

**East Coast College MINUTES of the meeting of the Curriculum
Growth and Development Committee held at 9am 30th April 2024
Room L6FC**

Present:	Peter Lavender (Chair PL) Ian Lomax (IL) Mike Dowdall (MD) Katie Alexander (KA) Paul Padda (Principal and CEO)	
In attendance:	Julia Bates (Deputy Principal Curriculum and Strategic Partnerships) Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance)	
W/24/04/1	Apologies and membership	
<p>It was noted that the Associate Governor Lisa George had stepped down. The Principal and CEO was congratulated on his appointment.</p>		
W/24/04/2	Declarations of Interest	
<p>There were no declarations of interest:</p>		
W/24/04/3	To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the 30 January 2024 and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda	
<p>The minutes of the meeting held 30 January 2024 were agreed as a true record.</p> <p>The Committee discussed attrition and retention, and how it needed to be reviewed in light of the regional and national context. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Strategic Partnerships advised that attrition related to students that left pre day 42. The Principal and CEO advised that the College was looking at a strengthened induction period to help retain students and a related objective would be included in the Accountability Statement. As reported at the previous meeting a research project on attrition was currently in progress. The Director of Governance reported that a consultation with Unloc was considering retention. The Committee concluded that although this was a quality issue there was no point in developing the curriculum if students were not retained. If students were not retained this had a detrimental effect on the financial sustainability of the college.</p> <p>The Committee commented that retention was also affected by attendance and that this was also an issue in the College's feeder schools.</p> <p>The Committee concluded that there was duplication of work and that the two committees should merge. The Director of Governance suggested that the Board may wish to consider amalgamating the two committees and that the College was unusual in having two separate committees.</p>		
W/24/04/4	To Review Rolling Action Log	
<p>The rolling log was reviewed.</p>		

	<p>Action W/23/06/5.4 - Application conversion rates to be included in future reporting - The Deputy Principal advised that the application conversion rates were not yet available with MIS still working on the reporting. The Committee requested that this action needed to be escalated as this was important performance data and the Principal and CEO agreed to see this was done.</p>	
<p>W/24/04/5</p>	<p>Curriculum Growth and Development Report</p>	
	<p>The Deputy Principal presented the report, and advised that it included KPIs, curriculum development and planning, recruitment and employer engagement. Stakeholder engagement was increasingly important but is a challenge and needs to be embedded through every level of the College. The employer engagement strategy group membership also needed to be developed to include more smaller to medium employers. GY and Lowestoft are dominated by SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) and micro businesses.</p> <p>Governors discussed curriculum development and how it could be more dynamic. The Deputy Principal advised that the College should look at revising its curriculum timeline with earlier financial modelling and scenario planning as this would help ensure that curriculum development is both responsive to evidenced need and financially viable from the outset. This could be assisted by a fully integrated curriculum planning tool which would alleviate the substantial administrative burden of the current spreadsheet system. There was also a need for all teams to be set clear team objectives and KPIs. Evidenced growth plans should be supported in areas which there is good quality of education and the area is of strategic importance. The Committee supported these recommendations.</p> <p>The Principal and CEO advised that the College did have a planning tool and this needed to be integrated into the planning at an earlier stage. There was need to review to see if the planning tool was still fit for purpose by both reviewing the market and ensuring that the tool that the College did have was being used to its full capacity. Governors commented that the planning tool needed to be intuitive for staff and reduce the administrative burden of the planning.</p> <p>Governors agreed that curriculum planning needed to be started earlier and be ongoing. Planning for 2025/26 needed to start now. There was also a need to review after recruitment what had been offered and what had been delivered to understand which areas were not recruiting to plan and why.</p> <p>Governors challenged progress with the relaunched adult offer. The Deputy Principal advised that the launch of the new adult brochure had resulted in a disappointing take up of the offer. Governors commented that there is a need to plan the adult development over a 3 year period based on evidence of need and provide offer flexibility. The Principal and CEO advised that the College was looking at investing in business development to help grow the offer.</p> <p>Governors noted that apprenticeships market share has been lost with the recruitment plan not met and that reputation in some areas was still poor. They challenged how this was to be addressed. The Deputy Principal advised that starts had reduced partly due to competition from a private training provider in Lowestoft and the economic position which has affected for example house building and nurseries so they haven't recruited apprentices. There was need for a quality offer and to improve stakeholder engagement as part of the reputational management.</p> <p>The Chair advised that he had attended the Employer Strategic Group. The conversation was impressive but it was noticeable that the group was dominated by the Councils and had few representatives from SMEs and no large employers. The Principal and CEO</p>	

