

# East Coast College Corporation Meeting

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025 9am On Teams

<b>Present:</b>	David Blake (Chair - DB) Tina Ellis (TE) Peter Lavender (PL) Mike Dowdall (MD) Giles Kerkham (GK) Ian Lomax (IL) Rachel Kirk (RK) Vicki Paterson (VP) Graham Evans (GE) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Robin Jackson (RJ) Andy Tovell (AT) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO) Rachael Botley (RB) and Teresa Sharman (TS)	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance), Urmila Rasan (Deputy Chief Executive) and Gary Jefferson (Deputy Principal)	
<b>ECC/25/5/1</b>	<b>Apologies and membership</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Katie Alexander (KA) Mark Buckton (MB) Kirk Lower and Ann Wall (Director of People and Wellbeing)</p> <p><b>Membership</b></p> <p>Tina Ellis (TE) Peter Lavender (PL) Mike Dowdall (MD) Giles Kerkham (GK) David Blake (Chair - DB) Kirk Lower (KL) Ian Lomax (IL) Teresa Sharman (TS) Rachel Kirk (RK) Vicki Paterson (VP) Graham Evans (GE) Katie Alexander (KA) Logan-Jaimes Gravelles (LG) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Robin Jackson (RJ) Mark Buckton (MB) Andy Tovell (AT) Maisy Clark (MC) Emily Harvey (EH) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO) Rachael Botley (RB)</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded them of their role as governors and trustees, including collective responsibility.</p>		
<b>ECC/25/5/2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
<p>There were the following declarations of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tina Ellis as ECETA Chair and as a Governor at an Ormiston School. Graham Evans as ECETA Director.</li> <li>Wendy Stanger as Rockborn consultant working with Unloc on learner voice.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that these declarations did not preclude full participation in the meeting.</p>		
<b>ECC/25/5/3</b>	<b>To approve the Minutes of the last meeting 28 3 2025 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda.</b>	
The minutes of 28 3 25 were approved as a true record of the meetings.		
<b>ECC/25/5/4</b>	<b>Rolling Action Log</b>	
The rolling action log was reviewed, and the Director of Governance advised that the actions were in progress and that the link governors had been holding their initial meetings.		
<b>ECC/25/5/5</b>	<b>CEO/Principals Report</b>	
<b>ECC/25/5/5.1</b>	<b>KPIs - Strategic Priorities and Deliverables 2024-25</b>	
The Principal presented the report. Budget setting was progressing, based on the proposed 2% pay award and £800K capital expenditure. The Support Area budget setting process has		

highlighted significant inflationary pressures, particularly software licences and utilities. Additionally, there are increased estate overheads associated with The Place, all of which will need to be accommodated within the budget. The extent to which the recent National Insurance increase will be funded also remains uncertain. A capital funding grant of £1.2 million, to be spent by April 2027, has been received. Its allocation will be considered as part of the revised Estates Strategy. Due to a reduction in the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) allocation, curriculum planning is being revisited. The College is actively engaging with Norfolk and Suffolk to secure a share of additional adult education funding allocated to the counties for 2025/26, and a subcontracting arrangement is currently under development. The Establishment Review is nearing completion, except for areas where changes have been proposed following consultation. The College has received the proposed Maritime Partnership Agreement, which is under legal review and may require approval via a written resolution. It would give the College the Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CASs) required for the next academic year.

Governors queried if the reduction in AFS was a sector-wide reduction or a College specific one. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that sector-wide there was a 6% cut, but the College's funding had also been rebased to the actual 2024/24 outturn which resulted in a further reduction. This year the College is delivering more including at The Place.

Governors welcomed the positive development of the Maritime Partnership and sought assurance regarding student recruitment for September. The Principal confirmed that recruitment projections are currently strong.

Governors challenged whether the partnership with the University of Suffolk (UoS) would be affected by the new partnership. The Principal advised that UoS was not able to provide the College with the CASs required and was aware that the College was therefore looking to enter into a new partnership for these. A positive meeting had been held with UoS regarding higher education and raising aspirations, together with the successful opening of The Place.

