

East Coast College Finance and General Purposes Meeting

24th June 2025 9am Board Room L6FC

Present:	Committee Chair - Ian Lomax (IL) Andy Tovell (AT) Graham Evans (GE) Kirk Lower (KL) and on teams David Blake (DB Corporation Chair) and Peter Blackburn PB Associate Governor)	
In attendance:	Urmila Rasan (Deputy Chief Executive) Lucy Wharry (Head of Finance) and Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance)	
F/25/06/1	Apologies and membership	
Apologies – Paul Padda (PP Principal and CEO) The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted the key areas for discussion, being the Three Year Financial Plan and risk.		
F/25/06/2	Declarations of Interest	
There were no declarations of interest.		
F/25/06/3	To approve the Minutes of the last meeting 24 June 2025 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda.	
The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.		
F/25/06/4	To review the post-meeting action log	
It was noted that there were no outstanding actions.		
F/25/06/5	Deputy Chief Executive Update	
The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report. The Great Yarmouth rebuild had commenced and would take a substantial amount of time to oversee, estimated at 2 days a week in 2025/26. While there was no financial risk to the College, effective management was essential to ensure the build met the College's needs. The specification had been agreed, and the DFE has been very supportive of the project and had maximised the budget. The DFE has signed a design and build contract with Kier, and it needs to be ensured that they deliver.		
F/25/06/6	Management Accounts - May 2025	
F/25/06/6.1	Management Accounts - March and April 2025	
The Deputy Chief Executive presented the May Management Accounts and advised that ECETA, the College's subsidiary, income was down and will be reviewed by the ECETA Board. The Director of Governance advised that the ECETA Board had previously been advised that income was down due to companies reducing training to statutory only, due to the economic climate. The College's management accounts for May demonstrated that the recovery actions taken have been effective, with the financials brought back in line with the budget and good financial health. Pay costs represented the largest portion of		

the budget and required careful management and control to ensure that resources were fully and effectively utilised and adjusted if income reduced.		
F/25/06/7	Draft Budget 2025/26 and Three year financial forecast for Review and recommendation to the Corporation	
F/25/06/7.1	College Financial Forecast Return (CFFR) Extracts	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Budget and Three-Year Financial Forecast along with commentary. Income was reduced due to lower project income, with minimal project revenue expected in 2025/26. The College was planning for good financial health, but EBITDA was decreased. EBITDA is necessary to fund investments. The College needs to operate efficiently to cover its costs, which have increased due to the expense of The Place, without a current increase in related income. Other costs have also risen, with contract costs increasing to account for higher NI contributions and minimum wages, among other non-pay increases. A 4% pay award provision for 2025/26 has been included, subject to funding and enrolment.</p> <p>Governors challenged whether the budgeted pay award was affordable. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the expected additional DfE Staff Recruitment and Retention Grant funding is projected to cover 2% of the 4% provision, and the award would therefore be assessed after enrolment, to ensure that it was affordable.</p> <p>Governors challenged whether the budget was a realistic one. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the budget was based on the curriculum plan and will be reviewed after recruitment. The curriculum plan was reviewed and challenged at area planning meetings. 16-18 was planning for growth, maritime was looking to recover, there was no additional money for adults, and HE numbers were reducing. Given the previous year's recruitment, a cautious approach had been taken to apprenticeship income, and it was hoped that this would be exceeded. Additional efficiencies are needed to increase the EBITDA. The sector was not encouraged to set optimistic budgets, as this has led to college failures.</p> <p>Governors challenged what action was being taken with HE. There needed to be a target for growth to help fund The Place. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that HE was looking to consolidate modules to help achieve efficiencies, and due to small classes, additional recruitment could be absorbed within the current plans.</p> <p>Governors challenged whether the College was being too passive in its recruitment aims. There was a need to grow in all areas to ensure efficiencies. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the College had room for growth to improve utilisation and that, for instance, Lowestoft Sixth had been designed and built for higher numbers than had ever been achieved.</p>		
F/25/06/8	Health and Safety Update	
<p>The Health and Safety update was noted. The Committee Chair, who is also the Governor Link for Health and Safety, advised that the incidents had reduced compared to previous years. There was still an issue with trip risk assessment being completed correctly the first time, and there had been two incidents where trips had taken place without authorisation, and these had been subject to an investigation.</p> <p>Governors commented that it was essential that risk assessments were completed correctly before a trip took place. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the paperwork had been simplified and a trips compliance officer was budgeted for.</p>		

