

**College of West Anglia**  
**Minutes of Performance Review and Quality Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, 17 September 2025**  
**8:30am – 11.00am**  
**Remote meeting (via TEAMS)**

<b>Present</b>	Jan Feeney Fliss Miller Donna Woodruff David Pomfret	Governor (Chair) Governor (Vice Chair) Governor (Staff) Governor (Principal/CEO)
<b>Attending</b>	Kerry Heathcote Rob Petto Sarah Anstiss Rachel Boast Ritchie Hosein Clare Pelling Jules Bridges	Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality Assistant Principal Funding and Performance Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning Head of Public Sector Services Programme Manager Science and A Levels Head of Learner Experience Head of Governance

No.		Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b> There were no apologies for absence from committee members. Sue Moore, Head of Faculty, Technology was not able to attend the meeting, so her apologies were noted.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interests</b> There were no items of interest declared.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Election of Vice Chair</b> The committee nominated and appointed Fliss Miller as Vice Chair of the committee.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 June 2025</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2025 were reviewed and <b>agreed</b> as being an accurate record.	
<b>5</b>	<b>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.  The links to the employer's case studies had been provided and the committee would like to see these as a regular feature of the meetings.  The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality confirmed that it was indeed the low numbers (5) of hairdressing students that was skewing the creative arts apprenticeship attendance, retention, and achievement data.  It was agreed that future reporting of observations will include the expected number against the actual to demonstrate in-year compliance.  All other completed items are to be removed from the report.	HoAppWBL        HoQ  HoG
	S Anstiss joined the meeting at 8.35am	
<b>6</b>	<b>Priority Item 1 – Apprenticeships/Technology</b> It was noted that the R13 rates have changed slightly since the report and the R14 submission is due in October which will give the final outcome for apprenticeships. The R13 return shows a slight drop in overall achievement at 59.5% but this is expected to	

improve slightly with other apprentices to go through. Work based learning is at 77.8% and S4PL at 23.5% but these are expected to transfer out. The R14 figures will be reported to the committee at the meeting to be held in November 2025.

Governors commented that some improvement is being seen but asked what action is being put in place for the coming year to see better apprenticeship outcomes this year. The change in enrolment process(es) is starting to show some improvement, and the teams are focussing on ensuring that skills scans and training plans are in place and that they are working. Training plans are the crux of the issue and working with the Head of Quality there are discussions about utilising Lead IQAs to rollout understanding of effective use of training plans and how this links with the curriculum with staff to deliver not just compliance but also improve the quality of the provision.

Regarding the exit strategy for S4PL apprentices it was confirmed that these are due to transition before the R14 return to the new provider. The college continues to support S4PL and the learners to transition. Secondly governors were interested to know the impact on apprenticeship provision and end point assessments with the recently announced apprenticeship reform moving from the DfE into the DWP. The Head of Apprenticeships and Work Based Learning has attended a number a workshops but early indications are that this could be positive for the college as it will align with employability and moving more NEET provision into apprenticeships.

The staff governor asked what the main issues are with apprentices and why they don't achieve at the level that they should, is it the assessors, or the learners not suited to the programme for example. Enrolment processes have improved to ensure that they right learner is attached to the right employer, there are some learning points with assessors around consistency and timeliness and some challenges around recording of evidence and quality that are being worked through. This was affirmed recently in the two-day health check undertaken by the FE Commissioners Team. The route issues are known, complexity of funding rules, compliance requirements, employer engagement and staff understanding of such complexities. The FE Commissioners office will deliver one-day training to staff to help consistency of approach and understanding of good/required practice.

Finally, the Chair noted that the report indicated that there was a proposed system change to the student portal, planned to go live in October 2025, and wondered if this was a risk for learners. It was advised that this is still under discussion at this time.

S Anstiss left the meeting and R Petto, R Boast, and R Hosein joined the meeting at 8.55am

## **7 Priority Item 2 – A-Level Provision**

The Programme Manager confirmed that this provision has experienced both retention and achievement issues, in the main due to students moving from Year 1 into Year 2 and 22% withdrawing without the qualification, thus negatively impacting achievement. The mock exams showed that achievement was predicted to be low and action plans were put in place but were not effective. Overall retention this year from Year 1 to year 2 is much improved at 87% which was 69% the previous years but there is still work to do to improve higher grades (A-C) and this is a particular focus for APR review that look closely at where and how programmes can improve. In addition, blended learning techniques are being introduced so learners can use Century and engage by learning at home. There is also a new attendance policy in place that will help retention and achievement with current cohorts.

The Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality accepted that earlier attention to the predicted grades from mock exams should have been reported however these are typically only 30% accurate but as results were so poor it was regrettable not to have reported a likely outcome to governors sooner. Governors were interested to know if poor attendance and retention was related to timetabling, what is IAG like at the beginning of the course and is this impacting on why learners don't stay on for the second year. The student experience is important, and whilst this is not explicit in the action plan presented to governors, time has been taken with students to listen to them, understand their

expectations and adjust, where possible, timetables to fit around their needs. There is lots more to do around advice and guidance this year and the possibility of introducing A/S Levels which may help learners achieve at A level.

The Principal/CEO put this into context, informing the committee that CWA A Level performance is concerning and significantly behind not just England averages but also FE college delivery of A Level provision and a dip from prior stronger performance. It is good to see some fresh energy and thinking from a new Head of Faculty but from a governance perspective this should be a priority focus (intervention) area for the committee and the Corporation.