The Principal updated the Board on the KPIs, focusing on the quality ones.

Governors discussed whether a KPI should be set for behaviour and, if so, what metric could be used. The Deputy Principal advised on the College's Disciplinary Policy and its stages, and advised that there was still work to do to ensure that it was used consistently. It should be used for disciplinary issues only and not for classroom management. Meetings had been held with all teams to discuss how students behave, and teachers do see it as a growing problem since Covid. The College needs to work with and support the students to improve their behaviour. Communal areas can be an issue, and to address this, staff are 'walking the floor' more. Governors emphasised the importance of ensuring that any actions taken are sensitive to students' circumstances, particularly concerning mental health and experiences of trauma. They commented that when they had visited the College, it had been calm and no poor behaviour had been witnessed, and this had been commented on in the Ofsted report.

Governors discussed attendance, how it was linked to the quality of teaching and learning, if it was impacted by staff absence, and how attendance could be improved. If students were not in, they were not learning, or being supported, and may not be safe. The Deputy Principal advised that it works well where teachers set out clear standards and expectations. The attendance figures have not been correlated to staff absence, but in a couple of cases, attendance has been impacted by staff absence. A mandatory Professional Learning Day was to be held in August, which will set out for staff the College's expectations. It was important that all students had a good induction and were clear on the standards expected of them and what action would be taken if they did not attend. A governor commented that the inductions at the start of the academic year had been good and suggested introducing a termly induction to serve as a valuable opportunity to reinforce the College's expectations and to support ongoing student engagement.

