

CORPORATION BOARD

CONFIRMED MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 4:00PM EASTON COLLEGE, ROOM JB031

Present:

Andrew Barnes	AB	Chair
Marcus Bailey	MB	Vice-Chair (<i>until 6:42pm</i>)
Jerry White	JW	Principal
Karen McCullagh	KM	Governor (<i>remote via Teams, until 5:04pm</i>)
Lucy Sydney	LSy	Governor
Nikki Gray	NG	Governor
Noel Bartram	NB	Governor
Phil Gormley	PG	Governor (<i>remote via Teams, until 7:09pm</i>)
Philip Pearce	PP	Governor
Sean Green	SGn	Governor
Freddie Simpson	FS	Student Governor, SU President (<i>until 6:48pm</i>)
Hazel Thomas	HT	Student Governor (<i>until 6:34pm</i>)
Josie Fryer	JF	Student Governor (<i>until 6:34pm</i>)
Laura Stewart	LS	Staff Governor
Shirley Barker	SB	Staff Governor

Attendees:

Jen Eves	JE	Chief Operating Officer
Jo Kershaw	JK	Vice Principal (<i>remote, via Teams</i>)
Jodie Mitchell	JM	Director of Governance and Legal (<i>remote, via Teams</i>)
Martin Colbourne	MC	Deputy CEO
Seb Gasse	SG	Vice Principal
Claire Harber	CH	Governance and Legal Officer

Apologies:

Jock Downie	JD	Governor
Joe McNeill	JMc	Governor

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received and noted as above.
- 2. Declaration of Conflicts**
No declarations were made.
- 3. Draft Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 10 December 2024**
The draft minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2024 were amended slightly and agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.
- 4. Draft Confidential Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 10 December 2024**
The unconfirmed confidential minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2024 were amended slightly and agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

5. **Matters Arising**

Board 6 Action 6: JW / ER to present the ToR that supports to UEA MOU to the Board for review. **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Board 1 Action 2: Provide a comparison to the previous year of the top ten referral areas at the end of this academic year (HRH). **ACTION ONGOING** (Due June 2025).

Board 1 Action 5: Speak to Wellbeing Manager regarding Samaritan outreach services (HRH). **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Board 1 Action 6: Email Jo Kershaw with message to circulate to curriculum teams to raise awareness of the Student Union (LS). **ACTION ONGOING** (Due December 2024).

Board 1 Action 8: **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Board 1 Action 10: **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Board 1 Action 11: Prepare the remit for the Employer Engagement Group and allocate to a member of CLT to lead (JW/JK). **ACTION ONGOING** (Due December 2024).

Board 1 Action 15: **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Board 2 Action 1: **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Board 2 Action 2: Explore the teaching/non-teaching staff ratio and research benchmarking data available (JW). *As a result of research into teaching/non-teaching staff ratio benchmarking, a paper has been produced and is included in the meeting pack.* **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Board 2 Action 3: Reflect on Bribery Act training for existing staff. It was confirmed that bribery training is built into the induction training (JW/MC). *A professional services company could be consulted if no additional training is available on Nimble.* **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Board 2 Action 4: **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Board 2 Action 5: **ACTION COMPLETE.**

Board 2 Action 6: Explore whether the AI function on OnBoard can assist in summarising papers Closed (AI / OnBoard) (JM/CH). *The Intelligent Assistant on OnBoard, can assist with summarising papers, identifying key risks and providing strategic insights, as well as suggesting questions. Further enquiries are being made, and Governors will be kept updated. It was noted that AI is the theme of the upcoming Staff Development Day and Governors were invited to join remote sessions as they wish.* **ACTION COMPLETE.**

6. **Chairman's Remarks**

The Chair announced that teaching is beginning in the new Construction Skills Centre at the Ipswich Road site. The building will be officially opened by Skills Minister Jacqui Smith on 13 March 2025, which the DfE have been supportive in arranging.

The Board were reminded of the upcoming Governor Strategy Day, and it was noted that themes for the day include financial recovery and AI.

