

East Coast College Corporation Meeting 24th November 2020

Video/telephone Conference

Present:	Albert Cadmore (AC) Roger Cracknell (RC) Alan Debenham (AD) Mike Dowdall (MD) Tina Ellis (TE) Rob Evans (RE) Jane Fermor (JF) Gemma Head (GH) David Hill (DH) Peter Lavender (PL) Debbie Pring (DP) Andrew Timberlake (AT) David Blake (DB) and Stuart Rimmer (CEO/Principal)
In attendance:	Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance) Urmila Rasan (Deputy Chief Executive) Paul Padda (Deputy Principal) Ann Wall (Director of People and Wellbeing) and for the presentation Lee Nevill (Digital Learning Manager)
ECC/20/11/1 Apologies and membership	
Apologies Apologies were received from Giles Kerkham (GK) and Saul Humphrey (SH)	Action
Membership Alan Debenham (AD) Tina Ellis (TE) Rob Evans (Chair - RE) David Hill (DH) Stuart Rimmer (CEO & Principal - SR) Saul Humphrey (SH) Albert Cadmore (AC) Debbie Pring (DP) Jane Fermor (JF) Peter Lavender (PL) Roger Cracknell (RC) Andrew Timberlake (AT) Gemma Head (GH) Mike Dowdall (MC) Giles Kerkham (GK) David Blake (DB) David Blake was welcomed to his first Corporation meeting.	
<p>The meeting commenced with a presentation on the Digital Strategy by the Digital Learning Manager. A copy of which was circulated to the Corporation and added to the portal.</p> <p>Governors challenged what were the barriers to implementing the Digital Strategy. The Digital Learning Manager advised that the barriers were infrastructure and connectivity. If these let the College down staff and students would lose faith in the Digital Strategy.</p> <p>Governors challenged what support the College was accessing to help ensure success. The Digital Learning Manager advised that the College was working with other colleges that already had excellent digital strategies in order to learn from them.</p> <p>Governors challenged if recruitment both for staff and students included an assessment of digital skills. The Digital Learning Manager advised that digital skills were being assessed as part of student inductions and a recent CPD day for staff had included an assessment of digital skills. There was a need to ensure that the digital divide and digital poverty was tackled.</p> <p>The Principal advised that future staff recruitment would need to include an assessment of digital skills.</p> <p>Governors concluded that the strategy was comprehensive and the presentation had been inspiring, the barrier to implementation would be sufficient investment.</p> <p>LN left the meeting.</p>	

ECC/20/11/2	Declarations of Interest	
<p>There were the following declarations of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Dowdall as an employee of the LEP • Stuart Rimmer, Urmila Rasan, Ann Wall, Paul Padda, Wendy Stanger, Debbie Pring, Jane Fermor and Andrew Timberlake in regard to item 13. <p>It was agreed that these declarations didn't preclude full participation in the meeting.</p>		
ECC/20/11/3	To approve the Minutes of the meeting 15 9 20 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda	
ECC/20/11/3.1	To approve the Confidential Independent Governors only Minutes of the last meeting 15 9 20 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda	
<p>The minutes for the Corporation meeting and confidential minutes of 15 9 20 were agreed as a true record of the meeting.</p>		
ECC/20/11/4	Rolling Action Log	
<p>The rolling action log was reviewed and it was noted where the actions were complete.</p> <p>28 7 20 ECC/20/07/12 – The Principal advised that the HE Centre was now moving to RIBA Stage 2. The Market Gates project was a longer term plan and would if proceeded with take a number of years to get to completion.</p> <p>28 7 20 ECC/20/07/13 – The Chair asked for a governor volunteer to join the Sustainability Committee. (Post meeting DB volunteered.)</p>		
ECC/20/11/5	Principal's Report	
ECC/20/11/5.1	Quarter 2 SLG Deliverables	
ECC/20/11/5.2	Strategic Plan Action Plan	
ECC/20/11/5.3	Covid Data Update 18 11 20	
<p>The Principal presented the update.</p> <p>Governors challenged how the Covid rate was affecting the College. The Principal advised that the College rate was lower than that in the local community but operationally it caused issues and where students had to isolate their learning experience varied.</p> <p>Governors challenged if enrolment numbers had been positive. The Principal advised that it had been a reasonably good enrolment overall but the learner number position had been difficult to assess due to problems with MI. MI was now included in the Support to Improve process.</p> <p>The Principal updated the Corporation on the latest staff pulse survey which had been reasonably positive. Morale was lower than desired but better than he thought it would be given the circumstances. Morale had been impacted in all areas by Covid. A summary report of the survey would be brought to the next Corporation</p>		

