

**College of West Anglia  
Minutes of  
The Corporation Board Meeting  
16 October 2024  
8.30am – 11:30am  
U125, University Centre, King's Lynn Campus**

<b>Present</b>	Gill Rejzl	Governor (Chair)	In person
	Chris Ashman	Governor (Vice Chair)	Remote
	Dave Clark	Governor	In person
	Jan Feeny	Governor	In person
	Sam Fletcher	Governor	Remote
	Paul Gibson	Governor (Staff)	In person
	Ray Harding	Governor	In person
	Russel Liddington	Governor	In person
	Alan Measures	Governor	In person
	Fliss Miller	Governor	Remote
	Sally Mitton	Governor	In person
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal/CEO)	In person
	Eva Remeikaite	Governor (Student)	In person
	Chloe Rothwell	Governor (Student)	In person
<b>In Attendance</b>	Kerry Heathcote	Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality	In person
	Paul Harrison	Vice Principal Corporate Services	In person
	Rob Petto	Assistant Principal Funding and Performance	In person
	Paul O'Shea	Assistant Principal Student Services	In person
	Clare Pelling	Head of Learner Experience	In person
	Jules Bridges	Head of Governance	In person

No.	Action
<p><b>1 Apologies</b> Apologies for absence were received from Hein van den Wildenberg, Gemma Standen, Donna Woodruff, Cally Rand, Joe Yexley, and Seb Ivanov.</p>	
<p><b>2 Declarations of Interests</b> Senior Post Holders, the Principal/CEO, Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality, and the Vice Principal Corporate Services, plus the HoG declared their interest with regard to items 5.6 and 17.3.</p>	
<p><b>3 Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 3 July 2024</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2024 were reviewed and <b>agreed</b> as being an accurate record.</p>	
<p><b>4 Matters Arising</b> The progress arising from the previous meeting were summarised in the progress report and all actions reported had either been resolved or, where appropriate, an update had been provided on progress elsewhere on the agenda.</p> <p>The review of the Governors' Code of Conduct has been completed but further edits from the Search and Governance committee are to be included before then sharing with the Corporation at the meeting to be held in December 2024.</p> <p>The moderation of 2023/24 area performance review grades has commenced. Retention outcomes inform this process and the action plan. The outcome and action plan of the investigation into retention will be shared with governors (Performance Review and Quality committee).</p>	<p>HoG</p> <p>DCEO/PC&amp;Q</p>

Now that the final review for the 2023/24 strategic targets has been completed this will be cross referenced and the targets that have transferred into the 2024/25 plan identified.

HoG

All other completed items are to be removed from the report.

HoG

## 5 **Committee Chairs Briefing Items:**

### 1 ***Finance and General Purposes***

The Chair of the committee was absent from the meeting but had provided a written overview of the items considered at the committee meeting held on 2 October 2024 for governors to consider and discuss. Governors asked for acronyms in reports to be written in full and it was noted that the funding workshop delivered by the Assistant Principal Funding and Performance will be rerun for governors.

APF&P

### 2 **Property Steering Group**

The Chair of the committee was absent from the meeting but had provided a written overview of the items considered at the committee meeting held on 2 October 2024 for governors to consider and discuss. It was noted that the £53k to replace/upgrade the LEV in the carpentry workshop is in addition to the capital budget but a necessary requirement to resolve health and safety concerns in this area.

### 3 ***Performance Review and Quality***

The Chair of the committee highlighted that the committee continues to have a focus on apprenticeships as quality processes and practice are yet to positively impact. The college will self-assess this area as 'requires improvement'.

The project last year to improve retention of study programme (16-19) early leavers was successful although there continues to be issues with retention overall in the year.

Adult education numbers have increased, and GCSE maths results are above national average (by 7%). GCSE English results were disappointing at 1% below national rate.

Despite good A level pass rates, retention remains an issue, and the committee will also keep this in focus.

Agenda item 5.4 was deferred until the Chair of the Audit and Risk committee joined the meeting

### 4 ***Audit and Risk***

The Chair of the committee confirmed that Dave Clark had been appointed Vice Chair of the committee.

The committee has asked for an audit of the green skills/capital projects to take place this academic year. This will include an audit of contract retention to provide assurance of document retention and accurate property related record keeping.