<p>Governors asked if the College was looking to introduce Foundation Apprenticeships. The Deputy Principal commented that the College had not yet planned to, but would consider their suitability.</p> <p><b>Governors agreed the following action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Absence range to be added to the KPIs.</b></li> <li>• <b>Proposal for a termly student induction to be reviewed.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Corporation noted the contents of the report and the KPIs and resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approve the College's entry into a subcontracting arrangement with Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils for the provision of Adult Skills Fund services in the 2025/26 academic year.</b></li> </ul>		<p><b>Deputy Principal</b></p> <p><b>Deputy Principal</b></p>
<b>ECC/25/5/6</b>	<b>Accountability Statement 2025/26</b>	
<p>The Deputy Principal presented the Accountability Statement and advised that it was an annual requirement. The draft statement was considered by March's Quality and Curriculum Committee, and they had recommended to the Board for approval.</p> <p><b>Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approve the Annual Accountability Statement together with its submission and publication.</b></li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/25/5/7</b>	<b>Governance Update including Weston and The Place Leases</b>	
<p>The Director of Governance presented the report and updated on the appointment of the Chair of the People Committee, the execution of lease deeds, and a review of the Weston recommendations alongside the College's current level of compliance. The Weston report highlighted that payments were made outside the normal control framework, and it needed to be considered how it could be ensured that this could not happen at the College.</p> <p>Governors commented that finding ways to circumvent the rules was also about culture, and the College did not have this culture. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the College was reviewing its financial policies, and these would be considered by the Committee and then the Board.</p> <p>Governors discussed the report and emphasised that there was a need for the Board not to be complacent. The Director of Governance advised that the Board had spent a long time in the last year on how it appraised and set the remuneration of Senior Post Holders and therefore complied with the recommendations related to these areas. It also had in place a scheme of delegation and carried out an annual Self-Assessment and Triannual external board review, and implemented the resultant actions.</p> <p>Governors raised that there was a need to review the Director of Governance job description and person specification to ensure that it was fit for purpose and succession.</p> <p><b>Governors agreed the following action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Director of Governance Job Description and Person Specification to be reviewed to ensure that it reflects the regularity requirements.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>The Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appoint Rachael Botley as Chair of the People Committee, with her term to run concurrently with her board appointment, ending on 31 July 2026.</b></li> <li>• <b>Review the Weston Report and discuss any changes the Board needs to make to its governance arrangements.</b></li> </ul>		<p><b>Governance Remuneration &amp; Search</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve the signing and sealing of the Lease and Underlease for the Place as agreed in the May 2024 written resolution and November 2024 Corporation resolution.</li> </ul>	
<b>ECC/25/5/8</b>	<b>Strategic Risk Register</b>	
	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Strategic Risk Register.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that the tactical risk registers are currently being updated following the Board's recent breakout session. However, there remains a need to further consider the College's risk appetite and the scoring to ensure that the Board's attitude to the risks is reflected. This was for each committee to carry out and these changes would then be reflected in the Strategic Risk Register.</p> <p>The Audit Committee Chair advised that the Audit Committee had reviewed the tactical and strategic risk registers and had been assured that the Committees were reviewing their registers.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive advised that she had met with the Estates Committee Chair and the Finance and General Purposes Committee Chair to review their committees' risk registers.</p> <p><b>Governors agreed the following action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated tactical risk register summaries to be included in the next risk update to the Board.</li> </ul>	<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>
<b>ECC/25/5/9</b>	<b>Management Accounts March 2025</b>	
	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the March Management Accounts and advised that there were no areas of concern or material changes to report. The Finance Team is currently in the process of final reconciliations in preparation for producing the draft year-end outturn.</p> <p>Governors challenged what, financially, the Board should be concerned about. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the financial challenges were the national insurance increase and how much would be covered by funding, meeting the costs of The Place, and the increased in utility and other costs. All of these needed to be met by efficiency and growth.</p>	
	<b>Committee Reports for Information</b>	
<b>ECC/25/5/10</b>	<b>Quality and Curriculum Committee Report 1 April 2025</b>	
	<p>The Quality and Curriculum Committee report of 1 4 2025 was noted, and the Chair provided an overview. Highlighting the need to develop the College's learner voice and its students as critical thinkers, and for data to support the College's quality assurance.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal advised that the data dashboard is being refined.</p>	
<b>ECC/25/5/11</b>	<b>People Committee Report 7 May 2025</b>	
	<p>The People Committee report of 7 5 2025 was noted, and the Chair provided an overview. Highlighting the Supreme Court ruling, the National Audit Office report on Teacher workforce, three year plan, Gender Pay report and the deep dive into the risk of staff absence.</p> <p><b>Governors agreed the following action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay Strategy should be included as a substantive item on the Board Away Day, and the adopted Pay Strategy should be used as a basis for the budget.</li> </ul>	<b>Director of Governance</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The % increase for years 2 and 3 of the Three-Year Plan be removed until a Pay Strategy has been agreed,</li> </ul>	Principal and CEO
ECC/25/5/12	Audit Committee Report 6 May 2025	
	<p>The Audit Committee report of 6 5 2025 was noted, and the Chair provided an overview of the audits. A reminder had been sent to the Senior Team on the Committee's behalf that the College's Fraud Register included near misses and covered all aspects of the College's work, not just financial fraud.</p> <p><b>Governors agreed the following action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learner Journey Audit actions and management response on actions to be considered by Quality and Curriculum June's meeting.</li> </ul>	Deputy Principal
ECC/25/5/13	Estates Committee Report 6 May 2025	
	<p>The Estates Committee report of 6 5 2025 was noted, and the Chair provided an overview. The focus was on the review of the College's Estate Strategy and the need to consider the condition of the estate and whether it was fit for purpose. The condition survey, for instance, would highlight that the Lound buildings were in a poor condition and that they were not suitable for the planned provision. The Committee had also discussed the need to ensure that the estate developed had the provision to fill it.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the College was looking to bid for funding for large warehouse style building for Lound so that they could be used for training in areas such as scaffolding.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that it was planned for the Estates Committee to consider the Estates Strategy and then it be brought to the July Board for approval.</p>	
ECC/25/5/14	Breakout Session notes - Learner Voice	
	<p>A breakout session was held focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are our Objectives for Learner Voice, and how can we achieve them?</li> <li>How can we engage learners in all aspects of learner voice, including governance?</li> <li>What roles, responsibilities, support, and structure do we need?</li> </ul> <p>The four groups fed back to the whole Board areas raised, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the current learner voice engagement.</li> <li>College making developments and changes in response to learner feedback.</li> <li>Higher engagement with student voice opportunities.</li> <li>better quality of teaching and learning, and learner experience.</li> <li>Informed decision making.</li> <li>Transparent governance.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

