

East Coast College Corporation Meeting

Tuesday 21st March 2023 9am L6FC Board Room

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| Present: | David Blake (Chair - DB) Alan Debenham (AD) Tina Ellis (TE) Rob Evans (RE) Stuart Rimmer (CEO & Principal - SR) Saul Humphrey (SH) Peter Lavender (PL) Mike Dowdall (MD) Giles Kerkham (GK) Kirk Lower (KL) Ian Lomax (IL) Malcolm Goodwin (MG) Jude Owens (JO) Nasima Begun (NB) Katie Alexander (KA) | |
| In attendance: | Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance), Ann Wall (Director of People and Wellbeing), Urmila Rasan (Deputy Chief Executive) Julia Bates (Deputy Principal Curriculum Development and Strategic Partnerships) Paula Padda (Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience) | |
| ECC/23/03/1 | Apologies and membership | Action |
| <p>Apologies</p> <p>There were no apologies as all in attendance.</p> <p>Membership</p> <p>Alan Debenham (AD) Tina Ellis (TE) Rob Evans (RE) Stuart Rimmer (CEO & Principal - SR) Saul Humphrey (SH) Peter Lavender (PL) Mike Dowdall (MD) Giles Kerkham (GK) David Blake (Chair - DB) Kirk Lower (KL) Ian Lomax (IL) Malcolm Goodwin (MG) Jude Owens (JO) Nasima Begun (NB) Katie Alexander (KA)</p> <p>Katie Alexander was welcomed to her first Board meeting.</p> | | |
| ECC/23/03/2 | 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 • Tina Ellis as ECETA Chair • Saul Humphrey – Professor at Anglia Ruskin University • Peter Lavender – UEA Senior Research Fellow – fixed term • Kirk Lower – BPP University: Apprenticeship Strategy Advisor <p>It was agreed that these declarations did not preclude full participation in the meeting.</p> | | |
| ECC/23/03/3 | To approve the Minutes of the 21 2 23 meeting and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda | |
| <p>The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting.</p> | | |
| ECC/23/03/4 | Rolling Action Log | |
| <p>The rolling action log was reviewed.</p> <p>ECC/21/12/7 VAT Refund – The CEO advised that a formal complaint had been made due to the delay in payment of the agreed refund.</p> | | |

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| | PART 1 AGENDA | |
| ECC/23/03/7 | CEO/Principals Report | |
| <p>The CEO presented his update which covered key strategic developments, strategic priorities and KPIs. He advised that it was likely that the Unison ballot would be for industrial action. Mitigation would be put in place and this would not result in the College closing. It was important that the pay review 2023/24 was considered early so that it was included in the budget and discussed with the Unions.</p> <p>Governors challenged why on the strategic priorities quarter 2 update progress on apprenticeship recovery had fallen. The CEO advised this was due to achievement rates reducing and recruitment not being on target.</p> <p>Governors discussed the curriculum reforms and the affect they would have on the College's offer and learner's progression. The CEO advised that the reforms could be devastating for the College's offer and were to be explored by the Senior Leadership Group, raised by the College at the Annual Strategic Conversation and were being addressed in the AOC Mind the Gap Campaign. The level 2 reform was currently out to consultation. Governors commented that there was a risk of learners being marginalised without a suitable progression from school or from a level 2 and this would affect the College's educational character. There was a need to set out the affect on the College's offer, what the learner and employer demand was for these qualifications and skills gaps that they were addressing. The CEO commented that this would be assessed through the curriculum planning and statutory curriculum review process. The process for curriculum planning was set out in the Curriculum Strategy which the Board had approved.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience advised that with level 2 licence to practice qualifications were included which provided learners with progression to employment and apprenticeships.</p> <p>The Curriculum plan and current applications were discussed and the Deputy Principal Curriculum Development and Strategic Partnerships advised on how employers were involved in validating curriculum planning. Application numbers were consistent with the previous year and were not showing growth.</p> <p>The CEO updated on the GY University Centre and the Board discussed the risk of the tight timetable given contractors were not yet appointed. The CEO advised that timeline for completion remains for teaching September 2024 but it was likely that the College would have little time for fit out prior to the HE teaching commencing. The lease would not be issued until there was cost certainty.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current application data to be shared with the Board. • Report on the Impact of curriculum reform on the College's curriculum offer to be reviewed by the Board. | | <p>JB</p> <p>JB</p> |
| ECC/23/03/8 | Draft Accountability Agreement | |
| <p>The CEO presented the first draft of the Accountability Agreement. This needed to demonstrate how the College was meeting local, regional and national needs and would be used as the College's one year operational plan. It would come back to the May Board for approval prior to submission.</p> | | |

