

LUMINATE EDUCATION GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEEDS CITY COLLEGE BOARD HELD ON MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2023

Present

Colin Booth	Group CEO
Ann Forsaith	Co-optee
Amy Hunter (from item 7)	Co-optee
Qasim Hussain	Student Member
Julie Hyde	Co-optee
Linda Littler	Staff Member
Kate Lodge (from item 7)	Co-optee
Abigail Marshall Katung – via MS Teams	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

Pete Fiaschi (up to item 12)	International Consultant
Mel Halstead	Director of Governance
Sarah Heaton (up to item 9)	Head of Learning & Organisational Development
Stuart Jolley	Chief Financial Officer
Bill Jones	Deputy CEO & Exec Principal of LCC
Anna Keogh (item 10a – item 12)	Director of Student Recruitment & Marketing
Jane Pither (up to item 10) – via MS Teams	Governor and Chair of Audit Committee
Michelle Ritchie	Governance Manager
Gemma Simmons-Blench	Deputy CEO Curriculum and Quality
Ann Marie Spry	Group Vice Principal Adults
Christopher Thornton	Director SEND & Inclusive Provision
John Toon (up to 9b)	Chair of Governors
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 Bill Barton (Co-optee). John Toon and Jane Pither were welcomed to the board meeting. John Toon was introduced as the new Luminate Chair of Governors. John Toon asserted that Leeds City College was the pathfinder for the college group and a positive influence across the wider group.

Linda Littler was welcomed to their first board meeting as Staff 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 5 July 2023, Rolling List of Actions & Matters Arising

The board considered the draft minutes of its meeting held on 5 July 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 5 July 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 from group board included a summary of the 2023/24 student recruitment position and the complex benefits and challenges that this presented. The Group CEO elaborated on the college risk (and wider Leeds City Region risk) to accommodating forecast student number growth and explained some of the Luminate mitigations underway to provide additional space which includes building an extension at Park Lane and raising the 'crisis' with the Local Authority and ESFA. It was noted that Leeds Local Authority was ranked 148/152 in national NEET (Not in Education or Employment) tables and would likely decline further without intervention. On a positive note, the college was collaborating with various Multi Academy Trusts on a temporary solution to provide space within schools for Level 1 learners.

The Deputy CEO & Executive Principal confirmed that the college would pay the AoC recommended pay increase of 6.5% in 2023/24.

Board members were advised that the Safeguarding Children & Adults Policy 2023/24 is available on Virtual Boardroom (VBR).

- b) Feedback from Link Governors
- Four Link Governor visits took place this term; The Vine, Printworks, Health & Social Care at Quarry Hill and 14+ Academies at Park Lane. Highlights were the 'excellent' facilities at the new Vine building (albeit that it closed for two days due to a flood) and the 14+ Academy. The Group CEO reminded board members that the 14+Academy is hugely oversubscribed and a loss leader. There are 120 Year-10 spaces for the 2024/25 cohort and application numbers are anticipated at 600.
- c) Update from Students' Union President
- The Student Member reported on successful Freshers' Fairs held at all campuses. A scheme to provide peer to peer support on languages was working well (95% positive feedback) and enabling learners to feel connected to the college. Finding prayer room space continued to be a challenge for students but a temporary solution had been identified.

The Student Member attended the recent AoC Student Governor Conference and reported on an optimistic NUS view of the Skills Agenda.

The SU have published a statement on the Gaza/Israel conflict that is in line with the group's neutral position. The statement has received positive feedback from the student body.