	<p>together with actions that were being taken to address issues and concerns raised. The survey had highlighted that 10% of staff were not confident in their digital skills</p> <p>Governors challenged what was required to make digital work. The Principal commented that the Digital Strategy must be delivered and we needed to look at how the College was to generate the capital and revenue costs to achieve this. The College could not continue with classrooms not equipped to teach digitally, old equipment and insufficient connectivity if it was to meet the modern learning requirements.</p> <p>Governors agreed that there was a need to quantify the digital investment required to deliver the strategy.</p> <p>The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that the College this year had seen a higher staff retirement rate and this could be related to staff's heightened anxiety.</p> <p>Governors challenged if the spending review was likely to see additional funding for FE. The Principal advised that it was only a one year spending review and was unlikely to include additional funding for FE, though there could be additional funding for specific projects.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital investment schedule to be produced in support of the Digital Strategy. 	LN/UR
ECC/20/11/6	Governance Update	
	<p>The Director of Governance presented the report. The written resolution process has been used twice since the last Corporation:</p> <p>1) To appoint Governors with the Corporation resolving their approval to appoint:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. David Blake as an Independent Governor as of 11 11 20 for a term of office of 4 years 2. David Blake to the Finance and General Purposes Committee 3. Pippa Byrne as an Independent Governor as of 11 11 20 for a term of office of 4 years 4. Pippa Byrne to the People Committee <p>With 11 Governors responding and 11 in favour.</p> <p>Unfortunately subsequent to appointment Pippa Byrne had to withdraw.</p> <p>And</p> <p>2) To approve additional capital expenditure for additional IT expenditure with the Corporation resolving their approval to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. Additional capital up to £100k • 2. Use the tender completed in June to buy the additional laptops <p>With 14 Governors responding and 14 in favour.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that the Governance Remuneration and Search</p>	

Committee at its September meeting discussed nominations for College Fellows and agreed to nominate Mike Burrows as a College Fellow due to his work in the successful establishment of East Coast College which included 2 mergers, Ofsted Good and Financial Health Good.

Governors unanimously agreed with the nomination.

Corporation resolved to:

- **appoint Paul Nisbett as an Associate Governor on Curriculum Development and Finance and General Purposes Committee for a period of 1 year**
- **to note the use of the written resolution process and the resolutions that were agreed**
- **to note the use of the College Seal and to**
- **appoint Mike Burrows as a College Fellow in recognition of his work in successfully establishing ECC.**

ECC/20/11/7

SAR and QIP

The Deputy Principal presented the finalised SAR and QIP which had been written from the concept of the learner journey. Governors had attended the self-assessments and Standards had also reviewed the overall SAR. The College had assessed as an overall 2 with a 3 for full cost and apprenticeships.

The Chair of Standards advised that the Standards Committee had reviewed apprenticeship performance in detail. The Deputy Principal advised that apprenticeships had been assessed as requires improvement due to poor initial assessment, lack of ownership of the learner journey and issues with the Vocational Trainers. Action was being put in place to get to the root causes in order to secure improvement.

Governors challenged what was key to improving apprenticeships. The Deputy Principal advised that key was to get the initial assessment right. Without this the milestones are incorrect which can cause funding issues and lead to employer complaints. There was also a need for a cultural change within the Vocational Trainers as standards moved to highly personalised assessments and was not just about ticking off criteria to achieve certification.

The Principal advised that apprenticeship achievement rates had fallen as had income and subsequently the contribution rate. The team was restructured last summer but was now too big given the delivery level.

Governors commented that it was key that all students received a quality induction. The Deputy Principal advised that there was a cross college induction programme that included study skills and college expectations and this year it had been a hybrid of on site and digital. This was being quality assessed and an update would be considered at December's Standards Committee.

Governors challenged if adult learning numbers had increased. The Principal advised that adult numbers were the same as in previous years and had not as yet been affected by the closure of businesses. It would seem that adults were focussing on paying the bills and delaying or deferring training.

Governors commented that the College was a solid 2 but it was clear that there was a long way to go in order to get to outstanding.

