

East Coast College Corporation Meeting

Tuesday 25th March Great Yarmouth Board Room

Present:	Tina Ellis (TE) Peter Lavender (PL) Mike Dowdall (MD) Giles Kerkham (GK) Ian Lomax (IL) Rachel Kirk (RK) Vicki Paterson (VP) Graham Evans (GE) Katie Alexander (KA) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Robin Jackson (RJ) Andy Tovell (AT) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO) And with on Teams Mark Buckton (MB) and Teresa Sharman (TS)	
In attendance:	Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance), Ann Wall (Director of People and Wellbeing), Urmila Rasan (Deputy Chief Executive) and Gary Jefferson (Deputy Principal)	
ECC/25/3/1	Apologies and membership	Action
<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from David Blake (Chair - DB) Kirk Lower (KL) Maisy Clark (MC), and Emily Harvey.</p> <p>In the Chair's absence, it was agreed that Vice Chair Community Tina Ellis would chair the meeting.</p> <p>Membership</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 Gravells (LG) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Robin Jackson (RJ) Mark Buckton (MB) Andy Tovell (AT) Maisy Clark (MC) Emily Harvey (EH) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO)</p> <p>It was noted that Lynne Doublet had resigned.</p>		
ECC/25/3/2	Declarations of Interest	
<p>There were the following declarations of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tina Ellis as ECETA Chair and as a Governor at an Ormiston School. Graham Evans as ECETA Director. <p>It was agreed that these declarations did not preclude full participation in the meeting.</p>		
ECC/25/3/3	To approve the Minutes of the last meetings 17 12 24 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda.	
ECC/25/3/3.1	To review the notes of the Away Day 28 1 2025 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda	
ECC/25/3/3.2	To approve the Minutes of the 28 1 2025 confidential meeting and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda	
<p>The minutes of 17 12 24 and 28 1 2025, including confidential ones, were approved as a true record of the meetings.</p> <p>The notes of the Away Day 28 1 2025, were agreed.</p>		

ECC/25/3/4	Rolling Action Log	
The rolling action log was reviewed, and the Director of Governance advised that the College was setting up an AI working party, and it was agreed that the Governor AI link would attend this.		
ECC/25/3/5	CEO/Principals Report	
ECC/25/3/5.1	ECC response to the select committee inquiry on FE and skills	
ECC/25/3/5.2	Ofsted Inspection toolkit draft document	
ECC/25/3/5.3	KPIs - Strategic Priorities and Deliverables 2024-25	
ECC/25/3/5.4	Accounting Officer Letter - Education and Skills Funding Agency Closure	
<p>The Principal presented the report, including the appendices. Curriculum planning was completed, and budgeting was now in progress. This could, in some areas, lead to an establishment review due to changes in roles and provision. If this is required, consultation would commence post Easter and be completed before the Summer break. Discussions for the proposed new partnership for maritime were ongoing, and it was hoped that a memorandum of understanding would be signed shortly, with a formal partnership agreement in place to enable a September enrolment. Funding announcements had not yet all been received, but did include a 6% cut in adult funding and additional funds for construction.</p> <p>Governors noted that it was encouraging to receive a positive update on the maritime provision. They also emphasised the importance of maintaining and developing the partnership with the University of Suffolk (UOS). The Principal advised that a meeting with the new leadership at UOS had been scheduled for June to discuss the partnership's future direction.</p> <p>Governors discussed the risks of devolution and how to ensure that the College had a voice in the discussions. The concern was that the devolution models could become overly focused on Ipswich and Norwich. It was noted that currently, the Counties and the Districts were proposing different devolution models.</p> <p>The College's response to the select committee inquiry on FE and skills was noted, and that the inquiry had commenced.</p> <p>The Principal presented the proposed Ofsted draft toolkit. Governors commented that the proposals were too complicated, and it was agreed that this would be looked at in more detail at the Quality and Curriculum Committee.</p> <p>Governors discussed the KPIs, noting that attendance is below target and that retention is higher for ages 16-18 and lower for ages 19+ compared to the same point last year. The Principal advised that forecast achievement rates will be calculated based on the progress reporting window, which closes on 21st March 2025. It was agreed that this would be further considered along with the actions being taken at the upcoming Quality and Curriculum Committee, and that the recommendations in the report on retention needed to be expanded upon to facilitate improvements.</p> <p>Governors challenged the apprenticeship KPIs and the action being taken to address them. The Deputy Principal reported that efforts are ongoing to update and finalise apprenticeship records, including closing those that are out of time. This process may result in achievement rates falling below the minimum required level, which could lead to intervention. Additionally, booking end-point assessments is proving challenging due to fully booked assessment</p>		

centres. The College is exploring the possibility of establishing its own assessment centre. The Further Education Commissioner has been providing active support to the College regarding apprenticeships, and a follow-up meeting is scheduled for May.