	<p>advised that work was ongoing to attract representatives from larger employers. The Deputy Principal advised that the College's market was dominated by SMEs, the area advisory groups had more individual employers represented and curriculum area employer advisory groups work well in childcare, animal care, metal fabrication and welding, and foundation studies, with impact seen through curriculum being co-designed with employers. There was a need to develop this in all areas.</p> <p>Governors challenged who curriculum development would be led by when the Deputy Principal left. This was a critical area for the College's development and needed focused leadership. The Principal and CEO advised that this needed to be a focus of the whole team, developed through business planning and monitored through the KPIs and performance management so that all were held to account. The Director of Governance advised that the Chair had asked the Principal and CEO to propose his senior team with sufficient resources to develop and grow the College.</p>	
W/24/04/5.1	Draft Accountability Statement Proposed Objectives	
	<p>The Principal and CEO presented the objectives, and advised that the objectives had been split into the key areas and included cross cutting themes.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal advised that the targets included were evidence based from the growth plan.</p> <p>The Director of Governance advised that the Board had agreed that the Committees should consider their section of the Accountability statement, with the finalised statement to be approved by written resolution to meet the submission deadline of 30 6 24 and then reported to the July Board. This was a one year plan that should reflect the College's strategic objectives.</p> <p>Governors challenged that there was no context given in the document. The Director of Governance advised that this was only the objective section and that the full document would include contextual information and a review of this year. The overall document would be in the design style of the other College documents and would be based on the Board's Strategy and Strategic Curriculum Review.</p> <p>The Committee had a detailed discussion and raised the following points on the draft Accountability Statement proposed objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contextual start section needs to set out what we deliver, and what we do well, so that the reader is clear on the College's offer and gets a sense of the College's context and place. • It is focused on what is state funded: should this be more focused on what we want to achieve as a 'community college'? • Would the statement be more coherent if it included all of the College's provision? • As the statement is a public document should it also not be used to demonstrate the breadth of the College's offer, including for example the additional provision we have developed to meet needs at the lower level? • Should the statement demonstrate the unique selling point(s) of the College and 'our place'? • Should HE and adults be separate sections to give more focus or are they interlinked with progression paths – would they be better under a section called 'levelling up'? 	

- Should targets be numbers as well as the financial target as this will be clearer on the amount of provision and the number of learners supported?
- Targets and activities why in the same column – do they need to be separate columns, especially those that are developmental?
- Do the targets and activities cover all that is needed – the 16-18 section needs more detail to align with the other sections?
- The activities need to be clear and understandable.
- Do the key sectors and the related jobs need to be set out within the local and regional sections, or is this level of detail covered in the Strategic Curriculum Review, and therefore just needs reference?
- Are the local, regional and national links to the College’s objectives clear?
- Cross college section needs tightening up as currently it is too vague.
- As ESOL is a growth area does that need including (could be under social mobility)?
- Strategic Curriculum Review and growth plan needs to feed through and be interlinked.
- Should the targets be stretch or realistic ones, given this is only a one year document (the College needs to grow and we therefore need to challenge ourselves and be innovative)?
- Should the document just include new initiatives, or should it include new and objectives for the current provision? If it is a mix it needs to be clear which is new.
- The Board needs to be assured that these are the key targets that need to be achieved in 2024/25.
- The statement needs to set out how the College is meeting its strategic objectives during 2024/25. There is a need for the College to use this as the one year plan but to also have a three year plan.

