

## East Coast College Corporation Meeting

**9am Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025 Energy Centre Lowestoft**

<b>Present:</b>	Dawn Carman-Jones (DJ) Giles Kerkham (GK) Ian Lomax (IL) Kirk Lower (KL) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Mike Dowdall (MD) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO) Peter Lavender (PL) Rachael Botley (RB) Rachel Kirk (RK) Robin Jackson (RJ) Teresa Sharman (TS) Tina Ellis (TE) Vicki Paterson (VP)	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Ann Wall (Director of People and Wellbeing) Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance) and Gary Jefferson (Deputy Principal)	
<b>ECC/25/11/1</b>	<b>Apologies and membership</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from David Blake (DB) Katie Alexander (KA) Mark Buckton (MB) and Urmila Rasan Deputy Chief Executive</p> <p><b>Membership</b></p> <p>David Blake (Chair - DB) Dawn Carman-Jones Giles Kerkham (GK) Ian Lomax (IL) Katie Alexander (KA) Kirk Lower (Vice Chair-KL) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Mark Buckton (MB) Mike Dowdall (MD) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO) Peter Lavender (PL) Rachael Botley (RB) Rachel Kirk (RK) Robin Jackson (RJ) Teresa Sharman (TS) Tina Ellis (Vice Chair -TE) Vicki Paterson (VP)</p> <p>It was noted that Andy Tovell (AT) had resigned and that recruitment for student governors was ongoing.</p> <p>Dawn Carman-Jones was welcomed to her first meeting, and introductions were made.</p> <p>In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair Kirk Lower (KL) chaired the meeting.</p>		
<b>ECC/25/11/2</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> </ul> <p>It was agreed that these declarations did not preclude full participation in the meeting.</p> <p>The Vice Chair reminded the meeting of the importance of keeping their declarations of interest up to date.</p>		
<b>ECC/25/11/3</b>	<b>To approve the Minutes of the last meeting 8 7 2025 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda.</b>	
<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2025 were approved as a true record.</p>		
<b>ECC/25/11/4</b>	<b>Rolling Action Log</b>	
<p>The rolling action log was reviewed.</p> <p>The Director of Governance informed the Board that the College's AI Group had been established with a varied membership including the designated Governor Link. The Principal</p>		

added that a smaller working group is currently exploring which generative AI tools should be approved for use within the College.

A governor commented that they had previously raised with the Principal the potential risk of a cyber-attack originating from a student, highlighting this as a sector-wide concern. In response, the Principal had confirmed that the College has controls and safeguards in place to mitigate such risks. The Principal advised that cyber threats are constantly evolving and stressed the importance of the College remaining vigilant and proactive in its approach to cybersecurity.

Governors noted that guidance and instructions from awarding bodies would need to be considered as part of the overall AI strategy.

**ECC/25/11/5**

**CEO/Principals Report**

The Principal presented the report and updated the Board on recruitment, staff pay, transport, Sizewell and Lound, devolution, Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, Community Cohesion and data dashboard. He commented that it was positive to see the White Paper raise the profile of Further Education.

Governors welcomed the generally positive recruitment but expressed concern about under-recruitment in apprenticeships and maritime programmes, the latter due to delays in visa approvals. They queried whether there was a risk that the visas might not be approved. The Deputy Principal confirmed that the partnership with the University of West London was established and the courses approved. Visa approval is currently with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), and until granted, there remains a risk that they might not be secured. If approved within the next few weeks, the cohort would start in January. Meanwhile, the University of West London has been providing remote support and online learning to prospective students.

Governors discussed the impact of devolution and the mayoral and local authority reorganisation on the College and the skills agenda. It was also discussed that the curriculum reform and the introduction of V Levels would have an impact on the College's offer. The Principal advised that the College was working with both Local Authorities and had already had in place adult skills contracts to align with future devolved funding.

Governors highlighted that the issue of young people not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) remains a significant challenge for colleges. They welcomed the recognition of this concern as a priority within the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper. However, it was noted that a lead body with overarching responsibility is needed to drive meaningful change and a holistic approach. A further concern raised was the limited availability of entry-level jobs, which continues to hinder young people's transition into the workforce.

