide further clarity throughout.

RESOLVED:

To approve the 2019/20 Further Education Fees Policy and to delegate approval to the Deputy CEO Services to make any further changes required to the policy to reflect any changes to ESFA funding rules, once published.

GOVERNANCE, RISK AND COMPLIANCE

9. Finance

Draft Operating Budget

The Deputy CEO Services presented, and sought the board's views on, an early draft of the college's operating budget for 2019/20. The financial plan had been updated following completion of the first round of business planning meetings and continued to meet the financial objectives set by the group board.

In particular, the board discussed the main income and expenditure assumptions, noting that the draft budget contained income of £69m, this being £5m higher than the current year forecast outturn. Significant cost pressures around pay included the need for additional staff to support higher income, inflationary pressures and pension increases. In response to a question from the board, the Deputy CEO Services advised that a cautious approach had been taken to the latter.

Members questioned the likely impact on staff recruitment associated with the budgeted pay award; the Deputy CEO Services advised that based on experiences to date, the college did not anticipate any difficulties in recruiting staff. The board asked that the next iteration of the budget paper provide detail on the numbers of staff budgeted for to reflect the growth projections and to include further details around the main income assumptions and indicators.

Group Membership Fee

The CEO & Principal advised that a proposal would be presented to the group board in April and that this was likely to recommend fees for other group members based on the current year's contribution. The LCC board reminded the CEO & Principal of the view it had expressed the previous year in that the extent to which Leeds City College was subsidising other parts of the group needed to be reduced and eventually eliminated to be more equitable towards Leeds City College learners.

10. Students' Union (SU) Constitution

The Acting SU President outlined proposed changes to the Leeds City College SU Constitution which included:

- a reduction in the number of executive officers from 14 to 6
- a reduction in sabbatical posts from 2 to 1
- the 5 part time officers to be paid roles
- an increase in the number of internal (student) trustees from 3 to 5

The board discussed the rationale for the proposed changes and, whilst supporting the changes in principle, asked that further consideration be given to the potential impact on the Keighley College Student Council prior to the changes being agreed and implemented. The board delegated authority to the chair in the event that approval was required in advance of the next meeting. In response to a question from members, it was confirmed that the proposed changes were cost neutral.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND SCRUTINY

11. Quality Improvement Plan

In reviewing progress against the college's quality improvement plan, the board was particularly pleased to note that student attendance had reached 92% overall, against the college target of 90%. However, some concern remained around English and maths attendance as this was still low at 74%. The Executive Director (Curriculum & Quality) reported that whilst English and maths attendance would not reach the target of 90% by the end of the year due to historical register issues, exam attendance always exceeded 90%. Board members queried how the attendance data triangulated with predicted achievement and the Executive Director undertook to present a detailed report on predicted achievement rates at the next meeting.

INFORMATION PAPERS

The board received a series of papers for information:

- College Strategic Risk Register and Data Dashboard
- Financial Position and Forecasts 2018/19
- Higher Education (HE) Performance Report
- Update on Health and Social Care Developments with Key Stakeholders

In considering the HE report, board members queried the TEF 4 metrics. These contained one negative flag in the core metrics in relation to continuation and the supplementary metrics indicated a positive flag for sustained employment or further study but a negative flag concerning above median earnings threshold or further study. Members received an explanation of how these two new criteria (based on LEO data) can disadvantage colleges like LCC in that the majority of LCC students choose to leave at Level 5 with a foundation degree and their earning potential is more limited as a result. It was noted that the college had submitted for a TEF 4 award, with the metrics indicating the possibility of silver.

There were no other questions/concerns arising from these information papers.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm

Signed: (Chair)

Date: