

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

CONFIRMED MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2025 AT 4:00PM THETFORD BOARDROOM, CITY COLLEGE NORWICH

Present:

Noel Bartram	NB	Chair
Andrew Barnes	AB	Governor (<i>from 4:13pm</i>)
Jerry White	JW	Principal
Joe McNeill	JMc	Governor
Freddie Simpson	FS	Student Governor, SU President (<i>remote via Teams</i>)
Shirley Barker	SB	Staff Governor

Attendees:

Jen Eves	JE	Chief Operating Officer (<i>remote via Teams, from 4:32pm</i>)
Jodie Mitchell	JM	Director of Governance and Legal
Martin Colbourne	MC	Deputy CEO
Seb Gasse	SG	Vice Principal
Claire Harber	CH	Governance and Legal Officer, Minutes
Matt Poll	MP	Director of Estates and Facilities (<i>until 5:21pm</i>)
Nick Sainton-Clark	NS-C	Health & Safety Manager (<i>until 4:32pm</i>)

Apologies:

Hazel Thomas	HT	Student Governor
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1. Area Updates

1.1 Health and Safety Update

The Health and Safety Update was circulated prior to the meeting.

In response to Bus 1 Action 1 (alternative ways to report Inclusive Learning Health and Safety incidents to prevent clogging up the accident system), it was reported that the use of C-POMS has been considered, and that more users can be added without additional cost. The decision whether to go ahead with that now needs to be made. It was agreed that the Business Committee would be kept updated.

ACTION 1: Update Business Committee on how reporting for Inclusive Learning Health and Safety incidents will be carried out going forward.

In response to Bus 1 Action 4 (issues outstanding with the new fire marshal process), it was reported that analysis on evacuations carried out during drills indicate that the system is working well at Easton and Paston but there are higher failure rates (i.e. less marshals than sweep zones) at Norwich. The Committee were informed that the Fire Marshal Training compliance is 99.7%.

Updates were given regarding the actions resulting from the insurance tendering process as follows:

- The College will be installing a fire suppression system in the Wroxham Building kitchen and is considering the same in two additional kitchens.
- More information is being provided to contractors on what is expected from them in relation to fire detection and fire stopping.

- As part of the rear corridor capital works, fire doors and new fire detection systems are being installed.
- Some Easton residential blocks need attention and there may be a need to close one of the blocks whilst work is being carried out.

AB joined the meeting at 4:13pm.

Additional updates were provided to the Committee including the following:

- A new reporting system is in place for Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) which will help to identify where assistance is needed. More staff have been trained to use evacuation chairs, and the next step is to train third parties such as Dardan to enable cover for events where the College would not necessarily know in advance where attendees need assistance.
- Dust monitoring tests were carried out earlier in the year. Easton workshop levels were good but higher levels were found in construction areas during certain tasks. Further monitoring is being done and remedials are being put in place.
- There has been an increase in reports of violence and aggression. Numbers are being monitored to ascertain whether this is a trend. The Safeguarding Team are working with the local constabulary and the young people involved.

A brief update was given on accidents and incidents, including in relation to Easton equine.

MP left the meeting at 4:27pm.

The Committee were informed that there has been an increase in work placement requests since September which is causing pressure on the Health and Safety process. A brief discussion took place on potential solutions and whether more resource was needed or whether there is a way to improve efficiency.

ACTION 2: Look at options to make work placement Health and Safety requests more streamlined, finding out how other colleges are dealing with similar issues.

MP rejoined the meeting at 4:31pm.

ACTION 3: If it is decided not to go ahead with the fire suppression systems in the additional areas, report this to the Business Committee along with reasons for the decision.

NS-C left the meeting, and JE joined the meeting at 4:32pm.

1.2 Facilities and Estates Update

The Facilities and Estates Update was circulated prior to the meeting.

MP reported a busy quarter with operational and major project work. Many of the major projects have ended with the library and Sports Centre refits and flat roof replacement works now complete. The Construction Skills Centre had its official opening last week which went well, and Governors provided positive feedback on the reception at Debut.

The following updates were included:

- Compliance remedials – key priorities include Easton accommodation and fire risk assessment work.

- A restructure of the Estates team is underway; there have been some promotions, and a new role has been created. The team have some vacancies on hold.
- Work is underway to improve site security. At Ipswich Road, security patrols have begun; smaller gates have been closed, and buildings are locked earlier. Similar measures will be rolled out at Easton and Paston.
- The Estates team are liaising with Dardan regarding out of hours CCTV monitoring.
- The Norwich rear corridor project is progressing well and within budget, and the area is expected to be re-opened in a few weeks. Window replacements will begin during the summer.

Items 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 were taken here.

1.2.1 Building Condition

The Building Condition Report was circulated prior to the meeting.

The capital life cycle replacement list was discussed. The following points were highlighted:

- The capital life cycle replacement list was prepared using the 2018 DFE Conditions survey. A new DFE survey is due in the next 3-6 months.
- Statutory compliance inspection actions are included in the list.
- Works have been given a high, medium or low priority grading.
- High priority items total £1.1m and are generally statutory requirements or business critical needs.

The Committee expressed concern over the cost of required work and a discussion around funding ensued. It was reported that there is c.£300m funding for the sector of which the College share is expected to be c.£1.5-2m for spend between April 2025 and March 2027. It is hoped that there will be an ongoing annual allocation, but there is no certainty at present. It was recognised that without funding regularity, it is difficult to plan.

ACTION 4: Include filters on the CAPEX replacement list for statutory and climate action plan priorities.