The audit of apprenticeship recruitment and employer engagement received a reasonable assurance (amber) opinion. The committee continues to keep apprenticeships on the agenda as a key focus area for improvement.

The 2022/23 ESFA funding audit conducted by PwC has now concluded. The clawback is likely to be c.£8k but we await confirmation from the ESFA.

The committee has approved the new Anti-Bribery and Corruption policy, and the corporation is asked under agenda item 16 to approve the Risk Management Strategy.

The DfE are soon to release guidance for the sector around safe use of generative AI and how to keep data safe. This will inform the college AI strategy. A GDPR compliance audit has been completed confirming the current level (51%) as 'requires improvement'. The aim is to achieve a 'good' level of compliance (80%+) within the academic year and the committee will receive regular updates on progress.

The committee has received assurance that all FOIs and DSARs have been responded to within the required timeframes and the whistleblowing case concluded with the allegations not upheld.

## **5 Search and Governance**

The Chair of the committee confirmed that Gill Rejzl had been appointed the Vice Chair of the committee.

The committee is considering the succession plan for Sam Fletcher whose term of office completes in March 2025, and Chris Ashman, and Alan Measures, whose terms end in December 2025.

It was reported that good progress has been made against the Code of Good Governance Assessment and External Governance Review action plans.

The new governor 'Check in' with the Chair and Governors' 'Check Out' the Chair processes have been completed and were received positively. The committee has discussed the themes arising from the processes and is working to progress the outcomes over the year. Work continues to develop a new governance self-assessment process with the expectation to release in the summer 2025.

It was confirmed that the annual update of the register of interests has been completed. Item 17.2 below in summary shows that board attendance during the 2023/24 academic year has increased by 7% (from 82% to 89%) compared to the previous year, with remote and hybrid meetings enabling governors to still attend but virtually.

Agenda item 5.6 was deferred until the Chair of the Remuneration committee joined the meeting

## **6 Remuneration (appointment of Accounting Officer)**

The Chair of Governors, Gill Rejzl, was appointed Vice Chair of the committee. The Chair of the committee confirmed that the annual appraisals of Senior Post Holders have been considered by the committee. The annual report of the committee is covered under agenda item 17.3 below. Once approved, the report is to be published on the governance pages of the college website.

The committee will look to increase its membership and will raise this for discussion with the Search and Governance committee.

In accordance with the college's accountability agreement, the Corporation must appoint, in writing, a named individual as accounting officer. This should be the Principal/CEO. Accounting officers must be able to assure Parliament, and the public, of high standards of probity in the management of public funds, particularly regularity, propriety, and value for money. The Corporation **approved** the appointment. The Chair of Governors will confirm the appointment in writing.

Chair

After receiving items 5.4 and 5.6 above, the Chair resumed the order of the agenda at item 11

## **6 Principal's Strategy Report**

The Chair commended the work and success of the Graduation Ceremony at the weekend.

The Principal/CEO highlighted that dialogue continues with the DfE who have submitted a business case to ensure that in year growth for FE is prioritised. There are no guarantees, and this is subject to affordability, but any announcement is unlikely before February 2025. There is national growth but significant growth in the East of England and CWA growth is greater than other colleges in the region.

F Miller (remote) and R Harding (in person) joined the meeting at 8.50am

The AoC has now recommended a sector pay award of 2.5% or £750 whichever the greater. If CWA were to meet the recommendation this would add c.£170k pressure on the budget resulting in depleting the budgeted outcome surplus to £100k. The Chair asked if there were any efficiencies that could be made to achieve the additional £170k

pay award increase. The college has contracted ETIO (Tribal) to complete a benchmarking exercise and this may expose some efficiencies but when the Corporation considers a pay award in the New Year then these considerations will be factored in. An early decision on growth funding would be beneficial but as mentioned above this is uncertain and based on affordability. The increase in student numbers will create additional income in year (if growth funding is affordable) and the funding allocation in 2025/26. Demographic growth is also predicted for the next few years and then a downturn in 3-4 years' time.

The original devolution deal has not been supported so Norfolk County Council is proposing a level 2 devolution deal focussing on the Adult Skills Funding (ASF) for 2025/26, but any decision is unlikely to be known until the budget.

