

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

CONFIRMED MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2025 AT 4:00PM CITY COLLEGE NORWICH, THETFORD BOARDROOM

Present:

Noel Bartram	NB	Chair
Andrew Barnes	AB	Governor
Jerry White	JW	Principal
Joe McNeill	JMc	Governor
Freddie Simpson	FS	Student Governor, SU President (<i>until 6:55pm</i>)
Hazel Thomas	HT	Student Governor (<i>remote, via Teams</i>)
Shirley Barker	SB	Staff Governor (<i>remote, via Teams until 6:20pm</i>)

Attendees:

Jen Eves	JE	Chief Operating Officer
Jodie Mitchell	JM	Director of Governance and Legal (<i>remote, via Teams</i>)
Martin Colbourne	MC	Deputy CEO
Matt Poll	MP	Director of Estates and Facilities (<i>until 5:13pm</i>)
Nick Sainton-Clark	NS-C	Health & Safety Manager (<i>until 4:33pm</i>)
Phil Gormley	PG	Governor
Seb Gasse	SG	Vice Principal
Claire Harber	CH	Governance and Legal Officer

The meeting commenced at 4:04pm.

1. Area Updates

1.1 Health and Safety Update

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

Updates in relation Bus 4 Actions 1, 2 and 3 were provided as set out in the paper.

SG joined the meeting at 4:09pm.

The following points were highlighted:

- Progress has been made in relation to Fire Risk Assessment actions.
- Fire Risk Assessments have been carried out at Easton and Paston.
- Raynes Hall residence at Easton is being mothballed due to being in poor condition and provision being adequately met by Hudson, Alston and Bradley Halls (it was confirmed that Raynes Hall will still be maintained).
- Work is underway to ensure PEEP requirements are identified during the enrolment process.
- An air purifier is due to be installed in the Easton Construction office due to high levels of dust being found during recent testing. Occupation Health surveillance is being considered.

The Committee were informed that demand for work placement assessments has been significant this year compared to previous years and there are capacity concerns. It was highlighted that software needs improvement and that the team are in contact with other educational establishments to see how demand is managed across the sector. It was confirmed that although the employer is liable for incidents at a work placement, the College ensures that employers have employers' liability insurance. The Committee

asked whether the College has insurance to cover work placements, and it was confirmed that insurance is in place.

Fire suppression system installation was discussed. The Committee expressed that the system should be put in place if deemed necessary as a result of fire risk assessments.

The Committee were informed that there have been four major health and safety incidents since the last update, two of which were heart attacks. A review of defibrillator access at Easton has since been carried out. The Committee asked whether there should be a wider review, and it was confirmed that this is work in progress.

ACTION 1: Update on defibrillator reviews (NS-C).

The low level of incidents within the engineering department was queried. The Committee were informed that there is ongoing monitoring to ensure all incidents are being captured. It was agreed that this would be reported within the next update.

ACTION 2: Include information from the monitoring of health and safety incidents within the engineering department in the next update (NS-C).

It was noted that there are no fire drills planned for the summer term. The Committee queried whether this is contrary to best practice and were informed that the high number of exams creates an issue and, in some buildings, there are exams every day. The Committee asked for clarification on whether the guidance states termly drills are advisory or mandatory.

ACTION 3: Report to the Committee on whether guidance states that termly fire drills are advisory or mandatory and provide narrative on the reasons for drills not being carried out (NS-C).

NS-C left the meeting at 4:33pm.

1.2 Estates and Facilities Update

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

The Committee clarified what they would like to see in relation to Bus 4 Action 4.

The Committee queried the lift works and why it has taken so long. It was explained that there was no maintenance programme due to lack of funding. The most unreliable lifts are now being updated but there is further work required. It was confirmed that this was highlighted to the Education Select Committee as an example of some of the problems facing the sector. Access requirements were raised as a concern by the Committee and recent issues in relation to access were reported. It was expressed that lift works should be a priority.

The following points were highlighted from the report:

- The Norwich Building rear corridor works are nearing final stages and the project is due to be completed in September.
- The Government have allocated £302m to the sector for condition works. £2.35m of this funding has been allocated to the College with a three-year spending period.
- Works planned for the summer include a new boiler and fire doors in Easton residences. Norwich Building toilets and Creative Arts lift works are also planned. It was confirmed that statutory compliance works are being prioritised.

- The 5-yearly DfE conditions survey is due to be carried out this year.
- The team are responding to c.600 TopDesk tickets a month College-wide. Although the team are trying to reduce open calls over each month, this is a challenge, and analysis is being done to identify continual issues.
- Vacancies within the team are being held due to cost saving.
- Work on the College Estates Strategy is kicking off this week. The strategy will include commercialisation.
- The Sustainability Working Group is up and running.
- Utilities consumption data has been received, and statistics will be included in the next update.

It was noted that Debut is not accessible and the Committee asked for rectification to be investigated.

ACTION 4: Investigate remedials to make Debut accessible (MP).

The rest of the conversation was confidential and is recorded in the confidential minutes.

MP left the meeting at 5:13pm.

2. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

3. Declarations of Conflicts

No declarations were made.

4. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 May 2025

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2025 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

5. Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 May 2025

The unconfirmed confidential minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 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

Bus 4 Action 1: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 4 Action 2: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 4 Action 3: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 4 Action 4: Include filters on the CAPEX replacement list for statutory and climate action plan priorities (MP). *MP asked the Committee to clarify the action.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: June 2025).

