

LUMINATE EDUCATION GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEEDS CITY COLLEGE BOARD HELD ON MONDAY 18 MARCH 2024

Present

Bill Barton	Co-optee
Colin Booth	Group CEO and Governor
Ann Forsaith	Co-optee
Amy Hunter - via MS Teams	Co-optee
Julie Hyde	Co-optee
Linda Littler	Staff Member
Kate Lodge	Co-optee
Abigail Marshall Katung – via MS Teams (to item 9)	Co-optee
Ken Morton	Governor and Chair
Andrew Roach – via MS Teams	Co-optee

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

In Attendance

James Broadhurst (up to item 8)	Project Coordinator to ELT
Andrea Cowans (from item 8)	Director of Student Life
Mel Halstead	Director of Governance
Stuart Jolley (from item 9)	Chief Financial Officer
Bill Jones	Deputy CEO & Exec Principal of LCC
Carol Layall (up to 12c)	Director of Quality
Phil Mark (from item 10 and up to item 11)	Principal, Leeds Sixth Form College
Michelle Ritchie	Governance Manager
Gemma Simmons-Blench	Deputy CEO Curriculum and Quality
David Warren	Group Vice Principal Development

The meeting took place at Park Lane Campus starting at 4pm.

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Qasim Hussain (Student Member).

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 Agenda Items

Board members were reminded of the requirement to declare their interest in any agenda items; there were none but standing declarations as per the Corporation's register of interests were noted.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 November 2023, Rolling List of Actions & Matters Arising

The board considered the draft minutes of its meeting held on 27 November 2023, and the rolling list of actions/matters arising from previous meetings, noting that many were now complete and others were on the agenda for today's meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the board held on 27 November 2023 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

5. Communications

a) Update from Chair including feedback from Group Board

The Chair's update confirmed group board approval of the *2022/23 Year End Audit and Accounts; 2022/23 FE Self-Assessment Report (SAR)* and associated *Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)* and group *Strategic and Operational Development Plan 2023/24*. At an extraordinary group board in January 2024, governors reviewed and approved updates to the *Curriculum, Student Growth and Property Strategy* and gave approval to proceed with the Pudsey Sixth Form College project (subject to construction contract costs being within the agreed budget and ESFA approval to rephrasing of loan drawdown). As the Pudsey project now moves into its next phase activity within other workstreams e.g. governance and marketing will start to gather pace.

The Chair reported that group board discussions on Luminate risk appetite and strategic priorities 2024/25 were underway and outcomes would be communicated in due course.

b) Update from Students' Union President

The Students' Union (SU) President provided an update to be read out in his absence:

- SU elections are underway. The election date was extended by one week. Results will be announced at the Oracle, Printworks campus next week.
- SU restructure planned for 2024/25.
- SU President attended an AoC Student Member online networking event.
- SU President nominated for NUS Deputy President FE (England). There will be a national election process and the SU President will run alongside one other candidate.

c) Feedback from Link Governors

There had been 10 Link Governor visits recorded since 1 January 2024 and these included; Mabgate campus, 14+ Academies, Finance, Printworks Campus, LCC Strategic Priorities, Teaching Learning & Assessment; Leeds Sixth Form College, Quarry Hill (Creative Arts visit), SEND and Careers Guidance. All feedback forms were available to view within Virtual Boardroom (VBR). Additionally, and on the recommendation of the Link Governor, the Chair visited the 14+ Academies and reported back to LCC Board on the positive impact the department was having on young lives. This was evidenced via an anecdote that one student's attendance was now at 100% having been persistently absent at school. Other highlights included, new state of the art kitchen facilities at Printworks campus and a hairdressing masterclass delivered by celebrity stylist, Andrew Barton.

It was noted that Andrew Roach had swapped the Link Governor Health and Safety role for Finance and an introductory meeting with the Chief Financial Officer had taken place. Feedback on the Link Governor form would be collected and considered by the governance team.

6. Board Effectiveness

The Board Effectiveness paper stated that overall, members were satisfied that the board had operated effectively throughout the previous year and fulfilled its terms of reference. The Chair drew attention to the more in depth three-point plan for 2023/24 i.e. self-assessment against the new FE Code, external governance review and rolling programme of one-to one review meetings. The board requested more opportunities to shadow students during the spring term.

