

CURRICULUM AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

CONFIRMED MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2025 AT 4:00PM CITY COLLEGE NORWICH, THETFORD BOARDROOM

Present:

Jock Downie	JD	Chair
Jerry White	JW	Governor and Principal
Lucy Sydney	LSy	Governor
Lacey Ross	LR	Student Governor, SU President (<i>to 6:31pm</i>)
Freddie Simpson	FS	Student Governor (<i>remote, via Teams from 4:54pm to 6:38pm</i>)

Attendees:

Ed Rose	ER	Assistant Principal
Helen Richardson-Hulme	HRH	Assistant Principal (<i>until 4:45pm</i>)
Jodie Mitchell	JM	Director of Governance and Legal
Marcus Bailey	MB	Governor (<i>remote, via Teams</i>)
Seb Gasse	SG	Vice Principal
Claire Harber	CH	Governance and Legal Officer

Apologies:

Laura Stewart	LS	Staff Governor
Philip Pearce	PP	Governor

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted as above.

2. Declaration of Conflicts

No declarations were made.

3. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting Held on 30 September 2025

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2025 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. Matters Arising

C&Q 4 Action 10: Consider where to include SEND support within the Strategic Risks (JW). *It was noted that publication of the SEND White Paper has been delayed. It was agreed that the action be closed, and the team keep a watching brief and revisit when the new White Paper is released and its implications are clear. It was also noted that the risk has been largely superseded by the transformation work.* ACTION CLOSED.

C&Q 1 Action 1: ACTION COMPLETE

C&Q 1 Action 2: ACTION COMPLETE

C&Q 1 Action 3: ACTION COMPLETE

C&Q 1 Action 4: ACTION COMPLETE

5. Wellbeing and Inclusion Report

The Wellbeing and Inclusion Report was circulated prior to the meeting.

Responses to actions arising from the recent Governor safeguarding training were highlighted and discussed as follows:

- The policies in which AI features are included in the report.
- How the College is meeting the filtering and monitoring standards are included in appendix 5.
 - In relation to the filtering and monitoring standards, it was noted that the Chair of the Corporation is the linked Governor for safeguarding. It was further noted that the registry is overseen by a Designated Safeguarding Lead, and the Director of IT oversees IT in this regard.
- The action to link Prevent Risk Assessment work to overall College risk within the risk register is complete.
- The question regarding whether the Code of Conduct can include intentional spread of misinformation by staff will be considered during the next review of the code. It was noted that there is already wording to remind staff of professional conduct when speaking with students.

The following points were highlighted from the report:

- There have been 32/33 reports of bullying, the majority of which occurred externally and are historic.
- Operation Encompass referrals are a key focus for the College and assist in identifying vulnerable students to enable proactive check-ins with those students.

6. SEND Report

The SEND Report was circulated prior to the meeting. The paper was summarised, and the following points were noted:

- There have been changes in relation to exam access arrangements evidence requirements which has had a big impact on the exams team and teachers and the risks of this impact are being monitored.
- The total number of high needs students have increased by around a third this year.
 - Due to the recruitment freeze, the high needs team of 167 FTE is reduced by 21 FTE so maintaining sufficient support is a challenge.
 - Funding relies on support being provided.
 - The College is attempting to recruit apprentices and have recruited agency staff to enable sufficient support to be maintained.
- Group based off-course support is being considered as part of the Transformation Plan.

Some Governors present reported that staff have approached them with concerns in relation to the re-allocation of in-class support in Level 3. It was agreed that the Governors would provide details to HRH and that HRH would follow up with those staff members.

ACTION 1: Provide details to HRH in relation to the concerns raised with them connected to the re-allocation of in-class support in Level 3 (JD/LR).

ACTION 2: Follow up queries concerns raised to Governors in relation to the re-allocation of in-class support in Level 3 (HRH).

7. CONFIDENTIAL – Risk Register Review

The Risk Register Review was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- The colour coding now reflects risk tolerance.
- The Business Committee asked for the diagram to be updated to be more user-friendly for those with colour blindness and this has been addressed.
- More information has been included on how the staff shortage risk is being mitigated.

8. CONFIDENTIAL – Strategic Target Monitoring

The Strategic Target Monitoring paper was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Committee noted the report.

8.1 College Data Dashboard

The Data Dashboard was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- Descriptions have been expanded to make entries clearer for Governors.
- National averages have been included in the notes section.
- The retention position is positive compared to last year, but still a way from 4% target.
- Attendance rates are considered in more depth within the Quality, Curriculum and TLA Report.