6. Link Governor arrangements 2023/24

Board members recognised that the proposed approach for the Governance Team to coordinate Link Governor visits had already been adopted by this board and was proving effective. Board members were asked to volunteer for vacant link governor roles, following which the link governors for 2023/24 were agreed as follows:

Link Governor Roles	Board Member
Mabgate Campus	Andrew Roach
Printworks Campus	Julie Hyde
Quarry Hill Campus (Health & Sciences)	Amy Hunter
Leeds Sixth Form College	Ann Forsaith
Park Lane (14-16 & 14+ Academies)	Andrew Roach
Safeguarding and Prevent*	Ken Morton (Group Link Governor)
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	Ken Morton (Group Link Governor)
Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA)	Ann Forsaith
Finance	<i>Vacant</i>
HR & Organisational Development	<i>Vacant</i>
Health & Safety*	Andrew Roach
EDI	<i>Vacant</i>
Information Advice & Guidance	Bill Barton*
Strategic Priorities	Julie Hyde

**Expression of Interest received outside of the meeting.*

RESOLVED:

To agree link governor arrangements for 2023/24 as detailed above.

7. Proposed Review of Board Effectiveness

The Chair confirmed that Luminate Education Group would adopt the AoC's revised FE Code of Good Governance from 1 January 2024. Board members were notified that a self-assessment against the revised code would be carried out in the new year and a plan to address any gaps would be presented back to the board in due course. Board members agreed to a rolling programme of annual one to one effectiveness review meetings.

RESOLVED:

Board members agreed the proposed review of board effectiveness.

8. Deep Dive: Digital Provision

This item was deferred until July 2024.

9. Principal's Report:

a) College update

With regards the tragic deaths of two Leeds City College students, board members were assured that the Death of a Student Policy was being followed and also that affected staff and students were being supported by the Safeguarding Team.

Student recruitment growth by headcount across all education programmes for young people was up approximately 12% on 2022/23. Whilst T Level recruitment was good, some students and parents were exhibiting reticence towards the new qualification. Adult education subjects are not as well-aligned to the college and Leeds City Region sector priorities as is required, for example there were known gaps in Digital provision, but board members were assured that this is being addressed.

In response to a question from the board, the Deputy CEO & Executive Principal confirmed that the college was aware of the 'Just Don't' campaign and the college Supporting Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy includes a section on Sexual Harassment & Violence.

Highlights included achieving College of Sanctuary status, board members attended Quarry Hill on Light Night and the Chair attended the Extreme Academy launch (for digital provision).

b) Progress against Strategic Priorities

Good progress was reported against each of the college's five strategic priorities. Board members discussed if and how the effectiveness of employer engagement was assessed. The Deputy CEO & Executive Principal explained that destinations were a good indicator of success and a Deep Dive (including NEET data) was scheduled for the next meeting. Similarly, the effectiveness of the broader staff remuneration package was enquired about. It was confirmed that not all staff benefits are monitored. An internal audit on Staff & Student Wellbeing was planned for Spring and outcomes would be reported to board members before the end of the academic year.

Good examples of stakeholder engagement were being recorded at Executive and Senior Leadership level but it was noted there was more work to do to capture wider activity.

c) Risk Management Annual Report 2022/23

Board members heard that mitigating actions delivered during 2022/23 had been effective in maintaining a stable position. This was observed as most evident in the Business as Usual risks.

RESOLVED:

The board approved the Annual Report 2022/23.

d) Review of Risk Register 2023/24

Two red risks were highlighted; accommodation requirements (discussed elsewhere within the meeting) and failure to recruit well qualified and experienced staff. Board members agreed the latest iteration of the college risk register and debated a potential new risk in relation to attendance. I.e. That secondary schools are struggling with attendance and these cohorts would soon feed through to college. The Deputy CEO Curriculum and Quality and the Director of Quality assured board members that all reasonable strategies were in place to address attendance.

RESOLVED:

The board approved the latest iteration of the risk register.