7. **Students' Union Update**

The draft Students' Union Constitution Review was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

The Board were informed that proposed amendments are outlined in the document. The Board asked whether the constitution is in line with SU constitutions of other colleges and were informed that although no in-depth comparisons have been carried out, conversations with other colleges have driven some changes. It was noted that not all colleges have a Students' Union President.

The Board **approved** the amendments to the Students' Union Constitution.

The Board thanked FS and SG for their work on the document.

A brief verbal update on activities of the Students' Union was provided as follows:

- Results from a recent student survey asking students what a green campus means to them included more greenery and less littering. As a result, the College are considering reinstalling the community garden at Ipswich Road and arranging a litter-pick exercise.
- There is a workstream led by FS and Tom Denney feeding into the Climate Change Board.
- Sustainability will be integrated into inductions next year.

8. Strategic Target Monitoring

The Strategic Target Monitoring papers were circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

A conversation around devolution took place. It is thought that devolution for Norfolk and Suffolk will happen quickly, perhaps within the next 12-18 months. This is particularly relevant to the College as:

- The adult skills budget is likely to go to the mayoral authority.
- If there is a 3-unitary model for Norfolk as expected, it may result in three separate safeguarding models which will add complexity to current arrangements.

The Board asked how targets that move from 'Good' to 'Satisfactory' are being monitored and were informed that the Senior Management Team consider and assess whether further interventions need to be considered for those targets.

ACTION 1: Review targets in relation to the Accountability Statement on Strategy Day (JW).

8.1 Climate Action Plan Update

JE provided an update from the report as circulated prior to the meeting. The following was noted:

- The Climate Action Plan has been considered by both the Business and Curriculum and Standards Committees.
- The paper includes a schedule for the roll-out of the plan.
- The communications team have been engaged to assist with marketing materials.
- The plan is broken down into workstreams which will feed into the Climate Board, meetings of which have been scheduled.
- Alternatives to carbon literacy training are being considered due to cost, and it is hoped that some form of training can be rolled out in the summer term.
- The Sustainability Manager role is on hold while the College is in financial recovery.
- There is a plan to integrate sustainability into the curriculum.

KM left the meeting at 5:04pm.

It was generally felt that the original timeline commitment is ambitious, but it was noted that actions are being taken towards the plan and it is being kept under review.

Comments were made reflecting that the financial affordability of the plan is an important consideration, particularly in respect of the aging estate and the investment required to make buildings sustainable. It was noted that until the College has the results of the baseline audit, it is difficult to assess how achievable the plan is, but that a positive start has been made.

A comment was made that the College needs to ensure symbolic value to effectively engage staff and students. A further comment was made that the DigiTech building lights are often left on.

Governors were asked if anyone would like to volunteer as a Governor Sustainability Champion.

ACTION 2: Reach out to Governors for a volunteer Sustainability Champion (CH/JM).

The meeting took a break at 5:22pm and reconvened at 5:35pm.

8.2 People Strategy Update

JE provided an update from the report as previously circulated, and the following was noted:

- A draft has been prepared after conversations with senior management.
- The Staff Culture Governor Strategic Group has considered the 3-year strategy in detail.
- Sickness and wellbeing are major themes.
- A Recruitment Working Group is active.
- It is hoped that improvements in the onboarding process and a more seamless approach to induction will be ready for implementation by the end of the academic year.
- The probation process is being reviewed, and a new process should be ready to embed next year.
- The Business Committee asked for mandatory managers training.
- Manager masterclasses are being planned.
- The College is working towards the Investors in Diversity accreditation.
- There is an action list for each working group which will feed into the main People Strategy action plan.

ACTION 3: Add People Strategy Action Plan to the next Board agenda (CH)

ACTION 4: Include updates on the People Strategy in the Workforce Updates to the Business Committee (JE/HB)

A discussion took place around the pros and cons of seeking Investors in People accreditation. The following points were made:

- The process of accreditation provides structure and can result in good action plans.
- The accreditation would be expensive for the College.
- The process used by Investors in People is thought to give added anonymity to staff input.