F/25/06/9	Subcontracting Tender	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the tender report and advised that the DfE guidance requires the College to carry out a tendering process. Tender submissions were received from four organisations, all of which the College has previously worked with, for this provision. The contracts for all subcontracting were to be updated to state that the College is using its 16-18 grant funding to fund this provision, less a management charge. This was needed due to VAT now being charged on private schools. High needs funding will be subject to irrecoverable VAT, and this will cost the College, based on 2024/25 figures, circa £20k.</p> <p>Governors discussed the scoring and challenged whether these were acceptable. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that there was no change in subcontractors and that the scoring had raised no concerns.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to recommend to the Corporation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following organisations be appointed as deliverers of sub-contracted provision for the College for the 2025/26 year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dance Performance Academy (DPA) ○ Inspire Suffolk ○ St Edmunds Society ○ ACE 		
F/25/06/10	Cleaning contract tender	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the tender report and advised that the current cleaning contract expires on 13th February 2026, and it is not possible for a further extension to be granted.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to recommend to the Corporation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tender process for the College cleaning contract, effective from 14th February 2026, be launched in September 2025 using the services of the Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC). 		
F/25/06/11	Finance Risk Register	
<p>1. Has the risk register been reviewed</p> <p>No, the last review was March 2025. The Chair had agreed that the register should not be reviewed and that the Committee should instead review the risk scoring and the risks included.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive commented that the risk register would need review based on the Three Year Financial Forecast.</p> <p>2. Is the Committee content that the risks are relevant and are being updated</p> <p>Governors commented that the risks were well thought out and the format of the risk, cause, and result was clear.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that the format had been agreed originally by the Board at a risk development day with a risk specialist. The Finance and General Purposes tactical risks fed into the Strategic risk of 'Failure to be financially viable.' The scoring for all risks were set by the Senior Team member responsible for that area in a</p>		

meeting with the Project Manager, who managed the risk registers and who helped to standardise the scoring.

3. Is the Committee content that the risks are being mitigated

Governors commented that more detail was required in the mitigation to provide the assurance the committee needed, and that this should be split between the current and new mitigation added at the latest review.

The Director of Governance advised that all reports were supposed to state what risk they were addressing, and this was not always completed.

4. Where a red risk is the Committee assured that appropriate action is being taken

The Committee discussed the red risks and whether they should be red or the risk appetite changed. The Director of Governance advised that the scores were red due to the under-recruitment and highlighted the financial risks of that. The financial recovery plan had therefore been put in place to mitigate this risk, and if the risk register was reviewed now, the red risks would have been reduced due to the mitigation of the recovery plan. The risk appetites were included in the Board’s Risk Management Strategy and Policy, and Procedure, and were

Key Risk Area	Risk Appetite Threshold
Financial health	Low
Investments	Low
Education and student experience	Medium/High
Development and commercial activity	Low/Medium
Partnership and external collaboration	Medium

Governors agreed that it was appropriate that the financial risk appetite was low as the strategic aim was to maintain a financial health rating of good and to manage the College efficiently.

5. Where does the Committee have significant concerns?

Governors agreed that the discussion had been a useful and detailed review of the register, and there was now a need for the Finance and General Purposes register to be fully reviewed, including those issues raised at the Board’s breakout session on risk.

Governors agreed the following actions:

- **Mitigation to be split between current and new mitigation**
- **Committee Chair and Deputy Chief Executive to review the risk register. To provide the committee with greater assurance, it was necessary to assess whether risks could be consolidated, ensure all risks, including emerging ones, were identified, review the appropriateness of risk statements, and provide additional details of the mitigation measures in place. This review should also consider the suggestions from the Board’s risk breakout session.**
- **Governance summary report section ‘What risk does this report address’ to be completed.**

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F/25/06/12	Policies for approval and recommendation to the Board	
F/25/06/12.1	QD027 Fee Policy 2025/26	
F/25/06/12.2	QD048 Bursary Policy 2025/26	
F/25/06/12.3	QD093 Subcontractor Policy 2025/26	
F/25/06/12.4	QD074 Supply chain fees and charges policy 2025/26	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the policies and advised that they had been updated to reflect current regulations and processes.</p> <p>The Committee resolved to recommend to the Corporation that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following Policies be approved for the 2025/26 academic year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QD027 Fees Policy ○ QD048 Bursary Policy and Procedures ○ QD074 Supply Chain fees Policy ○ QD093 Sub-contracting Policy. 		
F/25/03/13	Terms of Reference	
The Director of Governance presented the revised terms of reference		
F/25/03/14	Finance Link Governor Visit	
The Finance Link Governor Visit was noted, and he advised that it had been a positive meeting and he would look to have a termly meeting.		
F/25/03/15	Agenda Planning	
Revised risk register.		
F/25/03/17	Review of Meeting	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confidential Items – none 2. Were Learners prominent in discussions? Impact on students discussed 3. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment – risk register to be fully reviewed 4. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – None 5. Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – new build and risk assessments for visits 6. Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – none 7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media – Great Yarmouth re-build with media announcements subject to DFE approval 8. How did the meeting go – Good detailed discussions, particularly around risk. 		