

# East Coast College Corporation Meeting

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 9am Energy Centre Conference Room

<b>Present:</b>	David Blake (Chair - DB) Tina Ellis (TE) Rob Evans (RE) Mike Dowdall (MD) Giles Kerkham (GK) Ian Lomax (IL) Katie Alexander (KA) Teresa Sharman (TS) Rachel Kirk (RK) Jude Owens (JO) Joe Rahman (JR) Nasima Begum (NB) Tia Beresford (TB) and on Teams Kirk Lower (KL).	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance), Ann Wall (Director of People and Wellbeing), Urmila Rasan (Deputy Chief Executive) Julia Bates (Deputy Principal Curriculum Development and Strategic Partnerships) Paula Padda (Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience)  And for items 1 – 5 on Teams Tim O'Connor partner Scrutton Bland.	
<b>ECC/23/12/1</b>	<b>Apologies and membership</b>	<b>Action</b>
	<p><b>Apologies</b> Apologies were received from Peter Lavender (PL) and Stuart Rimmer (SR)</p> <p><b>Membership</b> Tina Ellis (TE) Rob Evans (RE) Stuart Rimmer (CEO &amp; Principal - SR) Peter Lavender (PL) Mike Dowdall (MD) Giles Kerkham (GK) David Blake (Chair - DB) Kirk Lower (KL) Ian Lomax (IL) Jude Owens (JO) Nasima Begum (NB) Katie Alexander (KA) Teresa Sharman (TS) Rachel Kirk (RK) Joe Rahman (JR) and Tia Beresford (TB)</p>	
<b>ECC/23/12/2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	<p>There were the following declarations of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mike Dowdall as an employee of the LEP</li> <li>• Tina Ellis as ECETA Chair</li> <li>• Kirk Lower – BPP University: Apprenticeship Strategy Advisor and Princes Trust and Movement to Work.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that these declarations did not preclude full participation in the meeting.</p>	
<b>ECC/23/12/3</b>	<b>To approve the Minutes of the last meeting 31 10 2023 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda</b>	
	The minutes of the minutes of 31 10 2023 were approved as a true record of the meeting.	
<b>ECC/23/12/4</b>	<b>Rolling Action Log</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/4.1</b>	<b>Great Yarmouth Redevelopment Update</b>	
	<p>The rolling action log was reviewed.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the update, which included a follow up on the actions set at the last Board. The façade had been reviewed to help give a sense of identity and work on the net carbon approach was ongoing.</p>	

	<p>The Estates Chair advised that it was unlikely that net zero would be achieved due to the building size and budget but the College would continue to encourage the DFE to maximise the net zero aspirations / achievements of the project.</p> <p>Corporation noted that the Great Yarmouth Stage 3 plans were now agreed and that Kier were to proceed to submit the planning application and thanked the Deputy Chief Executive for all her fantastic work on the project.</p>	
	<b>PART 1 AGENDA</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/5</b>	<b>External Audit presentation of Annual Accounts</b>	
	<p>The External Auditor presented the Annual Accounts and related reports and advised that these had also been considered by the joint meeting of the Audit and Finance and General Purposes Committee. It was a clean audit opinion with no regulatory concerns. It has been a smooth process demonstrating the work and improvements the finance team had made over the last year, particularly around fixed assets. and he thanked the Deputy Head and Head of Finance for their support during the audit. There were two findings, one follow of prior year recommendation and three minor other control observations.</p> <p>The Audit Committee Chair advised that the joint Committee to review the Annual Accounts had worked well and would be included on future governance schedules. The Audit was the cleanest that the College had seen since merger with long term issues such as fixed assets now resolved. This meant that the Board could have confidence in the accounts. The outturn was positively affected by the VAT refund and the prudent judgements about the risk of clawback.</p> <p>Governors commented that the audit report was positive and demonstrated the hard work of the College's finance team.</p> <p>The External Audit advised the Board on the outturn and how this had been affected by the VAT refund. Costs had increased due to inflationary pressures and depreciation and without the VAT refund this would have resulted in a deficit. The Balance Sheet and cash holdings were positive due to funding received in advance. ECETA had also had a positive year with an increase in gross profit and turnover.</p> <p>The Board thanked the External Auditor and they left the meeting.</p>	
<b>ECC/23/12/6</b>	<b>Annual 2022/23 Audit Committee Report to the Board and for Approval Review of Terms of Reference</b>	
	<p>The Audit Committee Chair presented the Committee's annual report. The Committee's opinion in the report was reflected in the Annual Accounts and provided the Board with a summary of the assurance the Audit Committee had considered. The Committee had concluded that:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Audit Committee's opinion is that the adequacy and effectiveness of the corporation's assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, solvency, and the safeguarding of assets during 2022/23 were effective.</i></p> <p>As part of the Annual Report the terms of reference had been reviewed and these were recommended to the Board for adoption.</p> <p>The Board reviewed the audit committee annual report and the assurance given to the Board and the Director of Governance advised that the annual report was submitted to the ESFA with the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022/23 at the end of December.</p>	