S Mitton joined the meeting at 8.55am

The funding bid for £750k for the school of nursing through the Norfolk Investment Fund has not been secured as the funding was linked to the unsuccessful devolution deal. The college continues to seek investment from alternative sources. If external investment cannot be secured, then college reserves will be utilised to complete the project. The Corporation had supported this proposal at the meeting held in July 2024 and there is every confidence that the sum approved to finance the funding gap can be utilised to complete the works.

## **7 Strategic Targets 2023/24 – Final Review**

Progress against all strategic targets have been reviewed to complete the 2023/24 academic year. The Principal/CEO highlighted the positive and negative performance outcomes for governors to note/discuss.

Overall, there are lots of positives in the year but a few negative areas where targets have not been met. Procurement of a new finance system is now finding some traction with a project manager appointed. The benchmarking exercise has been commissioned and sustainable growth will be the focus for the college going forward. NEET activity is increasing but in year funding will be critical to finance the support needed. The reduction of the sickness absence rate is a positive and the HR team clearly have worked hard to make this improvement. A project manager is currently being recruited for the Tower Block Roof and other capital project oversight. In terms of risk, it was noted that there is confidence that the roof will see out another winter.

C Pelling joined the meeting at 9.15am

## **8 Student Governor Presentation**

Student governors delivered a presentation to the Corporation entitled 'Learner Voice' showcasing the Freshers events held at each Campus. Students had also been involved in a Macmillan coffee morning and an update on student council activities were also highlighted.

Governors asked how the increase in student numbers has impacted students at the college. Public transport is a challenge, and this will continue to pose difficulties as the number of students continues to increase. Additional appropriate spaces have been created around campus to provide quiet spaces for students who experience anxiety.

## **9 Hearing the Student Voice 2023/24**

The report summarised the feedback from the last term of the 2023/24 academic year. The biggest achievement last year was the move of the LRC at Cambridge out of the Discovery building and into the Endeavour building to free up space to increase opportunities for social space near the canteen. This has been positively received by students and has greatly improved the experience for students.

The student governor had been involved in the Borough Council's Vision King's Lynn, 'Have Your Say' consultation creating Vox Pops to gather people's views on the town and long-term plan for the community. The consultation took place to further understand local people's aspirations for King's Lynn, following the Government announcement in March

2024 of £20m from the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme for the town. Notably the Borough Council were delighted that so many young people were involved in the project and had the opportunity to share their views.

The Chair commented that more detail about resolving the negative things that students say would be helpful. Governors were interested to know what was behind the negative comments raised around TLA as the survey suggested that 1 in 10 students said that they needed a higher grade, and governors wondered if this was clustered in certain subject areas or if this was across the board. The recent learner voice deep dive has also exposed this, and this will be an improvement area and focus for this academic year. In addition, governors mentioned that the report showed that 15% of students said that their study hours were not helpful, and almost 20% said that they don't complete them. The student governor said that there are some courses where study hours don't work effectively and, in some cases, they need to be planned better. More detail of these outcomes and findings will be reported to the Performance Review and Quality committee.

DCEO/PC&Q

C Pelling left the meeting at 9.30am

#### **10 Current Performance Data and KPIs 2023/24 (Emerging Outcomes)**

In addition to the report, it was noted that at this point last year there were only 12 student representatives on the student council. This year after a campaign there was a marked improvement with 39 student attendees which is positive.

Governors received an update (page 37) actual and best-case achievement for 16-18s which has now marginally increased to 73.8% (from 73.7%), and 74.2% best case but still both short of the 80% achievement target. On page 44 the adult (19+) actual has increased slightly from 82.1% to 82.8%, and best case up from 82.1% to 83%. This is up on the 2022/23 position but short of the 85% achievement target. Governors asked for the target figures to be included in the table for future reports.

DCEO/PC&Q

The 2019 Ofsted report highlighted level 2 progression challenges and a Level 2 deep dive, concluded in February 2024, with favourable outcomes and at that point retention was at 93.5% but then declined in the year, later than in previous years, resulting in a disappointing retention rate of 84.02%. Consequently, through learner voice every course team in their APRs will be analysing their course retention rate and the Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality will conduct an analysis of this piece of work. In addition, an external attendance and retention audit (planned for March 2025) will be conducted, course and retention timetabling analysis, and at appraisal meetings discussions will be held around future course viability based on performance indicators and outcomes. Work around improving retention, attendance and achievement therefore will be taking place throughout the academic year.

