

LUMINATE EDUCATION GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE KEIGHLEY COLLEGE BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH 2025

Present

Colin Booth
Matt Findull
Caroline Firth
Julia Grainger
Lexi Harney
Tim Rogers
Jo Rusden

Ex-Officio
Governor and Chair
Co-optee
Co-optee
Student Member
Co-optee
Staff Member

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

In Attendance

Andrea Cowans (from item 12)
Umair Hussain (up to item 8)
Bill Jones
Carol Layall (from item 10)
Kevin O'Hare
Michelle Ritchie
Gemma Simmons-Blench
Ann Marie Spry (up to item 10)
Caroline Ward (up to item 9)

Director of Student Life
Senior Finance Business Partner
Deputy CEO & Exec Principal of LCC
Director of Quality
Principal, Keighley College
Governance Manager
Deputy CEO Curriculum and Quality
Group Vice Principal Adults
Head of Adult, Communities & HE

The meeting took place at Boardroom, Keighley College starting at 4pm.

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed board members and attendees to the meeting and informed everyone that all papers would be taken as read to ensure there was ample discussion time. Apologies for absence were received from Aisha Ali (Co-optee) and Natalie Wilson (Group Vice Principal Curriculum and Skills).

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 and four were noted as per the Corporation's register of interests, as follows:

- Tim Rogers is Chair of Keighley Town Board

- Kevin O'Hare is a Trustee on Keighley Town Board and a member of Keighley Creative
- Julia Grainger has embarked on a five week contract at Bradford College, covering for a Head of Department.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 November 2024, Rolling List of Actions & Matters Arising

The board considered and approved the draft minutes and confidential minutes of its meeting held on 20 November 2024. With regards the rolling list of actions/matters arising from previous meetings, it was noted that many items were complete or planned to be addressed at the board Away Day in May.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the board held on 20 November 2024 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

5. Communications

a) Update from Chair including feedback from Group Board

The Chair updated the board on the discussions and key decisions from the Group Board meeting in December which included the approval of the 2023/24 financial statements, several HR policies, Livingstone House acquisition and a preferred bidder for the University Centre Disposal.

At the World Café event in January, discussions commenced about a refreshed Group Strategy. Following on from this, in February, the Group Board reaffirmed Luminate's values, its educational character and commitment to inclusive education at their strategic seminar. The Principal added that any new KC strategic priorities would, where possible, map to the new LEG strategic priorities.

b) Update from Students' Union (SU) President

The student member confirmed the SU elections were underway, and voting would close on 24 March. With regards local student activity, a student radio station had launched and would be broadcast into the canteen. It was noted that students were participating in a reversed advent calendar for Ramadan and an Easter Cheesecake event.

From 2025/26 the Student Officer roles will change to MCP (Members of College Parliament) and will no longer be remunerated. The SU structure is under review, but it is anticipated that a volunteer from within the pool of MCPs will be asked to lead on KC board and committee meetings. There is an inherent risk that the KC board may lose student representation.

Board members were invited to attend Student Parliament (December 2025) and any student parliament working groups before this date. The Governance Manager undertook to circulate dates.

c) Feedback from Link Governors

Three Link Governor visits had taken place since the last meeting (TLA, HR & Safeguarding). Key comments included:

- The HR Link Governor highlighted the good work being undertaken to enhance mental health strategies, 'user friendly' HR policies and staff inductions.

- The TLA Link Governor had an engaging visit to a welding class and spoke with apprentices, students and teaching staff. Strategy discussions with the Advanced Practitioner were focused on Level 3 and changes to T Level delivery.

Matt Findull (Regional Strategic Priorities) and Tim Rogers (Skills) had met with Ofsted Inspectors in February. The Chair thanked all Link Governors for their feedback and reminded all attendees that feedback forms were available to read on Board Effect.

d) Feedback from KC 100 Birthday Celebration Event

The Principal reported on a successful birthday event held at the college on Wednesday 26 February. Current and past KC Board members attended the celebration dinner. The board were pleased to hear about other planned communications and follow-up that included planting a time capsule and a 'Two Hundred' board signage made by the joinery team to be signed by 200 students.