<b>Corporation resolved to approve:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Audit Committee's revised terms of reference.</li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/23/12/7</b>	<b>Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022/23</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/7.1</b>	<b>East Coast College Audit Findings - Management Letter and Letter of Representation</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/7.2</b>	<b>ECETA Annual Accounts Year ended 31 July 2023 subject to ECETA Board approval in 13 12 2023</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/7.3</b>	<b>College Group Accounts Year ended 31 July 2023</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/7.4</b>	<b>Extracts from the Finance Record</b>	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Annual Report and Financial Statements and advised the Board on the main points to note - the College had been paid for the Apollo Project in advance, the EBITDA had been achieved even with paying the staff honorarium, the inflationary increases had been managed and efficiencies made and the VAT refund secured. These were a positive set of accounts and the Board could be confident in its going concern statement.</p> <p>Governors congratulated the Deputy Chief Executive for the accounts and thanked her for her financial management.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that the ECETA Annual Report and Financial Statements had been approved by the ECETA Board. The Board thanked the ECETA Chair and congratulated ECETA on the increase in turnover and gross profit.</p> <p><b>Governors agreed the following action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair to write and formally thank the Finance Team.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Corporation resolved to approve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>East Coast College Group Annual Report and Financial Statements Year ended 31 July 2023.</li> </ul>		<b>DB</b>
<b>ECC/23/12/8</b>	<b>Accountability Statement 2022/23 Term one Review</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/8.1</b>	<b>Accountability Agreements and the Local Needs Duty 2024 to 2025</b>	
<p>The Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience presented the Accountability Statement 2022/23 Term one Review. The Senior Team had reviewed the actions set out and had included progress and evidence against each action in the report. The Deputy Chief Executive commented that this demonstrated good progress</p> <p>The Board reviewed the progress made on the Accountability Statement and agreed that there was no need at this stage to review the objectives and agreed that the information provided sufficient assurance to demonstrate that progress was on target.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that the guidance Meeting skills needs: Guidance on annual Accountability Agreements 2024/25 and the Local Needs Duty December 2023 had been included in the Board pack for information.</p>		

ECC/23/12/9	<b>Governance Update - verbal update on External Board Review</b>	
<p>The Director of Governance updated the Board on the main findings of the External Board Review. The draft report would be reviewed for factual accuracy and then the finalised report presented at the January Board Away Day and an action plan drafted. This action plan would also encompass the issues identified in the Board's self-assessment. The review had identified that the governance structure, support and processes worked well, was flexible and regularly reviewed, meetings were chaired well with the majority contributing. The Board had a good mix of skills and demonstrated diversity of thought, and governance cover sheets and risk management were excellent. The main areas highlighted for development were the diversity of the Board, the need to recruit additional qualified accountants and educationalists, continue to improve triangulation and opportunities for governors to meet students and staff and improve attendance at committees and on training.</p> <p>Governors discussed the draft findings and commented that as a volunteer the role was ever expanding with large amount of reports to read and review. To assist with this, it was important that the governance summary reports were completed fully for all reports, including the financial ones, so that the issues, risks and actions were highlighted. Governors had the responsibility to engage with the training and development and to review the meeting packs ready to participate in the meetings. The Board had a range of skills and technical knowledge and the Board needed to use this mix for the benefit and development of the Board and in supporting the College.</p>		
ECC/23/12/9.1	<b>Annual Senior Post Holder Remuneration Report as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search</b>	
<p>The Director of Governance presented the report, which had been amended following the Governance Remuneration and Search's review of it, and was recommended by the Committee for adoption. This was published on the College's website with the Annual Accounts. The College was required to publish the Annual Accounts by 31 01 2024.</p> <p><b>The Corporation resolved to approve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>the Annual Senior Post Holder Remuneration Report, as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search, and agreed to its publication.</b></li> </ul>		
ECC/23/12/10	<b>Financial Recovery Plan</b>	
<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report advised on the current financial position, the actions taken by the Senior Team and the governance Committees and the changes in income and costs since the 2023/24 budget approval were highlighted.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience commented that the curriculum planning would identify delivery needs, then the resources and how this would be delivered would be costed.</p> <p>Governors commented that curriculum and resource planning needed to consider the rationale(s) for the College providing courses that didn't make a positive contribution, the College's costs and resource allocation and how the College operated in a competitive environment. The student experience and support needs needed to be an integral part of this planning. Quality and Standards Committee had discussed both the need for additional student support and in the College's Quality Team.</p> <p>Governors discussed the need to ensure that the College was competitive and maximised the opportunities available to it. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Strategic Partnerships</p>		