STRATEGY AND POLICY

7. Accountability Agreement

As a follow-up to the LCC Board Away Day discussion, board members considered four draft LCC targets for inclusion in the Luminate Accountability Agreement along the broad themes of; STEM7 skills; increase student numbers on Digital and Low Carbon courses; Create a Professional Service & Fin Tech Hub and increase study programme numbers to meet demographic growth.

Board members sought clarity on the purpose of the targets i.e. who is monitoring progress/achievement and requested more information on how LCC plans to achieve the targets. The Project Coordinator signposted board members to DfE guidance:

Guidance from the DfE: Submission of your annual Accountability Statement is an essential stage to release funding for you. The accountability framework (part 1) will be used by the DfE and the Education and Skills Funding Agency to assure the use of public funds and protection of the learner. We expect that you will want to use your Annual Accountability Statement (part 2) in a range of discussions with local partners and national bodies (such as Ofsted). It will also form a useful reference point in strategic conversations between you and us. Your annual Accountability Statement will need to be reviewed, updated, and returned annually. We do not intend to assess or amend your annual Accountability Statement on receipt and the plans will have no direct bearing on the level of individual providers' funding allocations. Those small number of providers that are in Intervention, however, will be expected to share their draft annual Accountability Statement with the Further Education Commissioner's team for advice and comment, as part of their support to you.

Board members provided constructive feedback such as the benefit to including contextual/baseline data. They also recommended that how the targets will be measured be added to enable accurate monitoring. A question was posed regarding the low carbon target and whether this should be limited to the motor vehicle sector or extended to all sectors. Following discussion, motor vehicle was agreed as the focus for 2024/25. Additionally, board members recommended that the document maps to the LSIP. Board members were invited to provide and further feedback via email.

In response to a request for an in year update the Project Coordinator for ELT confirmed that there is a 'Highlights from Luminate's 2023-24 Accountability Agreement statement' section in this year's draft that looks at some of the key figures and this will be repeated in next year's statement.

RESOLVED:

Board members agreed the Leeds City College targets identified for inclusion in Luminate's Accountability Agreement statement for 2024/25.

8. Strategic Deep Dive: Not in Education Training or Employment (NEET)

The Director of Student Life introduced the Strategic Deep Dive with an explanation on the remit of their part-time secondment to Leeds City Council, which is primarily to provide strategic planning and develop actions to address the city's NEET and post-16 capacity issues.

Board members were reminded that the local authority has a statutory duty to provide education for all 16 to 17 year olds. Last year the Leeds local authority was ranked 138/143 nationally. In 2023, 4.2% (784) young people in the 16-17 age bracket were NEET and 4.3% (811) were unknown. 'Unknown' was clarified as their whereabouts were unknown to the local authority – untraceable. 9.2% of those recorded as NEET were also without a grade 4-9 GCSE English/maths. These statistics were expected to improve somewhat for 2024.

The Director of Student Life highlighted that 34.5% of year 11 students did not achieve the GCSE grades required to progress to Level 3. Yet, across the city 75% of the provision was targeted at Level 3. The shortfall in post-16 spaces at Entry, Level 1 & Level 2 was therefore creating a systemic disadvantage in terms of space.

Notably, 54.7% achieved Level 3 qualifications by aged 19 compared to 60.7% nationally, limiting progression into technical and higher education.

Board members discussed the implications of the data presented in the slides pertaining to NEET by Council ward and how school based sixth forms (offering Level 3) could be mapped to the more affluent outskirts of the city region.

Within their seconded role, the Director of Student Life had thus far engaged with 25 schools, four colleges, three training providers, third sector, academics and politicians. Board members were heartened to hear that other Principals and key stakeholders from across the city were open to collaboration on addressing the NEET issue and ensuring young people were on the right course.

Opportunities for growth in Level 3 places were anticipated through planned capital projects across the city region but Entry, Level 1 and Level 2 observed smaller gains from just three independent training providers and some small third sector schemes. The Group CEO explained that the long-term strategy was to work more closely with third sector providers.

The Deputy CEO Curriculum and Quality advised that, due to curriculum reforms, the length of time young people spend at college working towards Level 3 was expected to extend to 2.5 years.

