



# Heart of Yorkshire Education Group

Minutes of the Group Corporation Board Meeting

Held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 3pm

In the Board Room, Castleford College

**Members In Attendance:** Yasmin Ayub (YA), Ruth Baxter (RB), Nigel Brook (NB), Claire Corneille (CC), Dmitry Fedotov (DF), Andrew McConnell (AM - Chair), David Powell (DP), Martyn Shaw (MS), Richard Stiff (RSt), Janet Waggott (JW), Sam Wright (SW - Principal and CEO).

**Apologies received from:** Ben Porter (BP), Ruth Sacks (RSa), Vijay Teeluck (VT), Neil Warren (NW),

**In attendance:** Lorraine Cross (LC), Lisa Macdonald (LM), Jason Pepper (JP), Antonia Praud (AP -Director of Governance), and Karen Sykes (KS)

Item		Action
1	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and Governors extended their thanks to the Executive Team for the huge amount of work that had clearly gone into preparing for the presentations today. Governors confirmed it was good to separate out these key plans from the main board meeting, to be able to give them the time and focus they deserve.</p> <p>It was also acknowledged that they are three of the key responsibilities of good governance – reviewing values, being collectively accountable for life in college (the KPI's) and effectively underpinning systems and processes (PI's)</p>	
2	<p><b>Final review of Strategic Plan and consider KPI and PI within the Plan</b></p> <p>Governors acknowledged the external context the plan was working within (the perfect storm of inflation, the political landscape, and recruitment issues).</p> <p>The recent government budget had not mentioned education or skills, but did focus on growth.</p> <p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The draft strategic plan had been reviewed by the board on 5<sup>th</sup> July.</li><li>• Headlines were shared with staff at the staff conference in July, and they received the 2 page infographic the governors had approved.</li></ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final plan was now presented for sign off, and it was noted there are timescales for the strategies to come to the board, that underpin it.</li> <li>• Under each of the strategic priorities, governors reviewed the timescales for the underpinning strategy to come to the board. Having questioned whether it was acceptable to leave the finance strategy until March 2023, they confirmed they were comfortable with the timescales shared.</li> </ul> <p>Governors were asked for their final feedback on the proposals, and they noted:</p> <p>Is there a separate strategy or section missing, focussing on the student experience in the colleges? The team confirmed this will remain as a priority but it does not need a separate strategy. It is integral to everything we do.</p> <p>Governors then questioned if they were measuring the proposals against the current situation or whether they should be taking a longer-term view. They asked themselves how future proof the KPI should be, whilst acknowledging there is always flexibility to adapt.</p> <p><b>Strategic Objective One:</b> Governors questioned how rounded the monitoring would be, confirming it must be more than attendance and retention – and needed qualitative feedback and deliverables.</p> <p>Governors then turned their attention to the role of the local board – and noted that KPI for them should be looking at attendance, destinations, achievement and outcomes as well as student satisfaction.</p> <p>A governor challenged that on page 6 it suggested the local board reporting line was to Curriculum and Quality Committee. Rather than the group board, which was very different to the structure previously agreed. It was confirmed this was not the intention, and wording would be revisited. Some of the data would report this way, to avoid duplication. It was accepted that KPI reporting to the committee was not the same as the governance structure and reporting.</p> <p>Governors questioned the local board role for monitoring the college’s part in the growth strategy. It was agreed that each of the local boards should review the measures at their next meeting and feedback their thoughts.</p> <p>Governors confirmed that everyone has a responsibility to monitor how well the provision supports local needs. The group are expected to have accountability agreements and asked about the roles the employer forums</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p>
--	--	-------------------

	<p>will have and how they will report back to inform decisions. This would help to really inform the leadership team.</p> <p>Governors also questioned about the scope for the green economy within the plan and were informed this is contained within construction.</p> <p><b>Strategic Objective Two:</b> It was confirmed that the inclusive and ambitious curriculum, and student satisfaction will be monitored at group level at Curriculum and Quality Committee. As the student experience is so fundamentally important, it will be monitored by the group at Curriculum and Quality Committee and by the local boards in detail.</p> <p>The committees will also be monitoring how well students are accessing wider opportunities.</p> <p>Governors questioned how realistic or achievable some of the targets were that were set (e.g. 16-18 to increase from 77 to 88 by 2024/25). No one should be set up to fail.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Executive team felt this was realistic but ambitious.</p> <p><b>Strategic Objective Three:</b> Governors questioned what was meant by a “strong culture”? Other suggestions were discussed, including “effective, and “committed” before the board made a recommendation to change this to a “high performing” culture.</p> <p>The reports would go to the Finance, People and Resources Committee.</p> <p><b>Strategic Objective Four:</b> Governors challenged if the group were being ambitious enough, aiming for “Good” financial health in 2024/25. The team confirmed that everyone would like to return to “Outstanding”, at the earliest opportunity, but at this stage it would be very courageous to set this as a target in the short to medium term.</p> <p><b>Strategic Objective Five:</b> This is a position statement for what the group hope to achieve this academic year – which is to recognise where we are, and to develop a policy and KPI during this academic year. There is a teaching and learning conference in October, a national green careers week in November, and some external funding has been secured for research.</p>	3
--	--	---