6. Governance Arrangements

a) Outcomes of Board Effectiveness Review

The board received a paper with a summary of outcomes from the board effectiveness review meetings held in January and February this year and several follow up actions. Following a year of significant change, the board currently holds three vacancies, it was agreed that recruiting to a skills gap in manufacturing and/or finance was a priority. Other actions were focussed on the meeting efficiency and finance training for board members.

Overall, members were satisfied that the board operates effectively.

RESOLVED:

Board members agreed to approve the actions identified.

b) Appointment of Vice Chairs

The Governance Manager reminded board members that the 2024/25 terms of reference allow for up to two Vice Chairs. In December 2024, all board members received an email inviting expressions of interest in a Vice Chair role. Vice Chairs would receive a standing invite to observe Group Board meetings. Two expressions of interest were received from Caroline Firth and Tim Rogers.

RESOLVED:

The board agreed the appointments of Caroline Firth and Tim Rogers to KC Vice Chair.

STRATEGY AND POLICY

7. LEG Annual Accountability Agreement 2025/26 – proposed targets.

The ELT Project Co-ordinator provided the board with a briefing paper outlining the purpose of the Annual Accountability Agreement and changes to DfE requirements, which include new national skills priorities and a focus on employment in key growth areas such as green jobs and net zero, creative industries and science and technology (including AI and quantum computing). An accompanying presentation explained the proposal to move to a singular group document and rationalised set of targets. This approach meant the Luminate FE colleges would no longer have bespoke Annual Accountability targets.

Following a discussion about how local manufacturing would be represented, the board supported the move to a group level document and requested that an progress update on targets be provided at the Joint FE Board Development Day in October 2025.

8. Strategic Deep Dive: 19 + Department

The Head of Department delivered a presentation on the reorganised Adult and Community delivery at Keighley College. The 19 + Department was established in 2023/2024, and provides accessible, effective, and empowering educational experiences, enabling adults to achieve their full potential. KC Adult attendance at 85.6% was reported as very good.

The board heard that a key benefit to reorganisation was enhanced learner progression through expanding the Level 3 course offerings, offering part time pre-internship to Level 5, and strengthening partnerships with employers and community to meet local workforce needs. Key partnerships include Keighley Community Together, NHS Modality, Bradford Local Authority, Local Community Centres, DWP and Keighley Creative.

The board explored how the curriculum scope was interdependent on West Yorkshire Combined Authority Adult education budgets. Forecast Adult education funding cuts in 2024/25 and 2025/26 will see circa £90k removed from KC income but this will be factored into college budgets and likely absorbed at group level. English, maths & ESOL were agreed as the priority Adult courses.

9. Principal's Reports

a) College update including progress against strategic priorities

With regards to strategic priority 1, the Principal informed the board of plans to centralise apprenticeship and business engagement activity. The rationale for this was around enhancing the delivery model rather than financial. It was noted that related Level 1 content was to be redeveloped into more stretching course material.

With regards to strategic priority 2, board members went onto to debate the challenges facing apprenticeship delivery and specifically achievement targets. Board members were reassured that whilst the college achievement target was not going to be met results remained above national rate.

In response to a question about attendance during Ramadan, the principal confirmed students had good attendance at 38-50% and higher for ESOL students.

With regards to strategic priority 3, it was noted that 96% of KC students were satisfied with their course and this was the highest satisfaction rate across the group. Some KC students are contributing to the 'Age of Wonder', a Born in Bradford research project, which in June becomes the 'Age of Opportunity' as the project follows young people through to the next phase of their lives.

All other strategic priorities were reported as on track.

b) Keighley Town Fund project update

KC now had the keys for the Advanced Manufacturing Hub and a tour of the facilities would be included within the board Away Day programme.