HRH left the meeting at 4:45pm.

9. College Self-Assessment Report

The College Self-Assessment Report was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- The College Self-Assessment Review is completed annually and will go to Board for consideration. Although it is not mandatory, it is a key element of quality assurance.
- The SAR was presented to the Central Leadership Team last week with the Chair of the Corporation present.
- Although good teaching, learning and quality have been recognised and confirmed through Ofsted visits, a key challenge is that achievement data does not line up well against national benchmarks.
- The Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) includes raising achievements and ensuring 'value added' measures at Level 3 are increased.

The Committee questioned whether the 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating for high needs can be maintained given the significant increase in demand. It was recognised that this will be a challenge, but the team are working hard to maintain the level of quality.

FS joined the meeting at 4:54pm.

It was agreed that time scales would be added to QIPs before presenting to Board. It was noted that QIPs in relation to retention gaps (QIP 3) and progression (QIP 6) are longer term goals.

ACTION 3: Add timescales to the QIPs before presenting the SAR to Board (SG).

The Committee determined to recommend the College Self-Assessment Report to the Board for approval with the addition of timescales to the QIPs.

10. Students' Union and Student Voice Update

The Students' Union and Student Voice Update was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- There has been positive student engagement in relation to the upcoming Culture Day.
- Seven Executive Officers have now been appointed to the Students' Union.
- There has been positive engagement with the induction and enrolment survey, and the results are in the appendices. Results are lower than last year overall and at Ipswich

Road. Paston has seen a significant decline in scores (although the scores are still good), but Easton has improved.

Governors expressed concern over the Paston scores. It was noted that there have been some issues that have affected staff morale at Paston, which are being addressed via Heads of Areas. It is unclear at this stage whether this is a contributing factor to the declining scores. The Committee asked for a dive into issues at Paston to be presented at the next meeting.

ACTION 4: Investigate issues at Paston College and report to the next C&Q meeting (SG).

The following further action was requested:

ACTION 5: Ensure when presenting student survey results that the full questions are visible and streamline results to make them more user-friendly (SG).

It was reported that the Student Liaison Officer is working with stakeholders to support young carers, and the first Young Carers Group meeting is scheduled later this month. The Committee asked whether there has been consideration to make the meetings hybrid for greater inclusivity and to make them more accessible for HE students.

ACTION 6: Discuss with the Student Liaison Officer the feasibility of making the Young Carers Group meetings hybrid (LR).

The meeting took a break at 5:20pm and reconvened at 5:30pm.

11. Quality, Curriculum and TLA Report (including Curriculum Strategy)

The Quality, Curriculum and TLA Report (including Curriculum Strategy) was circulated prior to the meeting.

The following points were highlighted:

- Attendance rates have been very good so far this year but are slightly down compared to this time last year. Enhanced support action plans and positive engagement policies have been implemented to support and monitor student attendance and behaviour.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of students studying Maths and English GCSEs and understaffing is being addressed by a recruitment drive and the use of agency staff. These high numbers present a challenge for the exams process, and the exams team are beginning to prepare for this.
- A new policy has been introduced to involve parents and carers earlier when intervention is required, balancing the need for student independence with appropriate support, and adapting to changing expectations among parents. This was well received by the FE Commissioner team at the recent CEFSS visit.

There was a discussion around retention after the Committee were informed that the College does not meet national achievement rates and that retention rates are a contributing factor. As well as focusing on improving internal progression, the College has put students on two-year programmes (instead of 1+1-year programmes) to surface retention issues and help prevent contributing to the Norfolk Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) figures. It was reported that due to sharper focus on retention, there has been some improvement on retention for two-year programmes.

The following actions were agreed:

ACTION 7: Include colour codes on the score card in the next report (SG).

ACTION 8: Include Power BI report on progression in next update (SG).

12. How Our Curriculum Meets Local and National Needs

The paper for this item was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were made:

- The curriculum strategy is being reviewed to ensure alignment with local, regional, and national policies, including the recently published curriculum and assessment review and the implications of the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper.
- Curriculum managers use labour market information and policy in the curriculum planning process and present their plans via Intent presentations. There are scrutinised by the management team to ensure relevance and responsiveness.
- The Accountability Agreement includes a section on how the College plans to meet local and national needs.

The Committee asked whether there is conflict between national and regional needs. It was noted that there is challenge when there is a different emphasis locally than nationally, and where popular courses do not align to where there are wider skills shortages.

