

East Coast College Corporation Meeting

Tuesday 7th July 9am Training Restaurant Lowestoft Campus

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| Present: | David Blake (Chair - DB) Tina Ellis (TE) Giles Kerkham (GK) Peter Lavender (PL) Rachel Kirk (RK) Kirk Lower (KL) Mike Dowdall (MD) Graham Evans (GE) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Katie Alexander (KA) Rob Evans (RE) Ian Lomax (IL) Jude Owens (JO) Lynne Doublet (LD) | |
| In attendance: | Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance), Ann Wall (Director of People and Wellbeing), Urmila Rasan (Deputy Chief Executive) Ruth Harrison (Interim Deputy Principal) | |
| ECC/24/7/1 | Apologies and membership | Action |
| <p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from Teresa Sharman (TS) and Vicki Paterson (VP)</p> <p>Membership</p> <p>Tina Ellis (TE) Rob Evans (RE) Peter Lavender (PL) Mike Dowdall (MD) Giles Kerkham (GK) David Blake (Chair - DB) Kirk Lower (KL) Ian Lomax (IL) Jude Owens (JO) Teresa Sharman (TS) Rachel Kirk (RK) Vicki Paterson (VP) Graham Evans (GE) Katie Alexander (KA) Tia Beresford (TB) Logan-Jaimes Gravells (LG) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Lynne Doublet (LD)</p> <p>Lynne Doublet (LD) was welcomed to her first Board meeting.</p> | | |
| ECC/24/7/2 | Declarations of Interest | |
| <p>There were the following declarations of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tina Ellis as ECETA Chair Kirk Lower – BPP University: Apprenticeship Strategy Advisor and Princes Trust and Movement to Work. <p>It was agreed that these declarations did not preclude full participation in the meeting.</p> | | |
| ECC/24/7/3 | Presentation on 'Student's social, emotional and mental health needs and the College support systems' | |
| <p>The Assistant Principal Student Services and SEND gave the presentation and updated the Board on the College's current support systems and proposals for future support. There was no standard method for Colleges to collect referral data and therefore comparative data was difficult to source. The College had been in discussions with other Colleges to consider best practise and was looking to change how it provided support by adopting WRAP. WRAP helps participants to identify their triggers and develop plans to manage them. Provides participants with tools they can use to monitor their mental health on a day-to-day basis and to identify when their mental health is taking a dip.</p> <p>Governors discussed the support the College provided, how best to use the resources available, the support from partner agencies and the proposals for future support. There was a need to demonstrate the impact of the support both for the student and for the College in terms of areas such as attendance, retention, achievement and progression.</p> <p>Governors challenged the support provided to Staff. The Assistant Principal advised that support was provided through regular meetings where cases were discussed and support</p> | | |

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| | <p>provided, the College had trained mental health first aiders, a Staff Wellbeing Officer in HR and provided relevant CPD.</p> <p>Governors discussed the support provided by partners and the College's access to counsellors. The Assistant Principal advised that the College had access to counsellors who were experienced with working with young people and also had access to the College's Counselling Degree Students who could provide support to adults. Referrals were made to partner agencies but unfortunately some of these had long waiting lists.</p> <p>Governors supported the idea proposed of a Wellbeing Hub and agreed that an identifiable and calm space for students would be a positive addition to the support the College offered. It was discussed how the funds for this could be sourced.</p> | |
| ECC/24/7/4 | East Coast College and AI - Presentation | |
| | <p>The Teaching and Learning Manager gave the presentation on the College's current use of AI and how it was to be developed. CPD had been provided cross college on the ethics and benefits of AI and relevant policies had been updated. There are restrictions on its use for staff and students due to safeguarding and security issues including concerns of what information should be shared with AI. The College was currently in the process of installing at Lowestoft Campus Igloo a dedicated virtual classroom and had purchased some VR headsets.</p> <p>Governors agreed that there was a need to enhance digital literacy but that all needed to understand its apt usage and its potential biases. There was a risk that the College's students would be more verse in using the tools than staff. The Teaching and Learning Manager advised that there had been management training days and training at the Professional Learning Days. The reason that the College supported the use of co-pilot was due to it providing references to the resources it provided.</p> <p>Governors challenged if the IT team were too restrictive and cautious in AI's usage. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the usage decisions were based on a risk assessment and also considered that some of the AI tools meant that the College's smooth wall was bypassed which was a safeguarding issue.</p> <p>The Teaching and Learning Manager advised that the College's Digital Strategy was to be updated for AI and would be brought to the Governors for approval.</p> | |
| ECC/24/7/5 | To approve the Minutes of the last meetings 26 3 24 & 5 5 24 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda | |
| | The minutes of 26 3 24 and 5 5 24 were approved as a true record of the meeting. | |
| ECC/24/7/6 | Rolling Action Log | |
| | The rolling action log was reviewed and it was noted that there was only one action not complete relating to AI and this work had commenced with the AI presentation. | |
| | PART 1 AGENDA | |
| ECC/24/7/7 | Principal and CEO Report KPIs for 2023/24 (Appendix 1) Strategic deliverables for 2024/25 (Appendix 2) | |
| ECC/24/7/7.1 | Accountability Statement - as approved by written resolution | |