The Principal reported that the Adult Education Hub design layout was finalised, and lease arrangements were progressing. Board members debated the relevancy of the Adult Education Hub project considering the Adult Education Budget funding cuts. It was agreed that these courses were of value to the local community and the space would be put to good use. ELT

undertook to check that West Yorkshire Combined Authority were aware of this project. Board members were advised that Keighley Town was eligible for future funding under Labours new 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' and more detail on this would be shared for discussion in due course.

c) Risk Register

The board received a cover paper and copy of the current college risk register. At November's meeting the board agreed that the risk to maintaining a Grade 2 could be removed. Therefore, there are now eight risks identified on the KC strategic risk register.

The report showed that several key risks at KC had evolved and most notably the risk of failing to meet recruitment targets KCS0001 has decreased from Significant to Medium. This reflects progress in addressing student enrolment challenges. However, the risk associated with outdated IT equipment: KCS0014 remains Significant. A full audit of IT resources is still ongoing, ensuring future upgrades align with student and staff needs before Windows 10 becomes obsolete in October 2025.

RESOLVED:

The board approved the latest iteration of the college risk register.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND SCRUTINY

10. Quality of Education

a) In Year Student Data & On Entry Survey Results

Board members received a paper prepared by the Director of Quality that contained in-year student data and On Entry Survey results. The In Year student data indicated that overall retention at 97.5% was 7% points above the national rate. Attendance for 16–18-year-old students remains a key focus at Keighley College and was being closely monitored at all levels with interventions, incentives and parental contact in place.

The On Entry survey ran for a period of three weeks in October 2024. 974 students responded which was an increase of 14% points from 857. Results were strong and broadly in line with the previous year across all ages and categories. In response to a question from the board the Director of Quality confirmed that SEND learner student feedback is comparable to fellow students.

b) Progress against Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The board received a paper prepared by the Director of Quality that gave a progress update on the college quality improvement plan. All QIP actions were reported as on track and it was noted that the first action 'ensure the new management structure is fully embedded and supported to drive improvement and maintain consistency across the college' had evidently progressed and showing strength.

The board initiated a discussion on the influencing factors to student attendance and heard that the volume of English and maths resits did impact. Attendance at English and maths lessons was a group wide issue. Mitigations such as room and timetable changes were being explored. The student member contributed a personal perspective on low confidence (maths) at the start of term and a perceived distraction from core programme and personal interests. Student confidence is built in-year and attendance at exams is high.

The Group CEO invited board members into college to support during GCSE exams.

11. Financial Performance (Financial performance was discussed prior to item 7)

a) Financial position & Forecast 2024/25

The Senior Finance Business Partner talked through the financial dashboard. The in-year performance was £700k better than forecast due to higher income from student number growth and high needs funding. Apprenticeship income appeared to be declining and could potentially go into deficit. An Apprenticeship deep dive was added to the reporting schedule. Overall, KC EBITDA was on track to break even.

b) Draft Operating Budget Assumptions 2025/26

The Group CEO presented a paper outlining the budget setting process and the major budget assumptions for the group. In summary, the improvements to the reputation of the college in the last two years and the related improvements in student recruitment in the 2023/24 and 2024/25 intakes have gone some way to reduce the negative EBITDA generated by the college.

ASSURANCE REPORTING

12. Careers Guidance & Actual Destinations Report 2023/24

The board was informed by the Director of Student Life that the Careers Guidance Annual report was now combined with the Actual Destinations report, as the two data sets are intrinsically linked. Highlights from the report included a three year high in apprenticeship destinations of 5.12%, significant decline in NEET and AEB (Adult Skills) had most students remaining in FE.

With regards Careers Guidance, the board was assured that the college monitors progress against the Gatsby Framework and were provided with evidence of activity against each criteria. 2023/24 was the first year that students (16-19) and staff have been able to record career guidance activities mapped to each benchmark on Navigate. There was still more to do in terms of logging activity and optimising reports from the new system.

The Chair observed that the KC data was encouraging to read given the broader context that Bradford had the worst youth employment rate in the country.

13. Mid-Year Assurance Reports 2024/25

The following assurance reports were provided: SEND, Safeguarding, Health & Safety and People Services. The new reduced report format was well received.

The meeting closed at 18:30