The Principal and CEO commented that the College’s 10 year strategy needed to be reviewed and refreshed and out of this a 3 year plan developed and then the Accountability Statement would be the annual plan. These all need to be mapped and the links evidenced so that the Board was given assurance on the strategic planning.

The Deputy Principal advised that the Strategic Curriculum Review had been based on a 3 year plan. There was a need to ensure that the College’s planning cycle aligned with the required reporting. This needed to include scenario planning so that modelling of the financial outcome of curriculum planning decisions could be assessed.

W/24/04/6	To Review the Risk Register	
<p>1. Has the risk register been reviewed Yes, April 2024.</p> <p>2. Is the Committee content that the risks are relevant and are being updated Yes, these have been updated including re financial sustainability of offer, curriculum reform as a risk cause and the risk of devolution.</p> <p>3. Is the Committee content that the risks are being mitigated Yes, mitigations have been updated</p> <p>4. Where a red risk is the Committee assured that appropriate action is being taken The red risk of 'Failure to develop a curriculum for students at Lowestoft Sixth Form College which meets stakeholder needs' is due to reduction in applications, mitigation actions discussed. The demographics over the next few years show no increase in school leavers and there was a need to secure the market that was available. This could be through a transport plan to make the College easier to access as this was highlighted as an issue in student consultation. The Committee recommend this.</p> <p>5. Where does the Committee have significant concerns The Committee is concerned about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment numbers in all areas, as this had a knock on effect on contribution and financial sustainability. • The Place and the need to meet the rate of return. HE needed to recruit to new provision and to a sustainable cohort size and The Place needed to be seen (and marketed) as a wider Adult centre rather than just HE. • The effect of devolution on the College's offer, and of new entrants in to the market. This was a risk that needed to be mitigated through full engagement. The Deputy Principal provided assurance that the College was fully engaged with both Suffolk and Norfolk but that there was a risk of a city focus. There was also an opportunity, as had been seen in other devolved areas of additional flexibility. • The offer to adults and how this develops. There are opportunities to develop in The Place and the adult centres being developed at Lowestoft and Lound. • Maritime and the need to secure additional CASs to grow the offer. • Need to bid for funds and the resources this requires – is there a need for a bid writer to take advantage of the funds available? • Reduction in apprenticeship recruitment and the competition from private training providers who are able to be more responsive with their offer. <p>Governors comment that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for the College to set out its unique selling point and if this was as a Community College this needed to be a focus of the strategy and offer. Without a unique selling point there was a risk that the College would not have a strategic focus or be recognised in the community. • There is a risk that the split of the Curriculum Growth and Development and the Quality and Standards Committees was resulting in duplication of reporting, discussion and focus. The Committee thought a merger of the two committees was needed, with a regular focus on curriculum development matters. 		
W/24/04/7	Agenda Planning	
<p>The Committee supported consideration by Governance Remuneration and Search of combining the Quality and Standards with Curriculum Growth and Development to create a Quality and Curriculum Committee. This would help ensure a joined up approach to</p>		

quality and curriculum issues and future developments. There may need to be more meetings of the new committee which would allow for stronger focus on curriculum development.		
W/24/04/8	Review of Meeting	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confidential Items: None 2. Were learners prominent in discussions: yes 3. Risk Management: as set out in the minutes, will need review if a joint committee. 4. Health and Safety: No 5. Equality and Diversity: No 6. Sustainability: No 7. Media: Accountability statement 8. How did the meeting go: A long meeting with good tough discussions. <p>The Committee thanked the Deputy Principal Curriculum and Strategic Partnerships for her work at the College, including her work on the review of the curriculum offer. The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Strategic Partnerships commented that it had been an absolute pleasure to review and develop the College's curriculum. The further education landscape is an ever changing one and this will need to be further considered in the College's planning.</p>		