Board member discussion touched on themes of social mobility, poverty and silo working. In summary, Leeds City College is currently the convener of strategic partnerships and there was more to do in terms of collective action. The Chair requested that this agenda item be brought back to the board for a specific discussion on strategic relationships.

a) Actual Destinations Report

The Director of Student Life presented the Actual Destinations Report and explained how the data was captured and recorded. The Actual Destination collection focused on 12,645 students who studied at LCC in 2022/23. It was noted that 'Not Known' data had been intentionally omitted from the report. In terms of trend data, Further Education (FE) was the most common destination for all students (all ages) including apprentices. 15.46% of students entered the workforce directly after completing their studies, followed by 11.57% progressing to Higher Education (HE).

b) Careers Guidance Mid-year Assurance Report

This paper had been added to the governance suite of statutory reports and was written in reference to the DfE Career Guidance and access for education and training providers and Ofsted's Independent review of career guidance in schools & further education and skills providers. Career Guidance is the preferred term of the DfE, replacing CEIAG for all aspects of careers education and information, advice and guidance.

The paper mapped college activity to the Gatsby Benchmark Framework and provided board members with assurance that the college is compliant with all statutory requirements and recommendations.

Board members enquired about the decline in feeder numbers to UCLeeds. A national decline in progression to HE, attributed to the cost of living crises, was reflected in the internal report.

The Chair suggested that going forward the targets within both reports could be consolidated and/or aligned to one another.

9. Principal's Report:

a) College update

A student had sustained injuries from a random knife by a member of the public when moving between Mabgate and Quarry Hill campus. Work to raise awareness of the impact of knife crime was happening across the group.

The Deputy CEO and Executive Principal provide an update on general performance at Printworks campus. Board members were assured that real improvement were being observed in areas that had long standing issues. To enable more focussed teaching the Engineering Department had been split into two departments: 'Engineering' and 'Sustainable Development & motor Vehicle'. Board members welcomed the news that a carbon technology expert was being sought to lead on sustainable development.

Highlights reported included Tracy Brabin (Mayor of West Yorkshire) teaching a drama class at Quarry Hill to highlight a national campaign for colleges to have their VAT reimbursed. The campaign was also supported by Sadiq Khan and Andy Burnham both of whom had led classes in London and Manchester. Another college highlight was Helena Akroyd being named Best Retailer Butcher Apprentice and Champion Butcher Apprentice at the Institute of Meat and Worshipful Company of Butchers Annual Prize-giving. Helena was competing against apprentices from around the country.

b) Progress against Strategic Priorities

The college's five strategic priorities continued to show good progress. The Deputy CEO & Executive Principal reported that a RSM internal audit report on Staff & Student Wellbeing that had found '*substantial assurance*'. The board heard that the college started 12 apprentices in January 2024 in partnership with a boot repair company that worked with Doc Martin's.

c) Review of Risk Register 2023/24

Two risk remained red; *accommodation requirements* and *failure to recruit well qualified and experienced staff*. Board members queried if knife crime should be added as a new risk but were assured by the Deputy CEO Curriculum and Quality that knife crime featured on the Luminate group risk register and mitigating actions were managed by the Safeguarding team.

RESOLVED:

The board approved the latest iteration of the risk register.

d) Employer Board Feedback

Two new members had joined the employer board; Leeds Heritage Theatres and Yorkshire Care Homes, representing the arts and social care sectors respectively.

10. Progress on Major Capital Projects

The Group VP Development informed board members that the new window installation at Park Lane was expected to finish ahead of plan and initial staff feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Asbestos had been discovered at Mabgate campus in the building intended for the Enfield move. The building is part of the 'heritage' planning and therefore cannot be demolished. The work to remove the asbestos will impact the build programme and the opening/move will be delayed.

With regards student growth, Park Lane C Block (new build) contractors are being appointed and the project is on track to complete March 2025. The original design which saw the building on stilts (as per Printworks D Block) had been updated and the stilts removed.

Board members were alerted to known challenges to planning within a heritage area at Temple Newsam were evolving into larger issues for the local planning department. The funders, DfE, had made aware that the planning issue had created a risk to the approved project completion date of March 2025.

An overspend on the Morley Towns Fund project was anticipated and related discussions were underway with the Towns Fund board and Leeds City Council.

The Chair summarised that work of the capital projects team was ensuring the footprint of Leeds City College was increasing and providing better stock.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND SCRUTINY

11. Curriculum Deep Dive: Leeds Sixth Form

The Principal Leeds Sixth Form College presented on the organisational changes made and their immediate and forecast impact on the department's performance data. Changes to the leadership structure had helped address student attendance and data quality. Other changes such as timetabled small group support, interventions and pastoral teams were having a positive impact on the student experience. Mid and long term opportunities for Leeds Sixth Form college referenced; Pudsey Sixth Form college and new curricula.

