

## BUSINESS COMMITTEE

### CONFIRMED MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2025 AT 4:00PM CITY COLLEGE NORWICH, THETFORD BOARDROOM

#### Present:

Noel Bartram	NB	Chair
Jerry White	JW	Principal
Joe McNeill	JMc	Governor
Phil Gormley	PG	Governor ( <i>remote, via Teams</i> )
Sarah Appleton	SA	Governor ( <i>remote, via Teams</i> )
Shirley Barker	SB	Staff Governor ( <i>until 6:22pm</i> )
Lacey Ross	LR	Student Governor, SU President ( <i>remote, via Teams until 4:51pm</i> )

#### Attendees:

Christopher Caddamy	CC	Assistant Principal
Jen Eves	JE	Chief Operating Officer
Jodie Mitchell	JM	Director of Governance and Legal
Marcus Bailey	MB	Governor ( <i>remote, via Teams</i> )
Martin Colbourne	MC	Deputy CEO
Matt Poll	MP	Director of Estates and Facilities ( <i>until 4:46pm</i> )
Sarah Tate	ST	Director of People
Seb Gasse	SG	Vice Principal
Claire Harber	CH	Governance and Legal Officer

#### Apologies:

Lillian Rackham	LRa	Student Governor
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## 1. Area Updates

### 1.1 IT Update

The IT Update was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. The following points were highlighted:

- Key achievements for October include the completion of the workstation deployment and a new progressions system.
- Cyber security is aligning with standards.
- Work is continuing on the AI framework.

The seamless deployment of the new workstations was noted, and thanks was extended to the Director of IT and the IT team.

The Committee noted the update.

### 1.2 HR Update

#### 1.2.1 Annual HR Report

The Annual HR Report was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. The following points were made:

- Sickness levels are high and are currently at 14 days per FTE. There is an aim to reduce this to 11 days by the end of the year (the national average was cited at 9.4 days).
- A high proportion of absences are due to mental health.

- The College is focussing on wellbeing initiatives to improve the wellbeing of staff and decrease sickness rates.
- Improvement is required in relation to the completion of probation paperwork and management training and support.

The Committee asked whether sickness is being linked to capability procedures and were informed that HR Business Partners are investigating long term sicknesses to understand how they might be linked to capability.

The Committee raised concerns about staff taking frequent short-term sickness absences. It was noted that the new Absence Support Meeting (ASM) process is assisting managers in managing these situations and supporting staff.

It was stressed that reducing sickness rates is a key focus for the HR team.

**ACTION 1: Investigate how the law changes due to come into force next year in relation to SSP might affect the college (ST).**

### 1.2.2 Workforce Strategy Progress Update

The People Strategy Progress Update was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. The following points were highlighted:

- There has been significant progress against the strategy.
- There will be a more proactive and data-led approach to business partnering moving forward.
- The wellbeing initiative is underway; funds from the occupational health budget have been ringfenced to enable a more proactive approach.
- Staff forums have been re-established; the first round have taken place and have been a success.
- There has been greater focus on staff communications after the summer survey results showed that improvement was required in this area.
- Priorities for next year include payline and transformation work.

The Committee expressed that it is important for the College to understand people issues and the reasons for difficulties in retaining staff. It was noted that part of the retention issue is pay, so the payline work is important to get right. It was reported that exit surveys are currently carried out via an external provider but there is a plan to develop a new in-house process to reduce costs.

### 1.3 Estates and Facilities Update

The Estates and Facilities Update was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. The following points were highlighted:

- An estates strategy meeting was held last week with Governors in attendance.
- Capital works - the Norwich rear corridor work is complete, and lift work is due for completion at the end of December.
- FECCA - of the £2.35m FECCA monies, £800k has been delivered including the replacement of 138 fire doors in residential accommodation.
- Sustainability - the Building Management System is in the process of being upgraded and solar panels are being installed so there will be less reliance on oil.
- The service request portal contract is due to come to an end in June, and the estates team are working with IT to consider a new software solution.

The Committee asked for an update on the Debut accessibility action. It was reported that some accessibility issues have been identified in regard to the outer doors, but a review of the Debut restaurant and café is planned next year and further action in relation to accessibility is on hold pending this review.