A graphic was shown to governors at the meeting detailing GFE comparative 2022/23 (October R13) data of Entry level, level 1, level 2 and level 3 learners across the region with CWA showing a higher proportion (third of learners,) at level 2 and 827 at Entry level. An analysis of this data will be reported to the next Performance Review and Quality committee meeting and the Corporation in December 2024 although it is evident that the mix and profile of CWA learners is different compared to the rest of the region mainly attributed to the lower maths and English GCSE grades obtained at school thus increasing the number of learners starting at college at Entry Level and Levels 1 and 2. ESOL numbers are growing particularly again with Entry Level and Level 1 learners on maths and English. There is also a high employment, low wage demographic in/around CWA that impacts Level 2 progression where learners in key subject areas are more likely to stop learning at Level 2 and progress into employment.

DCEO/PC&Q

The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality is leading a sector project on the number of learners without a permanent address which for CWA has trebled in the year (from 11 to 37). These are largely King's Lynn students but there are also learners at Wisbech and Cambridge campuses without a permanent address.

A student governor asked what other plans the college has, to keep up the upward trend of GCSE maths and English achievement. The key will be to 'love' maths and English and an example was given at the meeting where Motor Vehicle learners became the teacher switching roles which gave both the learners and the teaching staff valuable insight into what it is like to be a learner and see learning from their perspective. There are challenges to further improve outcomes for learners this year. The biggest challenge is capacity and as learner numbers have predominantly grown significantly for 16-18s at lower levels for maths and English beyond what was planned, there are capacity issues for both subject areas and recruiting teaching staff continues to prove difficult.

A governor commented on the lower than target attendance rates of adult learners and asked if more could be done to support learners who are finding it difficult to attend. Support is in place but in addition the college is considering a more hybrid offer/blended learning model but all materials are available in the learning portal so learners can keep on track with their learning if they are not able to attend. Another governor noticed that attendance and retention of 16-18 learners in Faculty F04 had red status against target and apprenticeship achievement in the same faculty was also low compared to others so what was being done to improve. It was confirmed that the delivery model for this faculty is being split and changed. A commercial manager has been appointed with responsibility for Travel, Tourism and Hospitality rather than a programme manager post. The ethos of the area has been refreshed and the viability of each A Level offer is being carefully considered.

F Miller left the meeting at 9.50am

In addition, it was noted that enrolment in this faculty last year had not hit target, but governors asked if recruitment this year was better. Overall, the college has recruited more learners, but this faculty has under recruited by 89 learners at this reporting point.

Governors noted the disappointing apprenticeship achievement rate (2022/23 52.0%) and asked if the same analysis and approach of data reporting could be applied to this area to establish why learners are not achieving. The Performance Review and Quality Committee has this as a priority focus area and has asked for more detailed and specific data reporting particularly on timely achievement. The problems are known, and these are being worked through systematically. Enrolment is down on last year and the college has strategically reduced the number of standards that will enable quality delivery rather than quantity.

Regarding comparative achievement data (e.g., on page 41) governors asked for percentages as well as numbers to be included in future reports and more narrative to explain the data would be useful. For example, the report suggests that A Level results look better than last year but are not as good as 2021/22 when actually the number of top end high grades achieved is improved but the number gaining A\* to C are just missing the C grade, dropping to a D.

DECO/PC&Q

Finally, it was agreed that the Digital Elevation Strategy mentioned in the report would be shared with governors via upload to the Governance Portal.

HoG

The meeting adjourned for a break at 10.05am and resumed at 10.15am

Committee Chairs for Audit and Risk and Remuneration reported against agenda items 5.4 and 5.6 before resuming the agenda at item 11.

## **11 Preliminary Financial Results 2023/24**

It was noted that the full year-end figures are likely to change following the R14 ESFA return this month, but the report represented best estimates with a bottom-line surplus of £209k against a forecast surplus of £11k in April 2024. This is a positive outcome; however, governors were reminded of the £400k overage sum included in income that is a one-off, non-trading transaction, that has supported the surplus year-end position.