3	<p><b>People Strategy</b></p> <p>KS thanked CC for her help in shaping the document that had also been shared in advance with members of the Finance, People and Resources Committee. It was confirmed that their feedback had been incorporated into the strategy presented.</p> <p>There are challenges including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff wellbeing</li> <li>• Staff retention</li> <li>• The national living wage increase (up to pay band L4)</li> </ul> <p>It was acknowledged that there needs to be balance and to ensure the group does not take on more than it can manage effectively, at one time.</p> <p>Governors challenged if it was a People Strategy or a People and Culture Strategy as it would influence their feedback. It was acknowledged it is in reality a People and Culture Strategy.</p> <p>Governors therefore questioned if there is something on values and behaviours that would underpin the culture?</p> <p>Governors <b>agreed</b> the values and behaviours should be added to fit with the mission at the start, and to amend the title to People and Culture Strategy.</p>	4
4	<p><b>Group Values and supporting Behaviour</b></p> <p>Governors were informed that the group had engaged Hive as consultants to run the project.</p> <p>They proposed 17 values at focus groups for staff, at all three sites. A values survey was also launched at the staff survey.</p> <p>419 staff took part in the survey which had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 scaled questions</li> <li>• 3 free text questions</li> <li>• 2 multiple choice questions</li> </ul> <p>Governors noted the take up in the survey and asked why it was completed in the busy enrolment period? They acknowledged staff had been given a number of weeks to participate in the survey itself, and a chaser reminder had been sent before the final deadline.</p> <p>The top five values were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Students First</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> </ul> <p>Staff shared a good spread of values choices.</p>	

	<p>Governors noted surprise that other key words the college was known for, (Passion, Caring, Kind) had not ranked in the top five. They then reviewed the recommendations.</p> <p>It was agreed that often “less is more” and often a short strapline, underpinned by other key words, can be effective.</p> <p>They noted they did not like “first” after students as it implies the exclusion of others.</p> <p>Other key words from staff included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kind and caring</li> <li>• Excellence</li> <li>• Passion</li> <li>• Ambitious</li> <li>• Integrity (within respect)</li> </ul> <p>It was <b>agreed</b> the values should be reviewed by the Executive Team and reported back with a final proposal on 4<sup>th</sup> October. The output should be short and memorable, and could potentially be used on lanyards or office items.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>6</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><b>Risk appetite of the board</b></p> <p>Governors received the paper highlighting the risk management policy and framework approved in March 2022.</p> <p>The Audit Committee, also operating as the Group Risk Committee, asked the board to consider relaxing the tolerance to some of the risks and tolerance levels, particularly at this point post-merger. Governors noted the existing risk categories on page 68 of the board pack.</p> <p>Governors questioned:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Whether they felt any strategic risk categories were missing from those listed?</li> <li>2. Whether they felt the risk appetite set for individual categories was correct?</li> </ol> <p>They confirmed that the tolerance towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Safety</li> <li>• Fraud and</li> <li>• Safeguarding <b>must</b> remain very low. These were non negotiables.</li> </ul> <p>Reviewing the other risks, it was noted that other low rated tolerances could be raised to moderate.</p>	

	<p>Governors challenged the recommendation to alter the finance risk, and whether increasing the tolerance could leave the college open to reputational risk? Governors confirmed the risk to reputation would always outweigh other priorities and would be considered, within the decision making process.</p> <p>Governors noted one additional category to add to the strategic risk categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure Risk</li> </ul> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the amendments above.</p>	7
6	<p><b>Approval of the new Strategic Plan, the new People &amp; Culture Strategy, and the new Group Values</b></p> <p>Governors agreed to approve the Strategic Plan and People and Culture Strategy, subject to the feedback given in the meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed the values would be presented to the group board on 4<sup>th</sup> October, for final review and approval.</p>	
7	<p><b>Approve the recommendation from the Search and Governance Committee Meeting on 29th September 2022</b></p> <p>The Search and Governance Committee had met earlier in the day and recommended:</p> <p>Jayne King be appointed to the Group Board and to be a member of the Finance, People and Resources Committee.</p> <p>Jason Brook be appointed to the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Jess Smith be invited to continue as the HE Student Governor on the Local College Board Selby.</p> <p>The board <b>approved</b> these recommendations.</p>	

## Action Log

1	Amend the wording on page 6 of the strategy to correctly position the governance and data reporting of the Local Boards to the Group and Committees	Executive Team
2	Gather feedback from the Local Boards on the recommendations for KPI and PI	Chairs of the Local Boards/ AP
3	Amend “strong culture” to “high performing” culture	KS
4	Add in the values and behaviours into the top section of the policy and amend the name to People and Culture Strategy	KS
5	Review the final values proposal and bring back the final recommendation to the board meeting on 4 <sup>th</sup> October	Executive Team
6	Prepare a communications plan	Executive Team
7	Add Infrastructure Risk to the risk strategies and amend documents to reflect the revised risk appetite of the board	JP