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| <p>The Director of Governance advised that the majority of the background information was from documents the Board has already approved such as the Strategic Plan 2020-2030, Curriculum Strategy and Self-Assessment Review.</p> <p>Governors raised the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College’s place and geography needed to be clearer. • Data used needed as far as possible to be geographically consistent. • NEET provision section needed to be expanded. • Adult returners needed to be covered in more detail, aligned to the Adult Skills strategy which was being developed and include how it was to be delivered. • Student wellbeing and support and the work that the College does to support our students needs to be highlighted. • There was a need to understand for each curriculum area the specific digital skills needed in the job market. • How could the College connect to the voluntary sector to meet their needs? • The alignment with the LISP needed to be more explicit. It was noted that due to the timing this year’s Accountability Statement could not be fully aligned as the LISP was due to be published after the Accountability Statement’s submission. | | |
| <p>ECC/23/03/9</p> | <p>Governance Update – Appointment and Engagement</p> | |
| <p>The Director of Governance presented the report and advised on the outcome of the recruitment which had been supported by the FE governor recruitment service provided by Peridot. Following on from the Unloc Student Leader Development Day the Student President had recommended two students to share the Student Governor position.</p> <p>Governors queried whether the student governor position needed to be elected. The Director of Governance advised that the standing orders state that:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Student Governors shall be appointed by a recognised College student body, elected by their peers in an election organised by the Director of Governance or appointed after interview by the Corporation.</i></p> <p>Governors commented that there was a need to develop and support new governors, including students. The Director of Governance advised on the induction programme and the use of mentors.</p> <p>Corporation resolved to agree that the following appointments are made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teresa Sharman as an independent governor and a member of the Audit Committee. • Toni Wynn as an independent governor and a member of the Quality and Standards Committee and link governor for SEND. • Sue Willgoss as an Associate Governor on Quality and Standards Committee. <p>With initial appointments for all to be to 31 7 24.</p> <p>And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joshua Reid and Lewis Hanson on a job share for the student governor role on the Board and to also appoint one to Finance and General Purposes and one to Curriculum Development to 31 7 23. | | |

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| ECC/23/03/10 | Management Accounts January 2023 - as discussed by Finance and General Purposes Committee | |
| The Board noted the management accounts for January 2023 which had been reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. | | |
| | Committee Reports - For Information | |
| ECC/23/03/11 | Finance and General Purposes Committee Report - Verbal Update | |
| <p>The Finance and General Purposes Committee Chair gave a verbal update. The Committee had considered the management accounts, replacement of boilers, the utilities contract, the termly health and safety update and the Deputy Chief Executives report.</p> <p>The boiler replacement had ben funded through the College Capital Energy Efficiency Fund. The Committee had considered the options sustainability but unfortunately the heat pump option was neither affordable or a viable option and the Committee had therefore approved replacement using hydrogen ready boilers.</p> | | |
| ECC/23/03/11.1 | Deputy Chief Executive Update - updated following Finance and General Purposes | |
| The Board noted the Deputy Chief Executive Update which had been reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. | | |
| ECC/23/03/11.2 | Utility Contract - as recommended by Finance and General Purposes Cttee | |
| <p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the utility contract proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The College had 5 electricity contracts which were due to expire 31st March 2023, these have been automatically renewed by Vertas, until March 2025 as it is their policy do to so if there is no formal notice. This has been fortuitous for the College as the College has been tied into lower unit costs. The remaining contracts are due to expire in September 2024 and it is planned to give notice on all the electricity contracts so that all contracts can be managed as one, due to the nature of the current contracts and conflicting expiry dates the expected time frame for this is March 2025. • The College has 5 gas contracts which expired 31st March 2023 and notice was given and a tender process commenced. Due to the market an updated price has been received prior to the Board and this has been added to the portal. The quote is significantly lower than our previous estimate which has reduced the risk to the College. <p>Governors discussed the need to consider sustainability when the electricity contracts were tendered and noted that there was not currently a sustainable option for the gas contracts. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the GY Re-build would be sustainable but was unlikely now to be 100% carbon neutral due to the cost. The CEO commented that there needed to be a clear sustainability position for procurement aligned to the College’s Sustainability Strategy.</p> <p>Electricity Contracts</p> <p>The Board noted the:</p> | | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced financial risk associated with the Electricity Contracts for the year ended 31st July 23 and 31st July 24 from the paper prepared in November. EDF contracts are up for renewal March 2025 and the Total Energies Contracts in September 2024. Papers will be brought to F&GP Committee to detail tenders ahead of these contracts expiring to ensure best prices are sought and financial risks considered at that time. <p>Water Contracts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted Auditel’s findings and agreed that the finance team carry out further work to establish the per annum saving. The Board noted the change to water for a cheaper annual cost managed by Auditel within the total contract portfolio. <p>Gas Contracts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted the Supplier tenders received on behalf of the College by Auditel. Auditel will work with SEFE Energy to ensure the final contract due to expire 30 September 25 is competitively priced on a 30-month contract. <p>The Board resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following Auditel’s advice and on the basis of the current energy climate and volatility of market prices, as well as the current financial challenges faced by the College; that the cheapest Supplier with the mid contract duration be engaged to supply gas. Based on the information supplied by Auditel at the current time this is SEFE Energy on a 30-month contract at a rate of 5.6544p per unit. | | |
| | SUBSIDIARY UPDATE | |
| ECC/23/03/12 | ECETA Report - Verbal Update | |
| <p>The ECETA Chair updated on the ECETA Board away day and the draft Business Plan which was to be considered at the next ECETA Board. The Board were confident that the financial targets would be met.</p> | | |
| ECC/23/03/13 | Review of Meeting | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidential Items: Separate minuted items. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment: ESFA Funding Audit. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: EDI impact assessment to be carried out on the Accountability Statement. Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Electricity contract Media: any issues discussed to inform local media: None | | |