- Challenges around resistance - a lot of students are only wanting to come in and complete their studies then return to their jobs/families/other responsibilities rather than getting involved in anything additional.
- Often only hear negative feedback, particularly from adult learners who are 'paying' or have loans – need different strategy to engage them.
- Need to engage learners about what is not working and how we can work together to fix it.
- Need staff that can act as 'listeners' to engage with learners to find out what the issues are and ideas for improvement.
- Legally required to have a Student Governor – how do we ensure that this role is a positive and successful one? Need to remember, not a student representative but a governor with the same rights and responsibilities.
- Student Governors to lead on focus groups - encourages other learners and may make clear to students what the governors do.
- Introduce a Learner Committee chaired by the Student Governor.
- Consider online meetings or streamed meetings where students can interact - doesn't need to be the entire meeting but could be a portion of it.
- Need to look to develop learner voice from the class representatives, to the student union, to the President, and the Student Governor.
- Need to ask learners how they want to be engaged and what structures they want for learner voice.
- Look to provide incentives to engage in learner voice activities.
- Learner voice activities need to be ones that learners would feel comfortable attending and contributing in.
- We need to find out what the students want to discuss and agree on the year's focus with the learners. This could be different for different provisions.
- Align our agenda better with theirs – too much stuff of board interest is not their interest
- Go to them not expect them to come to us – governors need to talk and engage with students on walkthroughs, in the social areas, and at events and Heads of Department should engage and lead on specific areas.
- Heads of Departments, Course Leaders, Success Coaches etc. could visit monthly with themes. Consider seasons, e.g. Likely to be bleak during the winter, so asking what we can do to support them.
- Consider language used in surveys - not accessible for low-level English learners.
- Is learner voice working at the classroom level – how do we get assurance back to governors – possibility of link role like a youth worker who can feedback to SMG/governors
- Challenge is to engage them on our agenda/important item – however, we probably have some common ground such as:
  - Jobs and careers
  - Transport
  - Student finances

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Building and experience, e.g. new Great Yarmouth build.</li> <li>○ Social spaces</li> <li>○ Timetables</li> <li>○ Catering</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We could and should learn from others who do it well, though nationally it is an issue</li> <li>● Need to ensure that we provide feedback – you said we did, and build on successes</li> <li>● The world has changed. How do we keep up to date? More training for governors on multigenerational workplaces.</li> <li>● Develop a learner voice engagement charter with the learners, covering all types of engagement and the different campuses’ cultures.</li> <li>● Tutorial programme to develop learners' critical thinking and confidence.</li> <li>● Introduce a Learner’s newsletter produced by the College and learners.</li> <li>● How to support the learner voice – internal and external support.</li> </ul> <p><b>Governors agreed the following action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Learner Engagement Strategy to be developed.</b></li> </ul> <p>Governors commented that the breakout sessions were a positive addition to the Board’s agenda and agreed to consider attendance at the July breakout.</p>	<p><b>Deputy Principal</b></p>	
<b>ECC/25/5/15</b>	<b>Review of meeting</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confidential Items: None</li> <li>2. Were Learners prominent in discussions: yes, especially in the breakout session</li> <li>3. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment: Updates are ongoing.</li> <li>4. Equality &amp; Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Estates Strategy</li> <li>5. Health &amp; Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None</li> <li>6. Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Estates Strategy</li> <li>7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media: None</li> <li>8. How did the meeting go: Breakout session was a positive addition to the Board agenda.</li> </ol>		