The Staff Member enquired as to whether retention and achievement levels correlated to staffing levels to which the Principal explained that these issues were exacerbated by a lack of subject experts rather than staffing levels (which was noted as close to a full complement). A follow-up question regarding staff sickness was addressed by the Principal who gave the board assurance that the legacy sickness culture was improving.

The Principal's transparent presentation style was welcomed by board members. The Chair commended the Principal on progress made on a legacy of weak departmental performance.

12. Quality of Education

a) In Year Student Data

Overall college retention was reported by the Director of Quality as strong (6.4 percentage points above the national rate) particularly in adult courses but overall attendance was slightly below the 90% internal target.

English and maths departments reported outcomes from the November resits as significantly improved on the 2022/23 results and a positive outcome for learners. High grade (4-9) results for both GCSE English Language and GCSE Mathematics are now above the JCQ national average. 52% for GCSE English Language against the national rate of 40.3% and 33% for GCSE Mathematics against the national rate of 22.9%. English and maths departments were now preparing for the summer exams.

The Chair concluded that the focus on attendance was welcomed, particularly in terms of potential safeguarding issues.

b) Progress against the QIP (Quality Improvement Plan)

Close monitoring of Grade 4 departments was in place through Rapid Improvements Meetings and focused monitoring visits. Improvements had been evidenced in the departments of Leeds Sixth Form College and Hair, Beauty & Media Make-up. Further work continues in the areas of Engineering and Motor Vehicle, Digital and IT and Events & Employability.

c) Apprenticeship Outcomes and Accountability Framework

The Deputy CEO and Executive Principal presented the apprenticeship paper and confirmed discussions with the ESFA had been initiated to address cases where apprentices' End Point Assessment (EPAs) were scheduled for the upcoming academic year in 2023/24, despite not reaching their end date yet.

The group Self-Assessment Report (SAR) rating for apprenticeships was 'good'. Luminate's performance had dipped during the pandemic. However, in recent weeks, the Deputy CEO & Executive Principal had received a letter from the ESFA confirming that Luminate's improved performance meant that it was out of intervention.

13. Financial Performance

a) Financial Position and Forecast 2023/24

The Chief Financial Officer stated that for the first six months of the financial reporting period the college was reported as in a good position and in line with the overall projected budget. Income is lower than budgeted, due predominately to lower apprenticeship recruitment, but some recovery is anticipated from apprenticeship starts expected later in the year.

With regards other income forecast for period 2, the college was expecting circa £1m from West Yorkshire Colleges Consortium (WYCC) and this was included in the period 2 forecast however there had been transfer delays in WYCC becoming part of Luminate Education Group, but this is expected to be resolved by August 2024. Other key influencing factors mentioned included the outgoing 6.5% staff pay award and incoming exceptional growth fund.

Overall EBITDA is forecast to be £800k higher.

b) Operating Budget Assumptions 2024/25

Board members heard that the projected demographic growth in Leeds will increase demand for places across the Leeds City College campuses. Capital projects were underway to

alleviate some of this challenge. When Enfield delivery moves to Mabgate efficiencies will be made on the cost of the Enfield lease.

The Group CEO reflected on the VAT savings that could be possible if the DfE applied the same terms to FE Colleges as it did Sixth Forms i.e. VAT exempt.

c) Sub-contractor Monitoring Report

Board members received an update on the performance of the college's subcontracted provision to date. Contracts were approved by the Group board in July 2023, with subsequent variations to be approved in November 2023. The provider Blue Apple is to have a variation of contract for £9k of AEB provision (from the ESFA) to be able to deliver to 21 learners in North Yorkshire for Marks and Spencer.

ASSURANCE REPORTING

Board members were invited to send questions in advance of the meeting. For the Q&A document please see Appendix 1.

14. EDI Annual Assurance Report 2022/23

An executive summary was provided highlighting key demographic statistics of LCC staff and students. 11 actions were listed as college EDI priorities for the coming year many of which were dependent upon action 1: *Increase awareness of declaring equality characteristics for students and staff and a system for collecting this data across the academic year.*

The EDI Annual Report would be published online 1 April 2024.

15. Mid Year Assurance Reports 2023/24

The following mid-year assurance reports were received:

- a. Safeguarding & Prevent
- b. SEND
- c. Health & Safety
- d. People Services

The meeting closed at 19:00