The Committee asked whether these principles also apply to HE and were informed that there is ongoing work on HE strategy as part of the wider curriculum strategy review. There is a plan for the College to be more employer focussed, which is in line with the focus on Level 4 and Level 5 within the Post-16 White Paper. The Committee requested that a summary of the implications of the Post-16 White Paper and Curriculum and Assessment Review be presented to Governors, and it was agreed that an appropriate method of relaying this information will be decided by the senior team.

ACTION 9: Present the implications to the College of the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper and Curriculum and Assessment Review in a way deemed appropriate by SMT (JW).

13. Apprenticeships Report

The Apprenticeship Report was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- 2024/25 saw a significant improvement in performance of apprenticeships compared to the previous year.
- Accountability measures are within the required tolerances.
- Adult, HE and employer engagement colleagues are being consulted as part of the apprenticeship planning cycle this year to enable multiple needs to be met and to ensure plans are financially robust.
- A post FE Commissioner visit action plan prepared based on FEC recommendations is included in the paper outlining progress made against each recommendation for assurance.
- There has been improvement in the financial outturn of apprenticeships and performance in apprenticeships since this time last year.

LR left the meeting at 6:31pm.

The Committee requested a report on the lessons learned from the FE Commissioner Apprenticeship visit and a dive into reasons for delay in taking action following the visit. Governors also asked that the action plan to be presented at future meetings so that the Committee can be assured that risks are being managed and that improvements are being made.

ACTION 10: Prepare report for C&Q on lessons learned from the FEC apprenticeship visit and a dive into reasons for delay in taking action following the visit (ER).

ACTION 11: Add FEC Apprenticeship Visit – Lessons Learned to the agenda of the next C&Q meeting (CH).

ACTION 12: Include the FEC Apprenticeship Visit Action Plan in future Apprenticeship Reports to C&Q (ER).

14. Employer Engagement

The Employer Engagement paper, including the Employer Engagement Strategy, was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- Work to update the Customer Relationship Management system to align with the system in place for the industry placement team is ongoing and expected to be ready for implementation early next year.
- Feedback from the Technical Construction Stakeholder Engagement Group meeting has been included in the paper.

FS left the meeting at 6:38pm.

The Employer Engagement Strategy section was taken as read. It was confirmed that the strategy aligns with the sectors prioritised in the Curriculum Strategy. Employers are being consulted on the strategy and initial feedback has been good. It was noted that there is a point within the Governance Improvement Plan to consider ways in which Governors can support the College with stakeholder and employer engagement. It was agreed that JW would engage with ER to explore ideas.

ACTION 13: Engage with ER to explore ways in which Governors can support the College in strengthening stakeholder and employer engagement (JW).

15. Other Urgent Business

15.1 Nursery

A verbal update was provided on the nursery as follows:

- The nursery is subject to separate Ofsted inspections and received a rating of 'Good' in last years inspection.
- The nursery meets required staffing ratios, has appropriate curriculum and safeguarding measures in place, and is undergoing a self-assessment in line with its inspection framework.
- The strategic direction of the nursery has recently been reviewed and strengthened.
- The Proprietor of the nursery is the Principal, and the managers of the nursery are answerable to the Principal or the Senior Management Team; it does not have its own governance.

An attendee declared that their child attends the nursery. No concerns were raised.

ACTION 14: Add nursery declaration to the Register of Interests (CH)

It was agreed that nursery safeguarding and safe staffing level updates be included in the regular safeguarding report (for assurance, including where there is a zero return), with other significant nursery developments to be included in the Quality Reports. An annual self-assessment report will be presented to the Committee, and any financial matters related to the nursery are to be addressed by the Business Committee.

ACTION 15: Update the Schedule of Business to reflect reporting on the nursery (CH/JM).

It was also agreed to ensure that the nursery is adequately reflected within reputational risk on the risk register.

ACTION 16: Ensure that nursery risks are appropriately reflected within reputational risk on the risk register (JW).

15.2 Meeting Time Extension

It was agreed that Curriculum and Quality Committee meetings would be extended by 30 minutes to act as a buffer for when meetings run over schedule.

ACTION 17: Extend Curriculum and Quality Committee meeting time by 30 minutes (CH).

16. Meeting Review and Summary

The following points were made:

- The AI Assistant on the board portal did not work for one Governor when reviewing papers.
- Governors are happy for report authors to talk less about their papers and respond more to questions.

17. Date of Next Meeting

The next Curriculum and Quality Committee Meeting is scheduled to take place on 20 January 2026 at 4:00pm.

All formal business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 6:57pm.

Signed Date
(Chair)