

East Coast College Corporation Meeting

Tuesday 23rd May 2023 9am L6FC Board Room

Present:	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) Katie Alexander (KA) Teresa Sharman (TS) Lewis Hanson (LH) Tina Ellis (TE) Nasima Begum (NB) and Toni Wynn (TW)	
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) and for item 5 Holly Chase Assistant Principal and Lee Beales Curriculum Manager for English, Maths, and Community.	
ECC/23/05/1	Apologies and membership	Action
<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Alan Debenham (AD) Malcolm Goodwin (MG) Jude Owens (JO) David Blake (Chair - DB) and the meeting was chaired by Vice Chair Peter Lavender (PL)</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 Begum (NB) Katie Alexander (KA) Teresa Sharman (TS) Lewis Hanson (LH) and Toni Wynn (TW)</p>		
ECC/23/05/2	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 • Katie Alexander re item 5 as an English Lecturer • Teresa Sharman re items 12 and 14 as an employee of Norfolk County Council <p>It was agreed that these declarations did not preclude full participation in the meeting.</p>		
ECC/23/05/3	To approve the Minutes of the 25 4 23 meeting and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda	
The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting.		

ECC/23/05/4	Rolling Action Log	
The rolling action log was reviewed and no issues raised.		
ECC/23/05/5	Maths and English	
ECC/23/05/5.1	Curriculum Area Report	
ECC/23/05/5.2	Governor Visit to English and Maths	
<p>The Assistant Principal and Curriculum Manager for English, Maths, and Community presented the update.</p> <p>Governors discussed the move away from functional skills. The Curriculum Manager advised that due to poor results at the College and nationally it was decided to focus on GCSE Maths and work with students towards a grade 4 or above. The GCSE gave better access to higher level study and employment opportunities. It may take more than one exam sitting but if the grade was improved this showed progress for the student and demonstrated the College providing added value. If the functional skills exam was passed there would still be a need to continue to GCSE to be able to progress further.</p> <p>It was discussed how English and maths could be a progression barrier. The Curriculum Manager advised that the usual profile for our students is that they see themselves as failing at these subjects and being forced to re-sit. There was a need for the College to contextualise the teaching and build a relationship with the students to get over this barrier. Additional support was also provided up to the exams with specific students identified who needed intervention. The CEO commented that to be a truly inclusive College, maths and English shouldn't be a barrier to entry and the College needed to re-consider its advertising of courses and entry requirements.</p> <p>Governors challenged how quality issues in GCSE maths had been addressed. The Curriculum Manager advised that there had been some poor teaching that contributed to the reduced pass at the high grade rate. The underperformance has been addressed through performance management and support but ultimately this has led to the member of staff leaving the College. This year the curriculum planning for maths was being further tailored with smaller classes and streaming.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience said that there was a need to improve some teaching but there was also some excellent teaching with real strength and talent in the team that can be shared to help others improve.</p> <p>The CEO advised further details of improvements were in the Quality Improvement Plan for the College and for the Curriculum area.</p> <p>Governors discussed the value-add score and how this could be used to measure the quality of the College's offer. The Curriculum Manager advised that last year the College's value add score was well above the National and Regional benchmark and it was hoped to improve this year. The data would be available in October. In self-assessment the curriculum area would be looking at assessing at a level 2, this would be helped further if attendance could be improved, and the final assessment would reflect the exam results.</p> <p>Governors discussed the students' view of the teaching. The Curriculum Manager advised that the student survey was currently out and this would be included in the area's self-assessment review.</p> <p>The Vice Chair commented that at the Governor visit they had been impressed with the curriculum area. It was noted during the visit how much maths and English students had</p>		