The Principal advised that we needed to manage quality and performance to achieve

outstanding as without that the College would not develop. AT left the meeting.		
ECC/20/11/8	Community Impact Strategy	
<p>The Principal presented the Community Impact Strategy which set out how the College's work linked to the broader community and social aspects. The Strategy would be used for bidding for funding for projects such as the HE Centre.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the following minor change should be made:</p> <p>Page 11 change <i>Increase in applications to HE from local adult population to Increase HE participation from local adult population.</i></p> <p>Governors discussed the outcome ambition of reducing unemployment and noted that this would be difficult to influence as unemployment was cyclical and not within the College's influence. There was also a need to tackle low pay with the College helping people to reach their potential.</p> <p>Governors resolved to, subject to minor editing, approve the Community Impact Strategy.</p>		
ECC/20/11/9	Risk Register	
ECC/20/11/9.1	Covid Risk Register	
ECC/20/11/9.2	Summary Tactical Risk Registers	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the update of the Strategic, Covid and Tactical risk registers. Covid infections had been controlled with no internal spread.</p> <p>Governors congratulated the College for the way that Covid had been managed.</p> <p>Governors discussed business interruption insurance payment and queried if the College could make a claim. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that it was unlikely due to the Colleges main income being government funding.</p> <p>Governors challenged if the College was at risk of insolvency or intervention. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that this was not a current concern but there were a number of uncertainties that had to be carefully managed. The College had to generate enough money to cover its loans and this put the College at a higher risk. The Principal advised that currently in the sector about 10% of Colleges were in some level of FEC intervention and 25% in ESFA early warning stage.</p> <p>Governors noted that there was a risk that students would request a fee refund arguing that they had not received the full student experience and this risk needed to be managed.</p> <p>Governors discussed the risk of disengaged staff and the Chair of People Committee advised that the Committee had been concerned by the non-compliance with appraisals and performance management. If staff weren't developed and poor performance or non-compliance managed the College would not achieve outstanding.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business interruption insurance claim to be looked into for non-government funded provision. • Risk of fee refund request to be added to the risk register with appropriate mitigation. 		<p>UR</p> <p>UR</p>

ECC/20/11/10	September's Management Accounts and Forecast Review - as discussed at F&GP	
The Corporation noted September's management accounts.		
ECC/20/10/11	Financial Update - October's Management Accounts and Cashflow for submission to ESFA	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented October's management accounts together with the cashflow and advised that this would be used for the ESFA submission.</p> <p>Governors noted that the management accounts were forecasting a reduced EBITDA and this was a major risk and challenged how this was being mitigated.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the College was currently working on revised plans for Maritime that would include keeping a small amount of provision continuing as it was felt by the Senior Team and F&GP Committee that if the provision was closed completely for a year it would be very difficult to re-launch. The cash flow was planning for the worst scenario but was still within the ESFA targets. The bank had been updated and advised that the College was working through cost reduction and control to retrieve the EBITDA position.</p> <p>The Chair of F&GP advised that the Committee had discussed the accounts in detail and had asked for best case and worst case scenario modelling to be included in the management accounts.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the external auditors had been told by ESFA to have an exceptionally good look at going concern. This had included reviewing covenants to ensure that the College could achieve enough savings to ensure that they were not breached.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the ESFA were interested in cash and the cashflow demonstrates that the College will not fall below 30 cash days. The cash looks high as the capital grant monies had already been paid and were therefore included in the balance.</p> <p>The Principal commented that there were a number of Colleges in a lot worst position as was demonstrated by the number in FEC intervention or ESFA early warning.</p> <p>MD left the meeting.</p>		
ECC/20/10/12	Estate and Capital Update - as updated and recommended by F&GP	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report this had been considered by F&GP Committee who were recommending approval subject to the additional VFM mitigation set out in the report. The grant had to be spent by the end of March and therefore wouldn't allow time for the normal tendering processes.</p> <p>Governors resolved to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the FECA project be implemented and the funds spent as set out in the report 2. To approve the procurement methodology for the project as set out in the report 3. That the College can submit a 100% grant funding application to the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme operated by Salix 		