The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that the pay award had been paid in March, backdated to January. The Sixth Form Association rate, which applied to Lowestoft Sixth Form heritage staff, had now been received and would result in a differential of circa £10k with a 3% rise from September and 5.5% in April.

Governors challenged the KPI for staff absence, seeking to identify any patterns and understand the actions being taken to address the issue. The Director of People and Wellbeing explained that the College employs a trigger system for managing absences, starting with informal interventions. It was noted that there is no discernible pattern to the absences, with mental health being the primary reason cited. To ensure that absences are appropriately managed, an HR Officer has been assigned the role of absence triage, facilitating necessary conversations regarding staff absences.

Governors queried if the closing of the ESFA had made any noticeable difference. The Principal advised that the team had transferred and no difference had currently been noticed.

Governors agreed the following action:

- **People Committee to review staff absence and its risks**

AW

ECC/25/3/6

Three Year Plan

The Principal advised that the Three Year Plan had been updated following the Governor's Away Day and had been reviewed and agreed by the Quality and Curriculum and Finance and General Purposes Committees. The curriculum plan needed to drive the workforce and estates strategy.

Governors challenged that, as the College had achieved Ofsted 'Good', the Strategy and the Three Year Plan should now be changed to aspire to be 'Outstanding' by 2030. The Principal advised that the plan set out areas the College was looking to self-assess as 'Outstanding' each year. Governors discussed whether the College should state that it aspired to be 'Outstanding' by 2030 and how this could be used to drive improvements in all areas. It was agreed that there was a need to be ambitious and build on the Ofsted 'Good'.

The Principal agreed that there was a need to be ambitious and to set a target to be 'Outstanding', but acknowledged that with the resources the College had, it would be a challenge. Governors commented that unless set as a target, it would be impossible to achieve, and the College needed to be ambitious for its students, staff, and community.

The Principal commented that the Three Year Plan needed to prioritise areas that would be the strategic focus for achieving 'Outstanding.' For instance, the Sixth Form should be a priority to help grow and rebrand its provision. Governors agreed that a stepped and targeted approach to achieving 'Outstanding' was sensible, but emphasised that the 2030 aim should be explicitly set as 'Outstanding.' This would also need to consider Ofsted's new framework.

The Deputy Principal commented that each department needed to be supported to be the best that they can be, but cautioned against an unhealthy focus on achieving 'Outstanding' status, as this could become toxic. Governors agreed, noting that the ambition to be 'Outstanding' should be organic and communicated in a supportive and focused manner.

The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that in recruitment, good candidates were inspired by a target of 'outstanding.;

<p>Governors agreed the following action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan 2030 to be changed to ‘By 2030 we will have: ‘Outstanding Provision’ demonstrated by our Ofsted report card.’ <p>The Corporation resolved, subject to the objective being changed to outstanding by 2030, to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the Three Year Plan, recognising that it is a dynamic document and is still to be reviewed by Estates and People. 		PP
ECC/25/3/7	Governance Update	
<p>The Director of Governance presented the report and updated on recruitment, the revised link scheme, and the AOC External Board Review report.</p> <p>Governors agreed that there was still a need to develop student governance, and this should be reflected in the Governance Quality Improvement Plan. The Director of Governance advised that the learner voice was being considered holistically with Student Services, and a report on how it could be improved would be brought for consideration.</p> <p>The Corporation resolved to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appoint Rachael Botley as an Independent Governor for a term of 2+2 years, which, as terms are aligned to academic years, would mean for an initial period to 31/07/2026. 2. Approve the revised Link Governor Scheme. 3. Note the AOC External Board Review report, and that this will be reviewed in detail by Governance Remuneration and Search. 		
<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>		

ECC/25/3/9	Management Accounts Jan 2025 as discussed at Finance and General Purposes	
ECC/25/3/9.1	Management Accounts - February 2025	
<p>The Board noted the January Management Accounts, which had been reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes. The Deputy Chief Executive presented the February Management Accounts and advised that there had been no material change. The forecast will be updated in April to include a reconciliation of areas such as bursaries and projects, providing a more accurate year end prediction.</p>		
ECC/25/3/10	Risk Register - Breakout session led by Committee Chairs	
	Background Information - Referenced Guidance, Strategies and Policies	
ECC/25/3/10.1	QD029 - Risk Management Strategy and Policy and Procedure	
ECC/25/3/10.2	RSM Emerging Risk Radar Spring 2025	
<p>An hours breakout session was held on the risk registers, which considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all risks covered on the risk register? • Could risks be removed or amalgamated? • Are the risk appetite statements fit for purpose? • Do the risk scores need adjustment? • Is more detail needed for mitigation, and/or is additional mitigation required? <p>A brief feedback session was held, and all agreed that the use of a breakout session had been a positive addition to the Board agenda. Focusing on the risk registers and the risk register process enabled the Board to get a better understanding of the risks, including their practical implications, interconnections, and mitigation strategies, but more time was required to fully review.</p> <p>The Audit Chair advised that the Audit Committee reviewed all the risk registers and the related committee minutes at each of its meetings.</p> <p>A governor commented that at a recent Audit Master Class he attended, it was evident that the Board had a more comprehensive approach to risk than other Boards.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update risk registers based on breakout discussions, and review them at the subsequent committee meeting. • Include deep dives into risks in governance agendas. • Add breakout sessions to Board agendas. 		<p>WS</p> <p>Chairs</p> <p>WS/DB</p>
	Committee Reports for Information	
ECC/25/3/11	Quality and Curriculum Committee Report 6 2 2025 & 11 03 2025	
<p>The Quality and Curriculum Committee reports of 6 2 2025 and 11 03 2025 were noted, and no concerns or issues were raised.</p>		