missed at school due to the pandemic. The team encouraged new methods of teaching with teachers not afraid to try new things.		
	PART 1 AGENDA	
ECC/23/05/9	CEO/Principal's Report	
<p>The CEO presented the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to completion of audit work and curriculum planning KPIs have not been updated in the May report. • The curriculum plan has taken longer than it should but is now signed off and as part of that a new costing model approved to ensure contribution for apprenticeships. • The budget was now being drafted and was currently showing a large shortfall which, the senior team were working to address, prior to the draft being considered by Finance and General Purposes Committee. • The Great Yarmouth rebuild was progressing through a series of CEM meetings, Kier are due to submit their bid and this will identify what value engineering is required. Staff and team consultation have taken place to refine the overall design, co-existences and create a plan for the enabling moves to avoid use of temporary accommodation and protect student experience. Some of these works will need to be completed over the summer. This project is taking up senior resources especially that of the Deputy Chief Executive. The shape of the space was now right but thought needed to be given to making it an exciting space that could improve quality, especially in the level 3 market. <p>Governors discussed the Great Yarmouth rebuild and its aim to be carbon neutral. The CEO advised that the costs may be prohibitive and the roof space was not big enough for the number of panels needed to achieve carbon neutral. The height required, due to the flooding concerns, had reduced from 2.8m to 1.4m which would be a cost saving and the height level would now not be noticeable. This would be reviewed further by the Estates Committee.</p> <p>Governors discussed the strategic priorities and the amber rating of apprenticeship recovery, quality recruitment and finance, ESFA Audit and staff retention. The Director of People and Wellbeing updated the Board on retention issues. The Vice Chair advised that at the recent AOC Chairs/Vice Chairs' meeting staff retention and recruitment was highlighted as an issue by attendees, with some Colleges having to close recruitment due to staffing shortages.</p> <p>Governors queried if retention and recruitment was an issue with support as well as teaching staff. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that there are always certain trade areas difficult to recruit to but the College was also now struggling to recruit support staff as there were more alternative opportunities available.</p> <p>Governors commented that they hoped the establishment review would not disrupt staff further. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that the timeline for the review was tight with consultation commencing 6th June and completing 30th June. It was hoped to keep the pools as small as possible to minimise disruption.</p> <p>The Director of People and Wellbeing advised it was hoped that the recent Best Companies results would help with retention and recruitment. The College retained it's 1* accreditation and moved up the league tables from 94th to 65th Best Large Company to work for, 7th Best Education and Training Provider nationally, and also 31st Best Employer in the East of England.</p>		

The Board congratulated the college on the improved Best Companies results which had been achieved during challenging times.		
ECC/23/05/10	Risk Register	
<p>The risk register was reviewed and it was noted that the risk 'Failure to be financially viable' had risen and was now a red risk. The Deputy chief Executive advised that the risk had increased due to the funding audit, lack of recruitment to target, and the resultant lagged funding and the inflationary increases. It would be further updated to reflect the College's income profile and the increased risk due to the need to bid for funding which were high cost and low margin work and therefore needed volume to be cost efficient.</p> <p>The Audit Committee Chair advised that they had asked for a covering report to be included with future risk registers which would act as a summary for members, setting out the context, trends and significant concerns.</p>		
ECC/23/05/11	Management Accounts March 2023 to review	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the management accounts and advised that the College was still on course to achieve an EBITDA of circa £2.1m which was above that budgeted and was needed to retain a good financial health position. The VAT refund was still outstanding with all VAT returns now filed. If not paid by December the auditors would need to consider how this would be accounted for. The bank balance was showing as high due to the Apollo Project funding being paid in advance.</p>		
ECC/23/05/12	Great Yarmouth HE Centre Lease Conditions	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the draft lease conditions summarised in the report. The final lease would come for Board approval in October. It has been queried with the DFE if lease approval is required due to reclassification. The lease is for 125 years and breaks in the lease may occur after 40,60, 80, 100 and 125 years. A previous version of the draft lease proposed a break after 20 years and at the College's request this was removed as a break after 20 years would not give sufficient time for an acceptable return on investment. If either party exercises a break clause, the landlord, GYBC, has the right to terminate the lease of the other party. GYBC require this clause as if one party were to leave the building they would need to review the use of the whole building. The rent for the first forty years is a peppercorn and will be reviewed at each break date and there will be a sinking fund for maintenance.</p> <p>Governors noted that the business case for the HE Centre had been discussed and agreed at previous Board meetings and the documentation was available to governors.</p> <p>Governors challenged progress on procurement for the refurbishment. The CEO advised that the Council wanted to secure the lease first before letting the refurbishment contract but the roofing contract had been let. Governors noted that there had been political changes at the Council and that the new regime would need to be briefed.</p> <p>The Corporation resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> agree the Draft Agreement to Lease, and authorised further discussions to take place in order to finalise the documents. 		
	Committee Reports for Information	
ECC/23/05/13	Audit Committee Report	