The college is reporting a financial health grade of 'good' (230 points, being at the top of the 'good' 180 to 230 range). Cash balances as at 31 July 2024 were £11.0m. EBITDA, a key measure of profitability is 4% against a target of 3.4%.

Given the uncertainties there is confidence that the year-end position is likely to be better than the £209k best estimate but there is the small ALS funding clawback to be confirmed and this financial year there will be no opportunity for one-off, non-trading transactions to support a positive year-end position.

Governors noted that interest receivable fell short of target in the year however the college has developed its Treasury Management policy and is soon to appoint an advisor. The advisor will have the expertise to apply a higher risk appetite, consistent with the college's Treasury Management policy with an expectation of a better outturn in this academic year.

Regarding the contribution analysis, governors highlighted several areas where contribution is low, and this is due to financial pressures on curriculum areas resulting from increases in student numbers offset by only partial in-year funding increases. The in-year growth funding doesn't cover the full cost of the additional learners, and the full funding is not realised until the following academic year due to the lagged funding rule.

C Ashman left the meeting at 10.30am

It was agreed after discussion that more narrative would be included with the contribution analysis data table in future reports to highlight where contribution rates are of concern and the nuances around why lower contributing areas are allowed to continue.

VPCS

## 12 Funding Position and Data Control

Recruitment of 16-19 study programme learners is up by 570 learners. Not all however, will be funded until they hit the 42-day attendance point after they first attended college. Final numbers therefore will not be known for a few more weeks. Based on active learners at this time there are c.3,570 learners against an allocation of 3,051. In-year growth funding will be received but is subject to affordability and CWA will not be notified until February 2025. Growth funding would attract c.£1.5m and recruitment will have a positive effect on 2025/26 income by c.£3m.

AEB is positive with more CWA delivery and less reliance on partnership delivery, resulting in a positive bottom line. Apprenticeships will be c.£100k behind income target and this is unlikely to be achieved at the year-end.

The PwC full funding audit concluded with c.£8k clawback but the ESFA is still to confirm the actual sum. Some recommendations were made around compliance and the college is working to achieve. There is still work to do to improve processes, but the Audit and Risk and Performance Review and Quality committees have this in focus. The Chair commended the work of the Assistant Principal Funding and Performance and the team for the positive outcome despite previous concerns of the Board and confidence that this would conclude positively.

## 13 HR Update

### 1 HR Annual Report 2023-24

The report confirms an 11.4% increase in the number of part-time (permanent) contracts. This compares to a 5.7% increase in full-time (permanent) contracts. One of the key drivers of this is the cohort of part time LSO, 12% of the FTE (Full Time Equivalent) which moving onto the next agenda item (Gender Pay Gap) explains why mean and median comparators are high compared with national rates. Pleasingly though the report demonstrates a real push on sickness absence and changes in recruitment processes in the year are impacting positively with fewer posts needing repeat recruitment campaigns.

The staff survey was released in the year attracting a good (72%) response rate. The results show that 80% of staff agree or strongly agree that the college is improving. Governors asked why, more negatively, 50% of staff said that communication between departments is not effective. There is now an internal communication strategy and a release of an internal newsletter which shares the work of other departments and college staff. The College Community Conference is another good example of where

improvement is being made and is a good opportunity for staff to interact outside of their usual department/area.

Governors welcomed the release of the Volunteering Policy, and a comment was made about the college's generous occupational sick pay (OSP) scheme and will be interested to receive the findings and recommendations of the intended review to bring it down to a more realistic level and in line with other colleges.

## 2 **Legal Update**

The report was received with no concerns raised by the Board.

## 14 **Gender Pay Gap Report – March 2024**

The Gender Pay Gap (GPG) report fulfils the College's reporting responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The headline results are unsatisfactory with the CWA GPG mean 15.97% and median 21.71% that has increased over last year (2023 equivalents were 14.22% and 19.46% respectively) and is high compared with the national median (7.7% for 2023) and poor against other Eastern Region FE colleges.