10. Luminate Employer Board Activity

a) Luminate Employer Board feedback

The Deputy CEO & Executive Principal reported that the Luminate Employer Board participated in lively debates. Outputs from the board included five Curriculum Reviews that focused on skills shortages and trends. The curriculum reviews that had been uploaded to virtual boardroom (VBR) were: Health sector, Digital, Sustainability, Business &

Administration and Education & Childcare. Board members requested more detail on the employer board membership and the Deputy CEO & Executive Principal undertook to share this outside of the meeting.

b) **Luminate Skills Statement**

The Group VP Adults guided board members through the rationale for the Luminate Skills Statement. The Skills Statement had been consulted on through the Luminate Employer Board and was developed in response to the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill. It is intended to complement Luminate's Annual Accountability Statement and provides a starting point for the Enhanced Skills Inspection anticipated to take place before June 2025. Board members sought and received reassurance that the Careers Information Advice and Guidance element would not completely fall to staff.

Board members welcomed future plans to develop and share impact statements with key stakeholders.

11. Proposed International Strategy

Board members received a presentation on the proposed International Strategy and specifically the Leeds Sixth Form strand. Board members heard that the intention was to work with universities (including University Centre Leeds) to develop a pipeline. Debate was focused on 'why' the group needs an International Strategy, safeguarding risks, space & resource requirements, agent quality and managing the differentials between 'paying' and 'free' learners. These lines of questioning were all addressed by the International Consultant and Group CEO.

The Chair sought assurance that the proposed international strategy would not distract focus from making improvements to the Leeds Sixth Form. The Group CEO confirmed that international student recruitment and support for this new cohort would be managed separately and would not fall to the Leeds Sixth Form Principal or their staff. International students would be added to existing groups/A Level subjects and wouldn't impact on capacity.

Questions had also been raised in advance of the meeting and responses have been shared with all board members via virtual boardroom (VBR).

RESOLVED:

The Board agreed to recommend the proposed International Strategy to the Group Board for approval, albeit with some reservations noted about safeguarding and appropriate accommodation.

12. Financial Performance

a) **Financial Outturn**

Total income at £69.3m is better than the budgeted position. Both staff costs and operating costs were higher than the original budget, in part as a result of fewer staff vacancies. Board members were reminded that the additional Pay Scale payment had been initially backdated 3 months and then extended to six months. At the request of Board members the tuition fees line was explained.

b) **Financial Position and Forecast 2023/24**

The EBITDA position at the end of October 2023 of £2,607k represents an adverse performance against budget of £1,720k by £887k. This is the net result of income being above budget by £639k, aided by an underspend of £248k against expenditure. The Adult and Apprenticeship figures were expected to drop as the year settled down. The CFO reported that the increase in Study Programmes would result in higher operational costs. It

was noted that the Exceptional Growth Fund income was not included in the paper and any surplus would contribute towards staff pay costs. A much stronger EBITDA than the current position was expected by the year end.

13. Subcontractor Monitoring Report

Board members were assured by the Deputy CEO & Executive Principal that all sub-contractors comply with the agreed Supply Chain Fees Policy. Following the insolvency of Aspire I-Gen training provider as the prime provider, the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) had requested Leeds City College to subcontract 16-19 provision currently with Motive8. Board members were informed that Motive8 shared the college values and were a gold standard provider. The Deputy CEO Curriculum and Quality reported that a recent internal audit on college subcontracting raised only 5 out of 95 amber ratings, quoted as 'the best RSM had seen in the sector'.

14. Progress on Major Capital Projects

Board members received a progress update on the following capital projects; Park Lane C Block extension, Temple Newsam, Mabgate, The Vine, Park Lane refurbishment and Eastgate. The Group Vice Principal Development confirmed that all areas of the Printworks with fire damage had been repaired and reopened. Board members enquired about how the estates team was ensuring sustainability was a consideration of the new builds and refurbishment plans. In response, the Group VP Development referenced air source heat pumps at Park Lane and at Printworks the introduction of solar panels and a changeover to an electric kitchen. Members recognised that inflation would impact Park Lane refurbishment costs and completion times.

The Group Vice Principal Development undertook to share Mabgate capital project designs.