	<p>advised that the College was working closely with businesses and with Sizewell Consortium based on the memorandum of understanding agreed by the Board.</p> <p><b>The Corporation resolved to approve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>that the financial recovery plan action is reviewed as part of the financial planning process in 2024.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>ECC/23/12/11</b>	<b>Bank Interest</b>	
	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report. Lloyds Bank's conditions relating to the College's bank loan state there was to be no interest paid on the balances in the accounts up to the value of the outstanding loans. Due to the funding in advance and the VAT refund the College's cash balance now exceed the loan balance and the bank have agreed that interest will be paid.</p> <p><b>The Corporation resolved to approve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>the deposit of up to £8m in a nine month fixed term account with Lloyds Bank at an interest rate of at least 5.10%</b></li> </ul> <p><b>and</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>the review of future options for fixed term deposits with high street banks.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>ECC/23/12/12</b>	<b>Strategic Risk Register and summary Tactical Register Reports as reviewed by Audit Committee</b>	
	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Strategic Risk Register and the summary Tactical Register Reports. The tactical reports had been considered by the relevant Governance Committee and the Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Audit Committee Chair commented that the use of the governance summary report to highlight changes since the last review was useful and that the Audit Committee were assured by the Governance Committees reviews of their registers.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that the Strategic Risk Register summary had included in this report an explanation of the scoring methodology as governors had asked for additional explanation.</p>	
<b>ECC/23/12/13</b>	<b>Management Accounts</b>	
	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the October Management Accounts.</p> <p>Governors queried if investing in the fixed term account would affect the ratios, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that it would not as it was still cash on deposit.</p> <p>Governors challenged if the current ratio was high enough, given that it was budgeted to be just over 1. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that as long as the ratio was in excess of 1 this was sufficient and demonstrated that the College was solvent.</p>	
<b>ECC/23/12/14</b>	<b>Quality Update - QIP as reviewed by Quality and Standards</b>	
	<p>The Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience presented the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which had been reviewed by Quality and Standards.</p> <p>Governors discussed the progress made and discussed attendance which was RAG rated red. It was noted that attendance was becoming a systemic issue across education with attitudes to attendance and students' priorities changed since Covid. The Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience advised that attendance had improved over the</p>	

last month but work was ongoing to help ensure that the improvement was maintained. This included learning from sector best practise, the College providing quality teaching and learning that inspired and which students wanted to attend and timetabling improvements.

Governors raised that the master plan for the Tower Block at Lowestoft Campus was looking at integrating the maths and English classrooms in the vocational areas to help encourage attendance. The Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience advised that this had been requested by the vocational areas as this will help with supporting students to attend, and benefit those students who feel more comfortable in their vocational area.

Governors commented that it was important that the College consulted and discussed with the students about attendance and how this could be improved and the Director of Governance suggested that this could be an area for Unloc to discuss with the students.

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Strategic Partnerships commented that there was significant school attendance challenges and it was important that there was a good school transition so that the College knew and understood each student individually. The College's widening participation and inclusive approach required additional support work which came at a cost. The Director of People and Wellbeing advised that the last Professional Learning Day had focused on student support and resilience training.

Governors noted that the Advanced British Standard was currently out to consultation and queried how attendance would be maintained on this especially in English and maths.