The Principal advised that the underlying causes of NEET status are varied and complex. The College must demonstrate its value as a pathway to employment and personal development. For some young people, however, traditional education may not be the initial or most appropriate step, particularly those disengaged from formal systems, and alternative approaches may be required. Colleges must be proactive in their engagement with schools to prevent young people from becoming NEET. One potential strategy was the development of a 14–16 provision, funded by Local Authorities, which schools could access by purchasing places. This model has been successfully implemented in other colleges and could offer an effective early intervention to support at-risk learners. This, though, was expensive as it required its own building, financial planning and staffing resources. The Deputy Principal commented that, given NEETs are a high priority in the White Paper, funding support may be released in the future.

Governors commented that schools are increasingly in need of alternative provision, particularly in light of rising exclusion rates. and reengagement could be supported by a

	<p>college-based 14-16 provision. The Principal advised that schools in the area were highly academised, so the college would need to work with the Trusts.</p> <p>Governors welcomed the commencement of the transport project, recognising its potential to support young people who are NEET due to limited access to transport, and to reduce barriers to education for those in underserved areas. They also offered their support to the working group, should it help progress the initiative. The Principal emphasised the importance of aligning curriculum and estate strategies, noting that transport considerations should be integrated to ensure accessibility.</p> <p>Governors noted the College's positive approach to promoting community cohesion and asked whether any related issues had arisen on campus. The Principal advised that tensions were evident in the wider local area rather than the College. The College was issuing resources to staff and students to help address these concerns, including materials focused on myth-busting and fostering understanding.</p> <p>Governors noted that the Staff Pay Award would be based on the 4% increase as agreed in the budget, and that this aligned with the Association of Colleges (AoC) national recommendation. The Principal advised that modelling of the lower pay scales had been carried out, and the lower bands would receive a higher award with additional scales added.</p> <p><b>Governors agreed the following action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governor webinar to be held on how to access and use the data dashboard</b></li> </ul>	<b>SMG</b>
ECC/25/11/6	<b>Self-Assessment Review and Quality Improvement Plan as recommended by Quality and Curriculum</b>	
ECC/25/11/6.1	<b>Quality Improvement Plan as recommended by Quality and Curriculum</b>	
	<p>The Deputy Principal presented the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), and advised that both documents had been updated to reflect the changes agreed at the recent Quality and Curriculum meeting. Key updates included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent reference to the issues identified within the Plumbing provision throughout the SAR.</li> <li>• Enhanced visibility of the positive improvements achieved within the Sixth Form, including that A-level subjects within STEM, English Literature, Philosophy, and Graphic Design performed significantly above national averages.</li> <li>• Incorporation of the final Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data.</li> <li>• Revisions to the QIP, including adjustments to the frequency of certain interventions, which have been amended from termly to either weekly or monthly, as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>The College's Overall Effectiveness and provision types were judged to be 'Good', a judgement that was confirmed during the Ofsted inspection in December 2024. Provision for learners with high needs is outstanding, and outcomes are consistently strong; and in many areas they outperform their peers in both retention and achievement.</p> <p>The Vice Chair of Quality and Curriculum, who chaired the meeting, reported that the Committee's discussion had been rigorous and detailed. As a result, the proposed changes were agreed, with key strengths and contextual developments now clearly reflected in the updated SAR and QIP. The QIP is structured around three core themes: Performance, Pedagogy, and Process. The Committee was assured that expectations of staff had been clearly communicated, including during a dedicated reset day at the start of term.</p>	