Governors considered the reasons for this situation acknowledging the structure of the workforce (high proportion of LSOs and cleaning staff) with a preponderance of females in lower paid, part-time roles. Where other colleges comparatively have better GPG results we will analyse to see how staff structures differ and impact more positively in the mean and median stats. There are some positive results however, where the proportion of females in the college leadership team was 52% in 2023 and has increased to 64% for 2024.

The report was **approved** by the Corporation for publication on the college website and for submission to the Government Equalities Office to be included on their website.

HoG

## 15 **Risk Management Strategy**

The Risk Management Strategy has been updated for 2024-2027. The strategy had been considered by the Audit and Risk committee meeting and it was recommended to the Corporation for approval. The tracked changes highlighted where amendments/updates had been made. The Corporation **approved** the strategy presented.

## 16 **Risk Register Review**

The risk register has been updated to reflect feedback received from the Audit and Risk committee, the last Finance and General Purposes committee meeting, Governors' Strategy morning held in June 2024 and the Corporation meeting held in July 2024. The associated heat map had also been updated to reflect the current risk position.

Risk R023 that identified the Tower Block Roof works has been modified to reflect the broader risk to the college for all capital works. The Chair commented that it may be wise to reinstate the Tower Block Roof as a standalone risk, as works are yet to proceed so this will be given consideration by the Chair of the Audit and Risk committee and the HoG.

Chair of A&R  
HoG

The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality was asked to give assurance that the level of risk attributed to Risk R001 was green (low risk). It was acknowledged that there are some areas where outcomes for learners need to improve and some areas that are excelling. Overall, the college will self-assess as 'good' so there is confidence that a green indicator can be justified and evidenced.

## 17 **Governance**

### 1 **Reappointments**

The Corporation was asked to approve the reappointment of Donna Woodruff, Staff Governor who is to stand for a second term of office. The appointment was **approved** by the Corporation.

### 2 **Governor Attendance 2023/24**

As reported above, governor attendance has improved by 7% compared to the previous year, with remote and hybrid meetings enabling more governors to attend. Detailed

attendance for each board meeting was included in the report and it was noted in the report that individual governor attendance is to be published in the college's financial statements.

**3 Remuneration Annual Report**

The annual report of the Remuneration committee had been considered for the 2023/2024 academic year at the committee meeting held on 9 October 2024. The report is a requirement of the AoC's Senior Post Holder Remuneration Code and the Code of Good Governance. The report was **approved** by the Corporation and is to be published on the governance pages of the college website.

HoG

**4 Application of the College Seal**

It is a requirement of the CWA Instrument and Articles of Government that a record is maintained of all applications of the Corporation seal. The seal is to be applied twice, the details of which were included in the report and will be completed after the meeting.

HoG

**5 Applewood Nursery Annual Report 2023/24**

The report has been considered by the Performance Review and Quality committee. As reported above, the nursery has had a hugely successful year. Under new leadership, a significant number of new initiatives and ideas to improve the provision have been realised as well as a positive financial outturn. The Corporation expressed their thanks and appreciation to the Team for such a great outcome.

**6 Learning Walks - Feedback**

The learning walks that have taken place since the last Board meeting, in date order, were provided in the report. In addition to learning walks governors have also been involved in a range of college activities, which were also detailed in the report. Feedback forms from governors about their learning walks were shared with all governors in the pack of papers for information.

Another governor had visited T Level provision where recruitment and finding work placements had been difficult for some learners. Student numbers are good, but this governor was not convinced that the T Level model is necessarily the best fit for some learners.

The WorldSkills 'Go for Gold' Event was held yesterday evening. The college has three finalists this year in Electrical Installation, Foundation Skills: Hairdressing, and in Health and Social Care. They will compete in the National Finals in Manchester next month.

**18 Any Other Business**

The newly developed Governance portal has been launched and is working well. Some governors commented about retrieving appendices and it was agreed that a demo of the portal could be given at the forthcoming governors' training/development morning in November 2024. The Chair suggested that documents requiring the approval of the Board may be better to include in the body of the papers rather than appending separately.

HoG

HoG

**19 Date and Time of Next Scheduled Meeting**

Wednesday 18 December 2024 at 8:30am, U125, University Centre, KL

Meeting Ended at 11.15am