15. Spotlight on SEND (including SEND Annual Assurance Report)

Safeguarding, Health & Safety and HR & Organisational Development Annual Assurance Reports 2022/23 were provided for information; responses to questions submitted in advance of the meeting had been shared with board members.

The Director of Inclusive Provision and SEND presented the SEND Annual Assurance Report 2022/23 and gave an overview of the group SEND Leadership & Governance Framework. It was noted that the government's SEND & Alternative Provision Improvement Plan, published March 2023, is postponed. Attendance and achievement are in line with peers on study programmes (and therefore a strong performance).

Members sought to understand the 50% increase in EHCPs between 2018 and 2022 – this was explained as due to better compliance and processes within the Local Authority and that early identification had improved. The college has to accommodate a broad range of needs and whilst percentage data is in line with sector norms it is the number this equates to which makes Leeds City College exceptional i.e. the projection for EHC Plans by 2025 is 7000. Discussing this figure brought the conversation back to the accommodation risk and how the college might meet forecast demand.

16. Quality of Education

a) Student Outcomes 2022/23

Whilst overall retention at 92.1% is above the national average performance is not as consistent as it needs to be across all levels of provision. The actual student outcome data for young learners remains in line with 2021/22 and comparable with the National Rate of 80.7%. Board members commended the college on its English and maths outcomes that had demonstrated a significant improvement on 2021/22 results. Value Added scores and Academic Provision (A Level) performance remains an area of focus.

b) Apprenticeship Outcomes 2022/23 & Assessment Framework

The paper included college specific data and separate metrics for the group accountability framework. The SAR was rated Good with some outstanding elements. Withdrawals and End Dates continue to be the main areas of focus.

c) Proposed Quality & Financial Targets 2023/24

The Chair welcomed the focus on academic studies (A levels) to push the college from a Good rating towards Outstanding. It was noted that the Health courses now running as T levels could no longer be counted and measured within the same datasets. The 2023/24 targets were approved for recommendation to group board.

RESOLVED:

Board members agreed to recommend Group Board include the proposed quality & financial targets in the Luminate Group Strategic and Operational Development Plan 2023/24.

17. Self-Assessment

a) Self-Assessment (SAR) 2022/23

The board received a college summary that was derived from a new group SAR. The Luminate SAR reflected the group approach that OFSTED would take. Board members appreciated the opportunity Link Governor roles provided to help triangulate key SAR messages. The board approved the following judgements:

Judgement	SAR Grade 2021/22	SAR Grade 2022/23
Overall Effectiveness	2	2
Quality of Education	2	2
Behaviour and attitudes	2	2
Personal development	1	1
Leadership and management	2	2
Programmes for young people	2	2
Adult Learning Programmes	2	1
Apprenticeships	2	2
Provision for learners with high needs	2	2

d) Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023/24

The Director of Quality presented six key actions (improvements relating to; target setting, personalised student targets, A & AS Level Achievement rates, attendance, value added and employer involvement) within the Quality Improvement Plan and all of them were agreed by the LCC Board.

18. Outcomes of 2022/23 Staff Survey

The Head of Learning & Organisational Development presented the outcomes of the 2022/23 staff survey. High scores were observed in relation to the college culture and included exceptionally high results of 99% for the following questions, 'I understand how my role impacts student experience' and 'I have a good working relationship with my peers'. Board members suggested that the LCC high scores would provide attractive recruitment soundbytes. There was a theme across all the FE colleges that 'systems and software are adequate for me to do my job' scored lowest.

Board member questions related to external benchmarking and pre-pandemic scores – both of which would be explored for 'You Said We Did' communication opportunities. Meanwhile the Head of Learning & Organisational Development undertook to provide longitudinal data from 2018/19 in a pre-pandemic comparator table with 2022/23 data. Board members queried if staff expected more in person communications post-pandemic. The ELT census was that staff expectations had changed and communications channels would evolve to include more face-to-face opportunities.

The meeting closed at 19:05