ECC/25/3/11.1	QD015 Prevent Strategy	
<p>As recommended by the Quality and Curriculum Committee Corporation resolved to approve the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QD015 Prevent Strategy 		
ECC/25/3/11.2	QD011 SEND Strategy and Policy	
<p>As recommended by the Quality and Curriculum Committee Corporation resolved to approve the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QD011 SEND Strategy and Policy 		
ECC/25/3/11.3	QD009 Curriculum Development and Planning Strategy	
<p>As recommended by the Quality and Curriculum Committee Corporation resolved to approve the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QD009 Curriculum Development and Planning Strategy 		
ECC/25/3/12	Finance and General Purposes Committee Report 18 3 2025	
<p>The Finance and General Purposes Committee report 18 3 2025 was noted, and no concerns or issues were raised.</p>		
ECC/25/3/12.1	QD214 Modern Slavery Statement	
<p>As recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee Corporation resolved to approve the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QD214 Modern Slavery Statement 		
ECC/25/3/12.2	QD215 Reserves Policy	
<p>The Audit Chair advised the Board on the purposes of a Reserves Policy, including its practical use in decision making, and questioned if the proposed one was a practical tool. The External Auditor's management letter had included a recommendation to establish such a Reserves Policy.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the management accounts would report against the Reserves Policy.</p> <p>As recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee Corporation resolved to approve the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to approve the QD215 Reserves Policy 		
ECC/25/3/12.3	Lease of the Lowestoft MUGA to Holt Padel Tennis	

<p>Governors discussed the proposed project and its impact on the College. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that discussions were ongoing and at this stage the Board was being asked for an in principle agreement only.</p> <p>Governors queried if, at the end of the lease if it would be better to retain rather than have the fence and floodlights reinstated. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the floodlights to be used by the Padel Tennis were portable ones and therefore could be easily removed.</p> <p>As recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee Corporation resolved to approve the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In principle, to the College is entering into negotiations regarding a lease with Holt Padel Tennis, subject to final negotiations and DFE approval. 		
ECC/25/3/12.4	ECITB Scholarship Agreement	
<p>As recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee Corporation resolved to approve the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineering Construction Industry Training Board's scholarship programme's Deed. 		
ECC/25/3/13	Governance Remuneration and Search Committee 4 2 2025	
<p>The Governance Remuneration and Search Committee 4 2 2025 report was noted, and no concerns or issues were raised.</p>		
	Resolutions recommended by committees on which no discussion is anticipated	
ECC/25/3/13.1	Chair's Objectives	
<p>As recommended by the Governance Remuneration and Search Committee Corporation resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the Chair's Objectives. 		
ECC/25/3/14	People Committee 14 01 2025	
<p>The People Committee 14 01 2025 report was noted, and no concerns or issues were raised.</p>		
ECC/25/3/15	ECETA Report 12 3 2025	
<p>The ECETA Report 12 3 2025 report was noted, and no concerns or issues were raised. The ECETA Chair advised that the ECETA annual report was being finalised before being shared with all stakeholders.</p>		
<p>Governors discussed the economy and how it and the increased employment costs, such as increase to NI, minimum wage and apprenticeship costs were impacting the commercial and college offer and recruitment.</p>		
ECC/25/3/16	Review of meeting	
<p>1. Confidential Items: 8 and separate minuted item 17</p>		

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Were Learners prominent in discussions: The impact of decisions on learners was discussed, including in the breakout session on risk3. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment. Breakout session identified changes required in the risk registers.4. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Diversity of the Board identified as an issue to address on the Quality Improvement Plan.5. Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Reviewed as part of risk register breakout.6. Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Reviewed as part of the risk register breakout and capital development.7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media: Great Yarmouth redevelopment once final approval and opening of The Place.8. How did the meeting go: Excellently Chaired, and the breakout session was a positive addition. | |
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