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| ECC/24/7/7.2 | Annual Review - for information | |
| ECC/24/7/7.3 | ECC Strategic Plan 2030 - for approval | |
| ECC/24/7/7.4 | Annual Conversation - for information | |
| ECC/24/7/7.5 | College Financial Statements review for 2022-2023 - for information | |
| <p>The Principal and CEO presented the report and thanked the College and Governance Team for all the support over the last year. The Strategic Plan had been reviewed, taking into account Governors views on the draft, and was included for approval. The Strategic deliverables for 2024/25 was included at appendix 2 for approval and set out the actions to be delivered in the next academic year.</p> <p>The Accountability Statement was noted and the Director of Governance confirmed that it had been submitted to the ESFA and published on the Colleges' website.</p> <p>Governors discussed the Strategic Plan and agreed that there needed to be some minor wording and editing but that it could be approved.</p> <p>Governors thanked the College team for producing all the documents and agreed that this was a positive start in term for the Principal and CEO and that it set out clear objectives for the coming year.</p> <p>Governors agreed the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECC Strategic Plan 2030: Our ambitions by 2030 we will have and Delivering Student Success - change the 'Achieved Ofsted Outstanding' to 'Achieved Exceptional Provision' to be demonstrated by an Ofsted good with outstanding aspects. • ECC Strategic Plan 2030 editing of photos, phrasing to ensure accessible to none educationalists and a final proof read. <p>Corporation resolved to approve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECC Strategic Plan 2030 (7.3) • Strategic deliverables for 2024/25 (Appendix 2) <p>And to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPIs for 2023/24 (Appendix 1) • Annual accountability statement 2024/25 (7.1) • Annual Review 2023/24 (7.2) • Annual conversation outcome letter from ESFA/DfE (7.4) • College Financial Statements review for 2022-2023 confirmation from ESFA/DfE (7.5) | | <p>PP</p> <p>PP</p> |
| ECC/24/7/8 | Governance Update as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search | |
| ECC/24/7/8.1 | Draft Governance Schedule as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search | |
| ECC/24/7/8.2 | Governance Team 24/25 as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search | |

The Director of Governance presented the report, and advised on the recommendations from Governance Remuneration and Search.

Corporation resolved to approve, as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search the following governor appointments:

- **David Blake as Chair for a 2 year term up to 31 7 2026, and an additional 2 year term of office to 31 8 2027, with a Chair Designate appointed in year 2.**
- **Tina Ellis as Vice Chair Community to 31 7 25, which aligns with her term of office which expires on 31 7 25.**
- **Kirk Lower as Vice Chair to 31 7 25.**
- **Ian Lomax as Finance and General Purposes Chair for a 2 year term up to 31 7 2026.**
- **Mike Dowdall as Senior Independent Director to 31/7/26 and Estates Chair 31/7/26.**
- **Jude Owens as People Chair for a 2 year term up to 31/07/26 and an additional 2Year Term as Governor to 31/07/27.**
- **Peter Lavender as Chair Quality and Curriculum for a 2 year term up to 31/7/26, which aligns with his term of office which expires on 31 7 26.**
- **Giles Kerkham as Audit Chair for a 2 year term up to 31/7/26, which aligns with his term of office which expires on 31 7 26.**
- **Rachel term of office be extended to the +2 agreed on appointment giving a term of office to 31 7 27.**

Corporation resolved to approve, as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search:

- **The Quality and Standards and Curriculum Growth and Development Committee be amalgamated to form a Quality and Curriculum Committee.**
- **The Governance Business Schedule for 2024/25.**
- **The Governance Structure and committee membership for 2024/25**

ECC/24/7/8.3

Associate Governors Audit Committee - for approval as recommended by the GRS Appointment Panel

The Director of Governance advised that a panel of Governance Remuneration and Search Committee members had interviewed the proposed Associate Governors and were recommending them for appointment to the Audit Committee.