MP left the meeting at 5:21pm.

The meeting took a break at 5:21pm and reconvened at 5:25pm.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted as above.

3. Declarations of Conflict

No declarations were made.

4. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting Held on 28 January 2025

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2025 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

5. CONFIDENTIAL - Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Meeting Held on 28 January 2025

The unconfirmed confidential minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2025 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

6. **Matters arising**

2023/24 Bus 4 Action 6: JW and Tom Smith to produce and share with Governor pre-recorded webinar on 4cast progress before the next Business Committee meeting on 7 May 2024. *This will be built into communications to the Board going forward.* ACTION COMPLETE.

Bus 1 Action 1: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 1 Action 4: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 3 Action 1: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 3 Action 2: Add phishing awareness points to the weekly newsletter once a month, to include 'slow down' messaging. *JW reported that messaging has been included in some recent communications.* ACTION COMPLETE.

Bus 3 Action 3: Put AI on the agenda for one of the forthcoming Strategy Days. *Due to more pressing matters and that the recent Staff Development Day had an AI theme, it was decided to close this action. The Committee were informed that JE will continue with the AI Strategy along with Nick Kershaw and updates will be reported via IT Updates.* ACTION CLOSED.

Bus 3 Action 4: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 3 Action 5: Reach out to colleagues in the sector to gather information on the consequences of cyberattacks. *JW has contacted an organisation who suffered a cyber-attack - their financial loss was less than £1m and the nature of loss was mainly the cost of hiring specialists to recover data and loss of business during down time.* ACTION COMPLETE.

Bus 3 Action 6: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 3 Action 7: Request data on the number of staff accessing the Wellbeing area of College Rewards. ACTION ONGOING (Due: May 2025)

Bus 3 Action 8: Update the budget fields on the Annual Report ready for the February Board meeting. *It was agreed that this would be checked and updated.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: February 2025).

Bus 3 Action 9: JW to research the statement in the AoC letter that 'many Colleges have been able to exceed the AoC 2.5% pay award recommendation' to understand how other institutions are managing this. *JW reported that the AoC confirmed that a 2.5% uplift was the norm. A few institutions managed more, but a lot uplifted by less. It was therefore confirmed that CCN is in line with the sector regarding this matter.* ACTION COMPLETE.

Bus 3 Action 10: ACTION CLOSED.

Bus 3 Action 11: Look at making manager training mandatory. *This has been picked up in the People Strategy. JE gave an update on planned manager training initiatives.* ACTION COMPLETE.

Bus 3 Action 12: An Insurance Working Group to include NB, AB and MC to be set up to review College insurance issues. *An insurance summary paper is going to Board in April.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: March 2025)

7. **CONFIDENTIAL – Finance Update**

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

7.1 CONFIDENTIAL – Management Accounts and Debtors Report

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

7.2 CONFIDENTIAL – Grounds Maintenance Contract Extension

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

7.3 CONFIDENTIAL – Catering Contract Extension

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

7.4 CONFIDENTIAL – Cleaning Tender Update

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

7.5 CONFIDENTIAL – Minibus Tender

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

8. Fees Policy

The Fees Policy was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Committee were informed that at a 5% inflationary increase is proposed where possible, largely driven by increased staff costs. Governors were referred to the paper for a more in-depth rationale.

It was reported that, a greater increase is proposed for residential fees to bring the College more in line with what other colleges are charging. In addition, from market research it was found that the College's food allowance for FE students is already generous, so there will be no increase for 2025-26. Nursery fees were also checked against the market and are on par.

The Committee queried the low number of international students and whether the College could seek to increase the number to boost income. The Committee were informed that the College is required to set and publish fees for international students but there is a limited number of visas that the College can secure under its sponsorship licence. In addition, there are costs associated with arranging visas and there would be additional administration and marketing costs if the College was to attempt to increase numbers. It was noted that international students are not a strategic priority.

The Committee asked that the introduction be updated in relation to wage inflation and nationally prescribed inflation numbers and to ensure that it is made clear that the Principal approves any apprenticeship fee changes.

The Business Committee determined to recommend to the Board to approve the Fees Policy subject to amendments requested.

9. Gender Pay Gap Report

The Gender Pay Gap Report was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Committee were reminded that at the February 2025 meeting, the Board delegated authority to approve the Gender Pay Gap Report to the Business Committee as the submission deadline is prior to the next Board meeting.

JE provided summary of the report.

The Business Committee approved the Gender Pay Gap Report, subject to minor amendment.

10. CONFIDENTIAL - Strategic Target Monitoring

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

10.1 CONFIDENTIAL - Proposed Accountability Agreement Strategic Targets for 2025/26

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

11. Risk Register Review

The Risk Register Review was circulated prior to the meeting.

An update was provided as follows:

- The Risk Register has been populated with all risks.
- The Audit and Risk Committee has seen the Risk Register.
- A Risk Register Review will be presented to the Business Committee as a standing item.
- Risks will be considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at every meeting and by the Board annually.

The Committee noted the report and stressed that Governors expect to see risk movement tracked.

12. CONFIDENTIAL - Union Colleagues Meeting Minutes

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

13. CONFIDENTIAL - Health and Safety Group Minutes

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

14. CONFIDENTIAL - Other Urgent Business

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

15. CONFIDENTIAL - Meeting Review and Summary

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

16. Date of Next Meeting

The next Business Committee Meeting is scheduled to take place on 6 May 2025 at 4:00pm.

All formal business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 6:48pm.

Signed Date
(Chair)