	<p>The Chair of Quality and Curriculum commented that the QIP was the focus, as this set how the College was going to improve and outlined the key actions and priorities required to drive progress and achieve measurable outcomes.</p> <p>Governors were encouraged to reflect on how they actively support the College's improvement journey and how they triangulate the information presented to them, particularly through engagement such as learning walks, classroom visits, and direct dialogue with staff and students. The Vice Chair for Quality and Curriculum advised that this could be further supported by a revised governor visit form, incorporating useful prompts to guide and enhance the effectiveness of the engagement. Governors were reminded that these visits are not formal observations and that the College did not conduct graded lesson observations.</p> <p>Governors discussed apprenticeship performance, and the Deputy Principal explained that outcomes had been impacted by legacy apprentices who had been carried forward from previous cohorts. Employers were given the option for these employees to complete the end-point assessment or withdraw, and some chose withdrawal, as the apprentices had already achieved the Level 3 qualification required for their roles. Governors noted the importance of integrating end-point assessments with the qualification itself. The Deputy Principal advised that there was a move to integration in the revised apprenticeship standards. Employer demand could also be met by offering the qualification alone, where there is a mandatory qualification required for the role, without the need to complete the full apprenticeship programme.</p> <p>Governors challenged whether there was sufficient capacity to support T Level industry placements. The Deputy Principal confirmed that all students were receiving the required placement hours.</p> <p><b>As recommended by the Quality and Curriculum Committee, the Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>approve the Self-Assessment Report 2024/25</b></li> </ul> <p><b>and</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>endorse the proposed actions contained in the Quality Improvement Plan.</b></li> </ul>	
<p><b>ECC/25/11/7</b></p>	<p><b>Governance Update and Governance Remuneration &amp; Search Committee 22 10 25 Summary</b></p>	
	<p>The Director of Governance presented the update and advised on the recommendations. Committees identified as needing strengthening are Finance and General Purposes and People, and for succession planning, Quality and Curriculum.</p> <p>Governors noted that actions had been set in the Governance Improvement Plan to try and further improve the diversity of the Board.</p> <p><b>As recommended by the Governance Remuneration &amp; Search Committee, the Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appoint Bill Farrow as a Full Governor on Finance and General Purposes. The position would be for an initial period of 2 years, plus 2 years, subject to annual review. The initial 2 year period to be to 31/07/2027.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Corporation minuted the passing of the written resolution to approve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>a lease with Eastern Power Networks for an electricity power station on the Great Yarmouth campus as set out in 'Lease of substation site (GRP Kiosk) and easements at Suffolk Road, NR310ED (1) EAST COAST COLLEGE and (2) EASTERN POWER NETWORKS PLC' and</b></li> <li>• <b>the signing and sealing of the said lease as a Deed</b></li> </ul>	

ECC/25/11/7.1	<b>Governance Self-Assessment as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search</b>	
<p>The Director of Governance presented the Governance Self-Assessment, which had been recommended by the Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee and included an accompanying improvement plan. The assessment was informed by a range of inputs, including the Governors' Equality and Diversity Review, the Skills and Experience Review, Governance Questionnaires, Chairs' Questionnaires, and individual Governor reviews with the Chair. The review is structured in line with the principles and expectations set out in the AoC Code of Good Governance for English Colleges.</p> <p>Report writing was considered as part of the self-assessment process, having emerged as a recurring theme in both the self-assessment questionnaires and Governor Reviews. In response, a revised reporting guide was approved by the Governance, Remuneration and Search Committee. The guide provides senior leaders with clear expectations on the use of the Governor's Summary Report, appropriate report length, and the effective use of data and benchmarking to support decision-making.</p> <p>Governors discussed the Governance Self-Assessment and agreed with its assessment and the areas for improvement.</p> <p><b>As recommended by the Governance Remuneration &amp; Search Committee, the Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>to approve the Governance Self-Assessment and Governance Improvement Plan</b></li> </ul>		
ECC/25/11/7.2	<b>Policy, Procedure, Strategy, and Code Approval Guidance – Revised 2025 as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search</b>	
<p>The Director of Governance advised that the guidance and scheme of delegation had been reviewed with the aim of reducing the volume of documentation requiring Board approval. The revised guidance also included an annual review by the Audit Committee of all documents and their scheduled review dates, to assure that updates and reviews are being carried out promptly.</p> <p>Governors discussed that some documents had been designated for review by the Audit Committee and questioned whether they might be more appropriately reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. In response, the Audit Chair clarified that the policies assigned to the Audit Committee were those aligned with the Regularity, Propriety and Compliance Manual, and that the Committee had agreed these should remain within its remit for approval.</p> <p><b>As recommended by the Governance Remuneration &amp; Search Committee, the Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>to approve the Policy, Procedure, Strategy, and Code Approval Guidance – Revised 2025</b></li> </ul>		
ECC/25/11/7.3	<b>Governance Remuneration and Search Annual Report as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search</b>	
<p><b>As recommended by the Governance Remuneration &amp; Search Committee, the Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>approve the Governance Remuneration and Search Committee's annual report and its publication.</b></li> </ul>		