ACTION 5: Reflect on the pros and cons of seeking the Investors in People accreditation (JW).

ACTION 6: Share Draft People Strategy with Governors (JE/CH).

9. Key Updates and Approvals from Committee Meetings

9.1 Curriculum and Standards

MB gave an update from the Curriculum and Standards Committee. The following points were highlighted:

- 8 risks have been identified, and the Curriculum and Standards Committee is monitoring the risks assigned to the Committee.
- Good updates have been received via the Student Voice Strategic Group.
- Good levels of assurance have been given regarding wellbeing and inclusion, as well as the new OfS sexual harassment standard.
- Further clarification from LADO regarding the reporting of low-level concerns is expected by the end of the month.

The Board were informed that the Curriculum and Standards Committee request that their name be changed to Curriculum and Quality Committee.

The Board **approved** the change of name from Curriculum and Standards Committee to Curriculum and Quality Committee.

ACTION 7: Ensure internal documentation reflects the change in name of the Curriculum and Standards Committee to Curriculum and Quality Committee (JM/CH).

9.2 Business Committee

NB gave an update on the Business Committee. The following points were highlighted:

- The Health and Safety Manager presented a report to the Committee on concerns raised as part of the insurance renewal process. Nothing of major concern was reported, but some resulting actions may assist the next renewal.
- The Committee approved minor amendments to the Treasury Policy.
- Business continuity surrounding cyber risk is an area of consideration.

JF left the meeting at 6:12pm.

ACTION 8: Present a summary breakdown of insurance cover and cost to the Board (JM/JW).

FS left the meeting at 6:15pm.

A discussion took place around cyber risk. The following comments were made:

- Critical systems should be in the cloud.
- A business continuity exercise is planned for the summer.
- The College is in contact with a council which has recently had a cyber-attack, and the council is sharing its learning surrounding the event.

ACTION 9: Add cyber risk in relation to critical systems to the A&R agenda (JM/JW).

ACTION 10: JE to send SGn information on the learning on cyber security received from the council discussed in the meeting (JE).

JF rejoined the meeting at 6:17pm.

FS rejoined the meeting at 6:20pm.

9.2.1 CONFIDENTIAL – Finance Update

The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes.

9.2.2 Gender Pay Gap Report

The Board were informed that the data for the Gender Pay Gap Report is not yet finalised and the deadline for submission of the data is 30 March 2025. As the next Board meeting is after this date, the Board delegated authority to the Business Committee to approve the Gender Pay Gap Report for submission. It was confirmed that the report will be presented at the next Board meeting for information.

9.3 Remuneration and Governance Committee

An update was given on the Remuneration and Governance Committee. The following points were highlighted:

- The Committee have considered the Annual Internal Review, approved the format and scrutinised the report.
- The Committee have considered the Assurance Framework which will be made available to Governors on OnBoard in due course and Governors were encouraged to look it once available.
- It was noted that the Assurance Framework is an outstanding piece of work and assists in reassuring Governors.
- A review of the Governor induction process is being undertaken.
- The importance of new Governors to meet with the Director of Governance and Legal was stressed.

FS and SG left the meeting at 6:48pm.

9.3.1 CONFIDENTIAL – Annual Internal Review of Governance

The Code of Conduct for Governors and Governance Guide were circulated prior to the meeting.

The Board **approved** the Code of Conduct for Governors.

The Board **approved** the Governance Guide.

9.3.2 CONFIDENTIAL – Chair of the Corporation – Recruitment Update

The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes.

10. Risk Register Review

The Risk Register Review papers were circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the papers have been reviewed through the Business Committee and Curriculum and Standards (now Curriculum and Quality) Committee. The next step is to provide Governors with more detail.

PG left the meeting at 7:08pm.

11. Other Urgent Business

No matters were raised under this item.

12. CONFIDENTIAL – Meeting Review and Summary

The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next Corporation Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on 1 April 2025 at 4:00pm

All formal business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 7:17pm

Signed Date
(Chair)