	<b>Committee Reports for Information</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/15</b>	<b>Quality and Standards Committee Report verbal report as meeting 12 12 2023</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/15.1</b>	<b>Annual Quality and Standard Committee Report to the Board</b>	
The Quality and Standards Chair updated the Board on the meeting and the Annual Committee report was noted.		
<b>ECC/23/12/16</b>	<b>Finance and General Purposes Committee Report</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/16.1</b>	<b>Annual Finance and General Purposes Committee Report to the Board</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/16.2</b>	<b>Annual Health and Safety Report</b>	
The Finance and General Purposes Committee Report and the Annual report were noted. The Director of Governance advised that the Annual Health and Safety Report was included as health and safety was a whole board responsibility. It had been considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Committee Chair was the Board's health and safety link governor.		
<b>ECC/23/12/17</b>	<b>Audit Committee Report including joint meeting with Finance &amp; General Purpose</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/17.1</b>	<b>Confidential Funding Audit and Action Plan as reviewed by Audit Committee</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/17.2</b>	<b>Policies as recommended by Audit Committee</b>	

<p>The Audit Committee report and the Funding Audit and Action Plan were noted.</p> <p>The Audit Committee Chair advised that the Funding Audit Action Plan was to be a standing item at the Audit Committee.</p> <p><b>Corporation resolved to approve the revised College Policies as recommended by the Audit Committee:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>QD104 - Regularity Propriety and Compliance Manual</b></li> <li>• <b>QD106 - College Companies, Mergers, Acquisitions and Joint Ventures Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>QD107 - Revenue and Capital Budget Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>QD108 - Income Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>QD031 - Procurement Policy and Procedure</b></li> <li>• <b>QD113 - Inventory and Asset Management Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>QD114 - Credit Management Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>QD115 - Treasury Management, Banking and Cash Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>QD007 - Travel and Subsistence Policy and Procedure</b></li> <li>• <b>QD116 - Management Accounts and Cashflow Policy &amp; Procedure</b></li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/23/12/18</b>	<b>Curriculum Growth and Development Committee Report</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/18.1</b>	<b>Annual Curriculum Growth and Development Committee Report to the Board and review</b>	
<p>The Curriculum Growth and Development Committee Report and the Annual report were noted.</p>		
<b>ECC/23/12/19</b>	<b>People Committee Report</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/19.1</b>	<b>Annual People Committee Report to the Board and review</b>	
<p>The People Committee Report and the Annual Committee report were noted.</p> <p><b>Corporation resolved to approve:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>the People Committee's revised terms of reference.</b></li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/23/12/20</b>	<b>Estates Committee Report</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/20.1</b>	<b>Lound - Updated Report Subsequent to Estates Committee</b>	
<p>The Estates Committee Report was noted.</p> <p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the Lound report which had been updated subsequent to the Estates Committee meeting and advised the Board on the development of a skills centre at Lowestoft Campus. The proposals were part of the College fulfilling the 2021 Memorandum of Understanding with Sizewell C as one of its education and academic partners.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Strategic Partnerships advised how the development work linked to both the College's main provision and its commercial offer and the relationships that were in place and being built on to further develop this.</p>		

<b>Corporation resolved to approve:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that lawyers are engaged to draw up a licence/lease as described in the proposed Heads of Terms which includes a peppercorn rent.</li> </ul>		
<b>ECC/23/12/21</b>	<b>Joint People and Finance and General Purposes Report</b>	
The Joint People and Finance and General Purposes Report was noted.		
<b>ECC/23/12/22</b>	<b>ECETA Report</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/22.1</b>	<b>ECETA Annual Report</b>	
<b>ECC/23/12/22.2</b>	<b>Business Plan Summary</b>	
The ECETA Chair presented the ECETA report, Annual Report and Business Plan Summary. ECETA had seen a positive year in its development as set out in the Annual Report and was continuing to grow.		
<b>ECC/23/12/23</b>	<b>Review of meeting</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confidential Items: Separate minuted items and commercial details re Lound</li> <li>Were Learners prominent in discussions? Yes, re QIP</li> <li>Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment: None</li> <li>Equality &amp; Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None</li> <li>Health &amp; Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None</li> <li>Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Capital works.</li> <li>Media: any issues discussed to inform local media: Annual Report statement</li> <li>How did the meeting go: A good meeting with positive year end reports</li> </ol>		