<b>ECC/25/11/8</b>	<b>Estates Update</b>	
<b>ECC/25/11/8.1</b>	<b>Background information Asset Skills Enhancement Capability (ASEC) fund Bid</b>	
<b>ECC/25/11/8.2</b>	<b>Residential Newsletter</b>	
<p>The Principal presented the update, which covered The Place, Lound and Great Yarmouth redevelopment. Since opening, The Place has successfully attracted engagement from individuals who had not previously interacted with the College. The development of Lound remains subject to funding, with an ASEC bid having been submitted and the redevelopment of the Great Yarmouth campus has continued to make positive progress.</p> <p>Governors noted the ASEC Bid to support Lound and discussed how Lound would need additional funding through additional bids to enable its development. If this funding was not forthcoming, the use of the site would require further review. The Estates Chair advised that the use of Lound would be considered in the revised Estates Strategy, which was due to be considered by the Committee in November.</p> <p>The Estates Chair reported that he had attended the ground breaking ceremony for the Great Yarmouth campus and noted the positive working relationship established with the developer. The College needed to ensure full budget provision for the internal fit-out of the new build to guarantee that the facility would be fully fit for purpose.</p> <p>Governors discussed the importance of maximising opportunities for students as part of the Great Yarmouth redevelopment, such as work experience, site visits, and apprenticeships and that this should be included in the social value of the contract. The Principal reminded the Board that the contract was held with the Department for Education rather than the College, which limited the College's leverage. The Estates Chair advised that the contractor had responded positively to student involvement and had highlighted the challenges of recruiting and retaining construction staff along the coast. The contractor suggested that subcontractors might consider offering apprenticeship opportunities.</p>		
<b>ECC/25/11/9</b>	<b>Strategic Risk Register</b>	
<p>The Strategic Risk Register was noted, along with the updates made.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised as the review took place in October 2025, it does not yet reflect a complete governance cycle.</p> <p>The Audit Chair advised that the Audit Committee would review the strategic and tactical registers at its December meeting and report on it to the December Board.</p>		
	<b>Committee Reports for Information</b>	
<b>ECC/25/11/10</b>	<b>Quality and Curriculum Committee Report 21/10/25</b>	
<p>The Quality and Curriculum Committee Report was noted, including the summary and recommendations from the Committee. The main focus of the meeting had been the self-assessment and the Quality Improvement Plan.</p>		

<b>ECC/25/11/10.1</b>	<b>QD017 Safeguarding Children Vulnerable adults policy Procedure as recommended by Quality and Curriculum</b>	
<p><b>As recommended by the Quality and Curriculum Committee, the Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adopt the QD017 Safeguarding Children Vulnerable adults policy Procedure</b></li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/25/11/10.2</b>	<b>QD105 Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Policy as recommended by People and Quality and Curriculum</b>	
<p><b>As recommended by the Quality and Curriculum Committee, the Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>adopt the QD105 Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy.</b></li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/25/11/10.3</b>	<b>Quality and Curriculum Annual Report</b>	
<p><b>As recommended by the Quality and Curriculum Committee, the Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>approve the Quality and Curriculum Committee's annual report and its publication,</b></li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/25/11/11</b>	<b>People Committee Report 30/09/2025</b>	
<p>The Corporation noted the People Committees' report, its recommendations and that the Committee had reviewed the people policies and approved the adoption of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QD022 Capability Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• QD023 Disciplinary Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• QD024 Grievance Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• QD120 Recruitment Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• QD201 Flexible Working Policy</li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/25/11/11.1</b>	<b>QD018 People Wellbeing Strategy as recommended by People Committee</b>	
<p><b>As recommended by the People Committee, the Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Adopt the QD018 People Wellbeing Strategy.</b></li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/25/11/11.2</b>	<b>People Committee Annual Report</b>	
<p><b>As recommended by the People Committee, the Corporation resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>approve the People Committee's annual report and its publication,</b></li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/25/11/12</b>	<b>Governance Remuneration and Search Committee 22/10/25 and see agenda item 7</b>	
<p>The Governance Remuneration and Search Committee Report was noted, and that an update on the non-confidential items was included in the Governance update at agenda item 7.</p>		