Corporation resolved that:

- **Ofure Obomighie be appointed as an Associate Governor on Audit Committee commencing 1/8/2024.**
This appointment to be for a 2 year initial period up to 31/ 7/2026, with extension available for an additional 2 year period, subject to annual review.
- **Andrew Dowsett be appointed as an Associate Governor on Audit Committee commencing 1/8/2024.**
This appointment to be for a 2 year initial period up to 31/7/2026, with extension available for an additional 2 year period, subject to annual review.

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| ECC/24/7/8.4 | Instrument and Articles and Standing Orders Review as recommended by Governance Remuneration and Search | |
| <p>The Director of Governance presented the reviewed Instrument and Articles and Standing Orders which were recommended for adoption by Governance Remuneration and Search. Tracked changes had been used to show the proposed changes and the documents would be subject to a final non-material edit pre-publication.</p> <p>Corporation resolved to approve the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrument and Articles • Standing Orders, including terms of reference. | | |
| ECC/24/7/8.5 | Written Resolution and Seal | |
| <p>The Corporation noted the UK Shared Prosperity Fund contracts with East Suffolk Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council agreements have been signed and sealed as a deed.</p> <p>The Corporation minuted that the following had been resolved by written resolution</p> <p>Issued 28 March 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make an exception to the Procurement Policy & Procedure for this item of expenditure (immersive classroom – Igloo) and not carry out a tender • approve that an order be placed with the supplier Igloo based on the quotation for the preferred immersive space at £238,500. <p>Issued 10 May 2024</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove the posts of Deputy Principal Curriculum and Strategic Partnerships and Deputy Principal, Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience roles. 2. Approve the establishment and appointment of a new Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality. 3. Designate the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality post a senior post holder 4. Set the remuneration range at £80-£100K, based on the current market and benchmarking data. 5. Delegate the appointment process to Governance Remuneration and Search to manage and make the appointment recommendation to the Board. 6. Appoint Dodd Associates to support the recruitment of the Deputy Principal. <p>Issued 22 May 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Agreement to Lease and the Lease for the Place in Great Yarmouth and that they are signed as a deed. • to approve the UK Shared Prosperity Fund contracts with East Suffolk Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council and that they are signed as a deed. <p>Issued 1 July 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Coast College's 2024/25 Accountability Statement • a confidential resolution to appoint the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality. | | |

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| ECC/24/7/9 | Redacted - confidential and commercially sensitive | |
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| ECC/24/7/10 | Risk Register as reviewed by Audit Committee | |
| | <p>The Chair of Audit advised that the Audit Committee had reviewed the risk registers as had the individual committees. The new summary report made this review easier as it clearly set out the changes since the last review.</p> | |

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| ECC/24/7/11 | Management Accounts as recommended by Finance and General Purposes | |
| The Board noted the management accounts, which had been reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Chair reminded the Board that finance was a whole Board issue. | | |
| ECC/24/7/12 | Budget and commentary as recommended by Finance and General Purposes | |
| ECC/24/7/12.1 | College Financial Forecast Return (CFFR) Extracts | |
| <p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the management accounts alongside the budget and three year financial forecast. This year had seen high project income as the ESF Projects had concluded and there had been no clawback. This one off income meant the College was currently assessing as outstanding financial health. This would revert to good in the following year as the money would be invested in the capital programme. Cash holdings were high and this was invested to earn interest. This may be impacted by the ESFA Funding Audit which was to take place in the Autumn term.</p> <p>Governors discussed the challenge of unfunded learners and lagged funding. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the costs had been allowed for in the budget of circa 200 unfunded learners.</p> <p>Governors queried if the KPIs used were the apt ones and discussed the College's borrowings. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the KPIs were based on those set by the Further Education Commissioner. Since reclassification there were restrictions on borrowings, the Colleges loans would be paid off by 2033.</p> <p>The Board noted that the new government may make changes that will impact College's finances.</p> <p>Corporation resolved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to approve the Annual Budget 2024/25, and the Three-Year College Financial Forecast Submission, comprising a College Financial Forecast Return and Commentary. | | |
| | Committee reports - for information | |
| ECC/24/7/13 | Quality and Standards Committee Report - Verbal Update | |
| The Quality and Standards Committee Chair updated the Board on the Committee's work. | | |
| | Policies recommended by committees on which no discussion is anticipated | |
| ECC/24/7/13.1 | HE Strategy - as recommended by Quality and Standards | |
| <p>Corporation resolved to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Strategy 2025-2030 | | |