	<p>The Audit Committee Chair presented the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As previously mentioned the Funding Audit Report and action plan was to be reviewed at the July Audit Committee. Given the audit had just happened a mock funding audit was not required and the resources would instead be used for the Subcontracting Audit, the requirements of which had increased sustainably this year. • The Committee challenged the Board to review in detail the future of apprenticeships and how if retained quality and funding compliance can be improved. • An audit on Enrolment – Learner Journey Audit was reviewed. This was reasonable assurance with one medium and three low priority actions. Overall the College had a lot of manual processes compared to other Colleges and this needed to be considered by the College to see if changes and improvements were needed. • Managing public money requirements were considered and the College’s policies are to be updated to reflect the new requirements. • The external audit tender was currently out and the committee had raised concerns that due to the timing of the tender whether there would be sufficient interest to achieve value for money. 	
ECC/23/05/13.1	QD036 Whistleblowing as recommended by Audit Committee	
	<p>It was noted that there were no material changes.</p> <p>Corporation resolved to approve QD036 Whistleblowing Policy as recommended by Audit Committee</p>	
ECC/23/05/14	Curriculum Development Committee Report	
ECC/23/05/14.1	Curriculum Planning – Current Position	
	<p>The Curriculum Planning Chair presented the report. The significant risks to the College’s income had been highlighted at the meeting and operational actions had been agreed which were intended to mitigate this risk. The Curriculum Planning – Current Position had been included in the Committee’s report to make sure the Board were appraised of the current position.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Strategic Partnerships presented the report and advised that it was crucial that the College recruited to plan with students on the right course to help ensure retention. There was now a separate plan for adults which had been informed by the regional and RCU data.</p> <p>Governors challenged how the devolution of the AEB funding to councils would affect the College’s planning. The CEO advised that he was leading on this and it had been a very collaborative process with learning from authorities where this had already occurred, as the ILR and audit requirements were complex. It was proposed that the funding would be three yearly rather than annual with more flexibility than the current system, which would assist with the College’s planning. The Counties had commissioned data to inform this devolution and it was agreed that this data replaced the need for the Learning and Work Institute survey on the Board’s action plan. It was noted that this planning assumed that devolution occurs.</p> <p>Governors challenged the reasons for poor 16-18 recruitment. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Strategic Partnerships advised that the College for the last two years had</p>	

<p>not recruited to plan which has meant the College's market share had fallen. The 16-18 provision is getting smaller, resulting in smaller class sizes which are not financially viable. Qualification reforms and raised entry requirements implemented two years ago in preparation for T levels, have disrupted the course offer, consequently some students are now unable to enrol on certain courses. NEET numbers were also increasing which was a concern and the College was working with the Counties to try and address this.</p>	
<p>ECC/23/05/15</p>	<p>Review of Meeting</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential Items: Separate minuted items. • Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment: Cover report for the risk register • Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Curriculum Planning and ensuring an inclusive curriculum. • Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None • Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Capital works, it should be remembered that the decisions taken now would have long term consequences for our energy costs. • Media: any issues discussed to inform local media: Best Companies and Annual Report – need to promote success. • How did the meeting go: It was useful to discuss provision at the start which had been part of the deep dives agreed at the Board's strategic away day.