### **1.3.1 CONFIDENTIAL – Catering Review**

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

*MP left the meeting at 4:46pm.*

## **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 7 October 2025**

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 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 7 October 2025**

### **5.1 Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Meeting Held on 7 October 2025 (Set 1)**

The unconfirmed confidential minutes (set 1) of the meeting held on 7 October 2025 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

### **5.2 Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Meeting Held on 7 October 2025 (Set 2)**

The unconfirmed confidential minutes (set 2) of the meeting held on 7 October 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 4: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 5 Action 1: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 6 Action 4: ACTION COMPLETE (see item 1.3 for update)

Bus 1 Action 1: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 1 Action 2: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 1 Action 3: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 1 Action 4: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 1 Action 5: The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

Bus 1 Action 6: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 1 Action 7: ACTION COMPLETE

Bus 1 Action 8: ACTION COMPLETE

### **6.1 CONFIDENTIAL – Confidential Matters Arising**

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 2).

*LR left the meeting at 4:51pm.*

## **7. Risk Register Review**

The Risk Register Review was circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the College's approach to risk is still evolving. It was highlighted that the financial position of the College is above the College's risk tolerance and will be discussed in more depth under the Finance

Update. The Committee were informed that all other risks are in line with or within tolerance levels.

## **8. FE Commissioner Report – Havant and South Downs College**

The FE Commissioner report on Havant and South Downs College along with the College's self-assessment was circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair stressed the importance for Governors to read and understand the report.

The Committee expressed that there is need for decisions to be made surrounding the governance of the College's Transformation Programme and for a costed financial sustainability plan. It was noted that there is a responsibility for the Board and its Committees to keep abreast of these issues.

## **9. Strategic Target Monitoring**

The Strategic Target Update was circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee were informed that although the College is on track with key actions, it is too early in the academic year to assess whether targets will be delivered. It was highlighted that transformation and IT are being prioritised.

### **9.1 College Data Dashboard**

This item was not taken. The Committee noted that the College Data Dashboard will be presented directly to Board in December.

## **10. CONFIDENTIAL – Finance Update**

### **10.1 CONFIDENTIAL - Finance Report**

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

### **10.2 CONFIDENTIAL – Covenant Compliance Certificate**

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

### **10.3 Annual Review of Financial Regulations**

The Annual Review of Financial Regulations was circulated prior to the meeting. The Committee were informed that the main change is the threshold for which approval for large contracts and capital cases will be sought from the Business Committee and Board being increased to £250k. It was confirmed that this is in line with the rates for others in the sector.

The Committee determined to recommend the updated Financial Regulations to the Board for approval.

### **10.4 CONFIDENTIAL - Procurement Activity Update**

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

## **11. CONFIDENTIAL – Tennis Centre**

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

## **12. Modern Slavery Statement**

A modern slavery update was circulated prior to the meeting for information. The Committee were informed that the College is contacting its top 30 suppliers for their modern slavery statements for review and will be doing a deeper dive on clothing suppliers. It was noted that there is criteria for modern slavery statements to be required and some suppliers may not meet this criteria and alternative due diligence will therefore be required.

The Committee noted the modern slavery update and that the annual update of the Modern Slavery Statement will be presented directly to Board for approval in December.

**13. CONFIDENTIAL – Insurance Policies Renewal**

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

**14. Union Colleagues Meeting Minutes**

The Union Colleagues Meeting Minutes from 24 September 2025 were circulated prior to the meeting and were taken as read.

The Committee noted the minutes.

**15. Health and Safety Group Minutes**

The Health and Safety Group Minutes from 1 May 2025 were circulated prior to the meeting and were taken as read.

The Committee noted the minutes.

**16. CONFIDENTIAL - Other Urgent Business**

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

**17. Meeting Review and Summary**

No matters were raised under this item.

*SB left the meeting at 6:22pm.*

**18. CONFIDENTIAL**

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 2).

**19. Date of Next Meeting**

The next Business Committee Meeting is scheduled to take place on 27 January 2026 at 4:00pm.

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

Signed ..... Date .....  
(Chair)