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| ECC/24/7/14 | Finance and General Purposes Committee and Joint meeting with People Committee Report | |
| <p>The Finance and General Purposes Committee Chair updated the Board on the Committee's work.</p> <p>The People Committee Chair updated on the joint meeting regarding the budgeted pay review. The Committees agreed that the Pay Review and its distribution would be assessed after recruitment and that the Real Living Wage remained a strategic aim but that its financial impact and affordability would be assessed once the rates announced. This may also be impacted by the change in government.</p> | | |
| <p>Resolutions recommended by committees on which no discussion is anticipated</p> | | |
| ECC/24/7/14.1 | Subcontract Tender Outcome as recommended by Finance and General Purposes | |
| <p>The Principal and CEO updated the Board on the subcontracting tender, and advised following discussions with the ESFA no changes were proposed for this academic year.</p> <p>Corporation resolved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to appoint the four organisations who submitted tenders be appointed to carry out that provision during the 2024/25 academic year. <p>That is Dance Performance Academy (DPA), ACE, Inspire Suffolk and St Edmunds Society.</p> | | |
| <p>Resolutions recommended by committees on which no discussion is anticipated</p> | | |
| ECC/24/3/14.2 | The Place Great Yarmouth as recommended by Finance and General Purposes | |
| <p>The Deputy Chief Executive updated the Board on The Place and the implications to the College's revenue from interest if the Council did not agree to staggered payments for the College's overall contribution.</p> <p>Corporation resolved to approve as recommended by Finance and General Purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a contribution of £200k, including VAT, is made to GYBC towards the additional refurbishment costs at The Place. This to be the College's final contribution • the College operates an Adult Skills Centre on the third floor of The Place. | | |
| <p>Policies recommended by committees on which no discussion is anticipated</p> | | |
| ECC/24/3/14.3 | QD027 Fees Policy 2024/25 as recommended by Finance and General Purposes | |
| ECC/24/3/14.4 | QD048 Bursary Policy and Procedure 2024/25 as recommended by Finance and General Purposes | |

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| ECC/24/3/14.5 | QD093 Subcontracting Policy 2024/25 as recommended by Finance and General Purposes | |
| ECC/24/3/14.6 | QD074 Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy 2024/25 as recommended by Finance and General Purposes | |
| <p>Corporation resolved to approve as recommended by Finance and General Purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QD027 - Fees Policy 2024/25 • QD048 - Bursary Policy and Procedure 2024/25 • QD074 - Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy 2024/25 • QD093- Subcontracting Policy 2024/25 | | |
| | Committee reports - for information | |
| ECC/24/3/15 | Audit Committee Report | |
| <p>The Audit Committee Chair updated the Board on the Committee's work, including the ESFA Funding Audit and the potential risk of clawback, Cyber Security planning and the External Auditor change of ownership.</p> | | |
| | Resolutions recommended by committees on which no discussion is anticipated | |
| ECC/24/3/15.1 | Internal Audit Annual Plan as recommended by Audit Committee | |
| <p>The Audit Committee Chair presented the Audit Plan and advised that this would be reviewed again at the December Audit Committee. Governors agreed that conversion rates and the process around that were a key area for review.</p> <p>Corporation resolved to approve as recommended by Audit Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Plan | | |
| | Policies recommended by committees on which no discussion is anticipated | |
| ECC/24/7/15.2 | QD100 Corporate Governance and Board Assurance Framework as recommended by Audit | |
| <p>Corporation resolved to approve as recommended by Audit Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QD100 Corporate Governance and Board Assurance Framework | | |
| | Committee reports - for information | |
| ECC/24/7/16 | Curriculum Growth and Development Committee | |
| <p>The Curriculum Growth and Development Committee Chair updated the Board on the Committee's work and advised that the Committee had agreed that the Committee should be amalgamated with the Quality Committee. The Committee had discussed curriculum planning, the tools the College used and how this could be improved. Concern was raised about recruitment at Lowestoft Sixth form College and how numbers could be increased with transport an area to be reviewed and the need to develop further the College's adult offer.</p> | | |