<b>ECC/25/11/13</b>	<b>ECETA Update</b>	
<p>The ECETA Report was noted, including that the subsidiary had discussed its draft annual report, accounts and had approved the methodology and associated amounts for recharges from East Coast College to ECETA Ltd.</p>		
<b>ECC/25/11/14</b>	<b>Break Out Session - Careers</b>	
<p>A breakout session was held focused on Careers</p> <p><b>1. How can we be assured that our Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) aligns with, and supports our overall mission and values?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider renaming CIAG to “Skills for Life” advisors to better reflect purpose and relevance.</li> <li>• Audit CIAG provision to ensure alignment with College values: aspirational, respectful, professional, successful.</li> <li>• CIAG should be a “tree trunk, not a cage” – build excellence, not just meet minimum standards.</li> <li>• Ensure CIAG supports both educational and employment outcomes.</li> <li>• Provide bespoke 1:1 support tailored to student level, while broadening horizons.</li> <li>• Strengthen alumni engagement through masterclasses, visits, and case studies.</li> <li>• Prepare students for a portfolio of careers, not just linear paths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on transferable skills, entry-level roles, and long-term aspirations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recognise that careers mean different things to different learners.</li> <li>• Promote entitlement for every student to have time to map out their career strategy.</li> <li>• Include mentoring and coaching as part of the CIAG offer.</li> <li>• Encourage lifelong learning as a foundation for career development and change.</li> <li>• Engage early with schools to link progression and careers.</li> <li>• Consider how CIAG continues post-college and how employers can support alumni development.</li> <li>• Ensure CIAG staff are up to date with career opportunities and receive regular CPD.</li> <li>• Include life skills in CIAG to support employability.</li> <li>• Discuss quality of life in career choices – passion, enjoyment, financial stability, happiness.</li> <li>• Recognise the impact of powerful, inspirational conversations.</li> <li>• Teachers should be integral to careers advice.</li> <li>• Encourage governors to ask students about aspirations during visits, while recognising some students may not yet be ready to articulate them.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2. What strategic priorities and focus should we consider to further enhance our CIAG?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and modernise CIAG strategy to reflect current and future career landscapes.</li> <li>• Emphasise:</li> </ul>		

- Interview readiness (e.g., professional email use).
- Soft skills: people skills, presentability, critical thinking, open-mindedness.
- Professional behaviours: timekeeping, reading the room.
- Deliver career workshops to broaden student horizons.
- Shift CV focus to LinkedIn and digital profiles.
- Integrate digital literacy and AI awareness into guidance.
- Promote flexible, non-linear career journeys (including multiple careers at once).
- Increase industry visits to inspire and inform students.
- Highlight the variety of career options linked to specific courses.
- Ensure students understand the importance of non-technical skills in roles.
- Expand CIAG access at school level to educate early on career potential.
- Prepare students for jobs that don't yet exist and non-linear career paths.
- Evaluate curriculum focus – is it too qualification-heavy or does it build future skills?
- Ensure careers professionals are current, aspirational, and well-trained (staff PL and support).
- Explore how tech and AI can enhance CIAG delivery.
- Identify what's missing from curriculum (e.g., entrepreneurship).
- Build flexible curriculum and relationships that allow learners to return post-19.
- Consider delivery models – is 9–5 suitable for all learners, especially those working?

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### **3. What does “careers” mean to our students, and how can we better align CIAG with their aspirations, perceptions, and lived experiences?**

- Recognise evolving student priorities:
  - Work/life balance.
  - Making a difference.
  - Financial security.
- Acknowledge that the term “careers” may feel outdated—consider more relatable language (e.g., Skills Advice).
- Tailor CIAG to reflect students’ lived experiences and personal definitions of success.
- Support students in identifying what motivates them (“find one thing that makes them tick”).
- Recognise that some students just want to know their job prospects (“I need a job, what are my chances?”).
- Capture student voice – why are they at college, what do they want, and how does our offer align?
- Ensure CIAG reflects students’ strengths and desires.
- Engage with those who influence career conversations:
  - Parents, carers, or supporters (especially for those without parental support).

- Consider hosting parents' careers evenings, linking to adult education and support.

**Governors agreed the following actions:**

- **Ideas for future Board breakout sessions to the Director of Governance.**
- **Quality and Standards to review the Senior Teams' responses to the Board's breakout session on careers.**

**Board**

**SMG**