

East Coast College Finance and General Purposes Meeting

18th March 2025 9am Board Room L6FC

Present:	Committee Chair - Ian Lomax (IL) Paul Padda (PP Principal and CEO) Andy Tovell (AT) Graham Evans (GE) Rachael Botley (RB Associate Governor) and on teams Peter Blackburn PB Associate Governor)	
In attendance:	Urmila Rasan (Deputy Chief Executive) Lucy Wharry (Head of Finance) and Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance)	
F/25/03/1	Apologies and membership	
Apologies – David Blake (DB Corporation Chair) and Kirk Lower (KL) It was noted that Lynne Doublet (LD) had resigned.		
F/25/03/2	Declarations of Interest	
There were no declarations of interest.		
F/25/03/3	To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the 19 November 2024, including the joint meeting with People, and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda	
F/25/03/3.1	To approve the Minutes of the last joint meeting of People and Finance and General Purposes on 14 January 2025 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda	
The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2024 and the joint meeting of 14 January 2025 were both approved as a true and accurate record of the meetings. Governors queried if the pay award had been actioned. The Principal advised that the Board agreed pay award had been actioned and would be in the March pay with a backdate to January. This had been announced in an All Staff and after discussions with the Engagement Ambassadors, a FAQ had also been sent out. There had been a mixed response from the unions with Unison, which was mainly for support staff, rejecting the offer. Union meetings were ongoing to discuss the pay award and the College's financial position and funding.		
F/25/03/4	To review the post-meeting action log	
The action log was reviewed and it was noted that all actions were complete.		
F/25/03/5	Deputy Chief Executive Update	
The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report and updated on the development of the Three Year Plan, Curriculum Plan, and government funding. In-year growth has been funded at only two-thirds but does help to meet the financial gap. Curriculum planning is considering how growth can be achieved without additional costs by being efficient and increasing class sizes. 16-18 funding rate has increased by 3.78% but will not be enough to cover inflationary costs and increased contract costs.		

Governors challenged why contract costs were increasing above that contracted. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the contracts included a term that if costs increased due to government action these would be passed on.

Governors discussed the funding rates and expressed concerns about the delays in decision-making and notifications. The Director of Governance advised that the National Insurance increase would not be fully covered with an announcement due shortly. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the College's pay bill was circa £20 million and the National Insurance increase was circa £300k. Any shortfall would need to be found for this financial year, with a prudent approach being taken for 2025/26 budgeting.

Governors challenged if the target for the average class size was being met. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that it was a struggle, especially with the two campuses. The Principal advised that as part of curriculum planning consolidation was being considered. If there was low demand and low quality then provision was being removed. The offer for Apprenticeships and Higher Education would be rationalised but the breadth of the offer at the Sixth Form would be maintained to enable growth.

Governors challenged if students would be impacted by rationalisation. The Principal advised that any student currently on an apprenticeship or a Higher Education course would be supported to complete it.

Governors challenged if staff rationalisation may be required. The Principal advised that due to the funding position and the need for efficiency, there was the potential that staff consultation may be required. This would be considered in College curriculum and business planning. The College would always first look at not filling vacancies, redeployment, and voluntary redundancy.

F/25/03/5.1 | **Draft Three Year Plan for Review**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the three-year plan and advised that it had been reviewed and updated following the Board Away Day.

The Committee resolved to:

- **Recommend the Three Year Plan to the Board for approval**

F/25/03/6 | **Management Accounts**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the accounts and advised that there had been no major change. The forecast will be updated in April to include a reconciliation of areas such as bursaries and projects, providing a more accurate prediction.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he

F/25/03/11	ECITB Scholarship Contract Deed	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive advised that this was an annual contract and as a deed Board approval required.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board's scholarship programme's Deed to the Corporation for approval. 		
F/25/03/12	Health and Safety Termly Update	
<p>The Chair who is also the Health and Safety Link Governor presented the report and it was agreed that he would follow up the noted air quality issue.</p> <p>Governors challenged the level of risk assessments not fully completed and emphasised the health and safety implications of these not being correctly completed. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the main issue was with trip assessment forms not being completed correctly on the first attempt. This was often due to students either not providing the required information or failing to sign to confirm the accuracy of the information held. Appropriate performance management actions have been and will continue to be taken in cases where risk assessments are not fully completed.</p> <p>Governors discussed if local and inter-campus trip risk assessments could be rationalised. The Principal advised that inter-campus risk assessments were being reviewed to see if a standard sign-off could be introduced. Local trips require less detailed information than an overnight or foreign trip risk assessments.</p>		
F/25/03/13	QD214 - Modern Slavery Act Statement	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive advised that due to the College's turnover it was now required to have and publish a Modern Slavery Act Statement.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommend the Modern Slavery Act statement to the Corporation for approval. 		
F/25/03/14	QD215 Reserves Policy	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive advised that External Audit had recommended that the College have a reserves policy.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the level suggested was consistent with that used in the education sector.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommend the Reserves Policy to the Corporation for approval. 		

F/25/03/15	Finance Risk Register	
<p>1. Has the risk register been reviewed Yes, March 2025</p> <p>2. Is the Committee content that the risks are relevant and are being updated Yes, the summary report sets out the changes made but it was agreed that there is a need to review in detail. The Deputy Chief Executive commented that the Committee and the Board need to review its risk appetite to assess whether change was required following the reduction in income and pay review. The Director of Governance advised that a breakout session on risk registers was to be held at the March Board meeting. This would review the risks, scoring, and mitigation. It was also proposed that each committee meeting would consider a deep dive into a risk.</p> <p>3. Is the Committee content that the risks are being mitigated The Committee commented that it could be argued that not all mitigation had worked as the risks were above the risk appetite or this could be due to the risk appetite being too low and the scoring incorrect. Financial risks also needed to be balanced against the Colleges other risks such as quality and people. The Director of Governance advised that the Audit Committee received all risk registers and that the Board should consider all risks and their interrelationships in their review.</p> <p>4. Where a red risk is the Committee assured that appropriate action is being taken The number of red risks was a concern and this was due to under recruitment. The Director of Governance advised that as the Board Away Day did not have time to cover the risk register a breakout session was to be held at the Board. This would consider the risks, risk appetite, and mitigation. The suggestion was that each committee meeting would do a 'deep dive' into a particular risk on their register.</p> <p>5. Where does the Committee have significant concerns? The main concern was around missing financial targets due to the College not recruiting to plan. There are an increased number of risks which are exceeding the risk appetite score and therefore it is recommended that the risk appetite scores and statements are reviewed to ensure they are still appropriate.</p>		
F/25/03/16	Agenda Planning	
None		
F/25/03/17	Review of Meeting	
<p>1. Confidential Items – as marked Item 7-10</p> <p>2. Were Learners prominent in discussions? Yes, as included discussions on capital development and curriculum changes and the student impact.</p> <p>3. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment – Board to consider in break out. The risk appetite needs review.</p> <p>4. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – None</p> <p>5. Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – new build</p>		

<p>6. Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – none</p> <p>7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media – Great Yarmouth re-build with media announcements subject to DFE approval</p> <p>8. How did the meeting go – Good detailed discussions</p>	
---	--