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| ECC/24/7/17 | People Committee | |
| <p>The People Committee Chair updated the Board on the Committee's work. A follow up meeting had been held with the Deputy Chief Executive where assurance was given that the people data needed was now available from the new HR system.</p> | | |
| ECC/24/7/18 | Estates Committee Report | |
| <p>The Estates Committee Chair updated the Board on the Committee's work. It was envisaged that the Great Yarmouth re-development contract would be signed in August with legal work ongoing.</p> <p>Governors discussed the sustainability of the Great Yarmouth project and the issues around and cost of removal of contaminated land. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the build would not be fully sustainable due to the budget but would include measures such as triple glazing and solar power. There would be a need to be clear on the building's sustainability for the College's carbon reporting.</p> | | |
| ECC/24/7/18.1 | Great Yarmouth Project Legal Update - for approval | |
| <p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report and advised on the legal agreements that were required. In addition, a revised Deed of Priority would be required. Given timings final agreement for these would need to be by written resolution.</p> <p>The Estates Committee Chair advised that he had attended a really positive staff consultation meeting on the re-development.</p> <p>Governors challenged if there was any risk to the re-development project given the change in Government. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that there were a great deal of sunk costs and the DFE project included 16 colleges. This would be a big programme for a new government to pull.</p> <p>The Corporation resolved to approve in principle the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Agreement, Back to Back letter (appendix 1) • Clawback Agreement (appendix 2) • underlease for access from Suffolk Road <p>and noted that the final approval will be by written resolution</p> | | |
| | Subsidiary Update | |
| ECC/24/7/19 | ECETA Report | |
| <p>The ECETA Chair updated the Board on the Subsidiary's work and its current predicted turnover which had been reduced due to the delays in developing Lound. The ECETA Board had made a small presentation to Alan Debenham as it was his last ECETA meeting.</p> | | |
| ECC/24/7/20 | Additional Item - Insurance Procurement for approval | |
| <p>The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report.</p> <p>Governors commented that the saving didn't seem high for going against procedures. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that there were few firms operating in the market and that a new tender would likely result in the same provider.</p> | | |

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| <p>Governors challenged if reclassification affected insurance. The Director of Governance advised that the Corporation was still an independent Corporation that made its own decisions regarding insurance.</p> <p>The Corporation resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an exception is made to the Procurement Policy to permit a new long-term agreement (LTA) for three years plus an optional two year extension being entered into with Aviva for the Commercial Combined insurance policy as from the 2024/25 year. | |
| <p>ECC/24/7/21</p> | <p>Strategic Focus - Apprenticeships</p> |
| <p>The Chair advised that it was planned to have a strategic focus at each Board and given the issues with apprenticeships it had been selected to be the first.</p> <p>The Principal and CEO advised that the report covered quality, recruitment and funding and provided a current position. These had been considered by the relevant committees but had been brought together in one report for the Board's review.</p> <p>Governors commented there was a need to develop and increase the apprenticeship provision and for this the quality of the provision was key. It was clear that the areas for development had been identified and improvement needed to continue. The Interim Deputy Principal advised that the provision was improving but that it was a slow process as the apprenticeships the College provided were mainly long ones. When the College got it right the apprentice and employer had a positive experience and the apprentice achieved.</p> <p>Governors discussed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprentices out of time were a cost to the College, and it was good to see that the number had reduced. • Timely achievement prediction had improved but was still low and needed to improve further. • Predicted achievement rate was comparable to previous years but that because apprentice numbers are relatively small, 2-3 apprentices count as 1% of the reportable cohort. This means that a small number of apprentices who do not achieve as expected, will have a big impact on results. • There is a national problem with apprenticeships. • The College needed to provide high quality provision and teaching. This had been impacted by recruitment issues. • Independent Training Providers achievement rates were higher where they specialised in limited apprenticeships. • Universities were looking at developing apprenticeships at level 3 and this was a risk to colleges. Universities had already got the degree apprenticeship market and were also looking at the level 3 market to help with progression to this. • The College's market was mainly SMEs and therefore the College needed to make it an easy and simple journey for them as the companies had limited resources. • The new government's aim of increasing housebuilding could result in more apprenticeships, but this would be impacted by the use of subcontractors. • The new governments proposed changes to the levy may affect apprenticeship funding and recruitment. The governments skills agenda may also affect the demand. | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit Committee were being provided with assurance that progress was being made with funding compliance and that new procedures were being put in place. Additional action may be needed following the ESFA funding audit. | | |
| ECC/24/7/22 | Review of meeting | |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Confidential Items: Agenda Item 9 and separate minuted items Were Learners prominent in discussions: Yes, throughout. Risk Management: any issues discussed which may require an additional Assessment: Change of government and UoS re maritime. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: Capital works. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media: Retiring Governors, Annual Review and Strategy How did the meeting go: A long meeting, presentations were useful. It was noted that the Governance Schedule for 2024/25 included an additional Board as it was recognised the gap since the last Board was too long. | | |