Bus 5 Action 1: Include the RAG progress relating to the DFE Digital Standards within the next IT update (NK). ACTION ONGOING (Due: October 2025).

Bus 5 Action 2: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 5 Action 3: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 5 Action 4: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 5 Action 5: Share Easton & Otley College Strategy with Business Committee (JW). ACTION ONGOING (Due: June 2025).

Bus 5 Action 6: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 5 Action 7: Ensure weaknesses identified in relation to Churchill are addressed within the contract management process (MC). ACTION ONGOING (Due: June 2025).

Bus 5 Action 8: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 5 Action 9: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 5 Action 10: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 5 Action 11: The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes.

7. Strategic Target Monitoring for 2024/25

No papers were circulated for this item. The Committee were informed that a Strategic Target Monitoring for 2024/25 paper has been to the Curriculum and Quality Committee and will go to Board for consideration on 1 July 2025.

8. Accountability Agreement including Strategic Targets for 2025/26

No papers were circulated for this item. The Committee were informed that a draft of the Accountability Agreement including Strategic Targets for 2025/26 has been to the Curriculum and Quality Committee and will go to Board for consideration and approval on 1 July 2025. The Committee asked for the final version to be presented back to the Committee at the next meeting.

ACTION 6: Add Accountability Agreement including Strategic Targets for 2025/26 to the Business agenda for October 2025 (JM/JW/CH).

9. CONFIDENTIAL – Finance Update

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

9.1 CONFIDENTIAL – Emerging Picture

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

9.2 CONFIDENTIAL – College Turnaround and Long-Term Plan

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

9.3 CONFIDENTIAL – Income Generation Update

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

9.4 CONFIDENTIAL – Budget 2025/26

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

9.5 CONFIDENTIAL – Funding Update

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

9.6 College Financial Handbook

The College Financial Handbook report and self-assessment along with the draft Reserves Policy were circulated prior to the meeting.

After discussion around some of the points within the Reserves Policy, the Committee determined to recommend the Reserves Policy to the Board for approval subject to the following amendment:

- In paragraph 6.3, the third bullet should read, 'this is *currently* £1m for IT...'

The Committee were informed that this the College Financial Handbook is used by both the auditors and DfE and that there is currently particular focus on novel, contentious and repercussive transactions and severance payments. It was confirmed that the College has not breached any severance limits during 2024/25. The Committee noted the College Financial Handbook compliance self-assessment.

9.7 FE Commissioner – Financial Benchmarks

The FE Commissioner – Financial Benchmarks report was circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee noted the report and the College's position against the benchmarks.

FS left the meeting at 6:55pm.

10. Draft IAS Audit Plan for 2025/26

The draft IAS Audit Plan for 2025/26 was circulated prior to the meeting.

It was confirmed that the audit plan was considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at their meeting yesterday and that it is due to be presented to Board for approval on 1 July. The Committee were asked for their view on the content and cost. It was confirmed that internal and external benchmarks have been consulted in relation to the fees and the fees are reasonable. The high inflation figures were queried, and it was confirmed that this would be checked against what the College did last year.

ACTION 8: Check the inflationary uplift on internal audit costs from 2023/24 to 2024/25 (MC).

The Committee queried why marketing is included within the audit plan and it was agreed that this would be investigated.

ACTION 9: Investigate why marketing is included within the internal audit plan for 2025/26 (MC/JW).

The Committee determined to recommend that Board approve the draft IAS Audit Plan for 2025/26.

11. Governance Matters

11.1 Annual Review of Committee Terms of Reference

The papers in relation to the annual review of Committee Terms of Reference were circulated prior to the meeting.

The Committee were reminded that a full review of the Terms of Reference was carried out last year and approved by Board in July 2024 and that this year's changes are mainly in relation to formatting.

It was expressed that the Terms of Reference should include more focus on workforce issues. It was agreed that JM would enhance the wording around workforce and send to PG for agreement. It was noted that many colleges have a separate People Committee.

Subject to amendments made in relation to the wording around monitoring workforce strategy and issues, the Committee determined to recommend the Terms of Reference for Board approval.

The Committee noted the mapping document demonstrating how the Committee has met its obligations throughout the year. A brief discussion took place on pay scales, job

families, payline and terms and conditions of employment and it was noted that these areas will be priority once the new Director of People is onboard.

11.2 Confirmation of the Chair and Vice Chair for the Committee in 2025/26

The Committee determined to recommend that the Board approve the continuation of Noel Bartram as Chair of the Business Committee for 2025/26.

Governors were informed that the role of Vice Chair of the Business Committee is currently vacant and were invited to express an interest in the appointment.

12. Risk Register Review

No papers were circulated for this item. It was confirmed that a full review will be presented to Board for consideration on 1 July 2025.

13. CONFIDENTIAL – Union Colleagues Meeting Minutes

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

14. CONFIDENTIAL – Health and Safety Group Minutes

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

15. Other Urgent Business

No matters were raised under this item.

16. CONFIDENTIAL - Meeting Review and Summary

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

17. Date of Next Meeting

Subject to Board approval of the 2025/26 meeting calendar, the next Business Committee Meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 7 October 2025 at 4:00pm.

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

Signed Date
(Chair)