(value approximately £1.4) as set out in the report		
4. To suspend financial regulations of tendering for this project		
DP joined the meeting		
ECC/20/11/13	Confidential - Pay	
ECC/20/11/13.1	Pay Strategy - as recommended by People Committee	
<p>The Director of People and Wellbeing presented the Strategy that was being recommended by the People Committee. The Chair of the People Committee commented that it was a well-structured and coherent strategy.</p> <p>The Director of People and Wellbeing updated the Corporation on appraisal progress and advised that the SLG had considered succession planning.</p> <p>Governors asked for clarification on item 9. The Principal advised that this was to ensure that an annual pay award was budgeted for annually, this would only be paid if affordable and the Corporation approved. 1% annual pay award equated to circa £200k.</p> <p>Governors resolved to approve the pay strategy.</p> <p>PP left the meeting.</p>		
ECC/20/11/13.2	Pay Review - as discussed by People Committee and Finance and General Purposes Committee	
<p>The Director of People and Wellbeing presented the pay review that had been considered by both the People and F&GP Committees.</p> <p>The Chair of People Committee advised that the Committee were broadly supportive of the recommendations for a targeted pay award, subject to affordability. He advised that this targeted approach would leave approximately 100 staff with no increase.</p> <p>Governors noted their concern about the inequity of not all staff receiving some form of pay increase.</p> <p>Governors discussed the inequity of the L6FC contractual right to the sixth form increase and noted that it was proposed that this would need to be met from their budget. The Principal advised that the sixth form income was declining and it needed to achieve its contribution rate the same as all other provision.</p> <p>The Chair of F&GP Committee advised that the Committee had raised concerns on affordability of any award and whether a decision could be taken at this point in the financial year, the equability of not awarding a pay increase across all staff and the cost of awards on future years with a need to model the financial impact.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the pay review needed to be re-considered to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability of payment in the current and future financial years, with modelling of the financial impact • Achieving the real living wage • Achieving the strategic aims <p>The Principal advised that financial certainty would not be achieved until January and it was agreed that the pay review should be re-considered at January Corporation.</p> <p>Governors commented that a pay award could not be paid if it was not affordable and this needed to be sustainable. It was noted that the Unions had requested a</p>		

<p>significant award and that they should be advised that the Corporation was struggling to financially pay any award.</p> <p>Governors resolved to ask the Senior Team to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate feedback to unions 2. Bring forward a revised proposal based on the Committees' and Corporation's discussion including affordability information to January's Corporation. <p>RC left the meeting.</p>		<p>AW</p> <p>AW</p>
ECC/20/11/14	Confidential SOR - Verbal Update and minutes of meeting	
	Committee Reports – For Information	
ECC/20/11/15	Standards Committee Report and Policy Recommendations	
The Standards update was noted.		
ECC/20/11/15.1	Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure - recommended by Standards	
<p>It was noted that the policy had been updated and that these changes were recommended for approval by the Standards Committee.</p> <p>The Corporation resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the revised Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure. 		
ECC/20/11/15.2	Student Union Constitution 20/21 - as recommended by Standards	
<p>The Director of Governance advised that the main change had been the introduction of a Student Sabbatical position which had now been appointed. This position would also be a Student Governor and would be mentored in this role by Unloc.</p> <p>Governors commented that this was an exciting introduction and congratulated the College.</p> <p>The Corporation resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve Student Union Constitution 20/21 		
ECC/20/11/15.3	The Careers Strategy 20/21 - no material change	
<p>It was noted that no material changes had been made with minor amendments made to reference the emerging Suffolk Careers Hub and use of digital learning.</p> <p>The Corporation resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve Careers Strategy 20/21 		

ECC/20/11/15.4	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Single Equality Scheme - No material change	
<p>It was noted that no material changes had been made to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy other than an update of the college core values.</p> <p>The Corporation resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Single Equality Scheme 		
ECC/20/11/16	Finance and General Purposes Committee Report and recommendations	
<p>The Finance and General Purposes Committee's update was noted.</p>		
ECC/20/11/16.1	Annual Health and Safety Report - as discussed by Finance and General Purposes	
<p>The Corporation noted the Annual Health and Safety Report that had been considered by Finance and General Purposes.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that the Committee had asked that home working be included in the Health and Safety termly update.</p>		
ECC/20/11/16.2	Insurance Tender as recommended by Finance and General Purposes	
<p>The insurance tender as recommended by Finance and General Purposes was noted.</p> <p>The Corporation resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the proposal for tendering the College's insurance provision for 2021/22 be approved using the process and timetable proposed by FE Protect. 		
ECC/20/11/17	Curriculum Development Committee Report	
<p>The Curriculum Development Committee's update was noted.</p>		
ECC/20/11/18	People Committee	
<p>The People Committee's update was noted.</p>		

ECC/20/11/19	Review of Meeting	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confidential Items – item 14 and 13.2 pay review until announced 2. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment – no additions. 3. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – Pay Review revised report to include E&D implications of a differentiated award. 4. Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – no additions. 5. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media – none 6. How did the meeting go – A long meeting. 	AW