The Head of Public Sector Services, and Head of Business, Creative Arts, and Digital Technology, Scott Leadley, have joint responsibility for A Level provision and will work together to support the Programme Manager achieve a stepped change for these learners. The structural changes are supported by the SMT and the drive for improvement. Governors asked that this commitment and the importance of an improved student experience, let alone outcomes, be reflected in the action plan.

HoPSS

It was acknowledged that given the early production of the action plan to the committee on reflection the plan aimed to provide headline actions as opposed to some of the more detailed actions planned by the team so the next iteration of the action plan will be more comprehensive and detailed to give governors more assurance that plans are in place and are progressing to reach/achieve improvement.

HoPSS

The Chair asked that the plan looks at the breadth of the offer and how this supports or limits student choice. A review of entry level requirements and criteria for each programme would be useful to see and how/if this impacts choice for learners and their ability to pursue their chosen career path.

HoPSS

Finally, it was noted that given the enormity of the concerns around this provision, governors would be hesitant to introduce an A/S offer, but more information/detail and scrutiny is needed before a proposal is made, so more detail would come back to the committee for further discussion.

HoPSS

R Boast and R Hosein left the meeting at 9.20am

## 8 Operational Oversight Report

In addition to the report the Deputy CEO/Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality provided interim achievement figures. It was noted that all the 'unknowns' will be rectified by the R14 (16 October 2025) return. However, achievement for 16-18s last year was 72.9% and this year is 75.5%, and best case 79.1%. For 19+ last year was 65.2% and 71.7% this year, and best case at 86.4%.

The report provided a 3-year full curriculum BRAG self-assessment heat map comparison from summer 2022 to summer 2025. This shows that A Level provision is the only 'inadequate' area of the college with fewer areas of 'satisfactory' provision over the 3 years. It was noted that leadership and management of A Level provision had been assessed as 'requires improvement', not 'inadequate' as there are already sufficient plans in place to rectify the position.

Governors were informed that the new Ofsted protocols use a 5-point scale which mirrors nicely with the colleges approach and use of BRAGP. The query under matters arising around the 456% increase in entry level maths and English and the attendance review showed three route causes and these were detailed in the report. It was noted that this trajectory of growth has halted this year with fewer entry level learners this year than last year but there are still over 3000 maths and English enrolments this year to accommodate. CWA has introduced 'step to' programmes; 'step to level 2', and 'step to level 3' programmes with 55 learners on a waiting list and 2 full courses running.

Governors noted that subcontracted recruitment was higher than target and queried if this was a deliberate strategy, is the provision being managed well, was it a strategy to achieve higher income. A strategic approach was taken to reduce the number of partners however

delivery is particularly specialist and there has been increase demand where these are being delivered.

The ESOL team was commended for turning the provision around from 'inadequate' to 'good'. Governors did highlight however that adult attendance is flagged purple (perilous) and asked if this was an ongoing concern. Attendance is purple; however, retention is not, but achievement is poor. The faculty has been regrouped, the provision reviewed and there is confidence that this will be turned around.

## **9 Updated HE Strategy and Growth Plan 2025-2035**

It was reported that there is still a huge appetite across the college to make the strategy and growth plan work. The growth plan (appendix 5) does show lower student numbers than the original draft. The Office for Students (OfS) and Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) pause has impacted. The OfS registration is now open with more emphasis on governance and scrutiny of criteria to investigate before applying to register. At the invitation of the University of Suffolk (UoS) due diligence has been conducted and a partnership expression of interest submitted to work collaboratively with them with effect from September 2026. Regarding LLE, the college cannot award modular delivery without being OfS registered however we could award with a partner.

It was noted that the strategy is dated 2025-2035 however year one of the growth plan starts from 2026 so governors asked what 2025/26 looks like. Year one is deliberately next year as largely this year is already done in terms of enrolments. There are 29 new enrolments this year which falls short of the original target but the reason for this is because of late confirmation of validated provision for September 2025 starts in three faculty areas. The percentage of good degrees is likely to dip with good degrees around 60% (against 70% target); there are no thirds, 14 of 32 are on track to get a 2-2, not a 2-1 or a first. The HE risk on the strategic risk register has been increased to the highest level of risk at 16. The finance and general purposes committee has a focus on this income line. Governors commented that Lightcast data isn't sufficient (snapshot in time), and it was felt that wider sources of data should be obtained; UCAS data, local jobs etc which had been considered in addition to the Lightcast data. Governors did recognise the challenge of delivering HE in an FE setting, the climate is tough. In summary governors still feel that the strategy is ambitious but remain optimistic that the flexible delivery, curriculum offer, new partnership/relationships, learner path opportunities may impact the growth plan in 2026/27 positively.

F Miller left the meeting at 9.50am

## **10 HE Performance Report**

Discussion covered in the item above.

P Gibson joined the meeting at 9.55am

## **11 Headline Quality Improvement Plan**

The new Head of Quality updated that the best-case achievement rate for study programmes is now at 79.7%. A review of the teaching and learning strategy, and observation process is being undertaken and progressing actions on the QIP are to be taken up with responsible individuals. As a minimum the QIP will be reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

F Miller rejoined the meeting. R Boast joined the meeting at 10.00am

## **12 Applewood Nursery Annual Report 2024-25**

The financial outturn for 2024/25 is c.£112k surplus. The nursery is oversubscribed with a substantial waiting list. The Head of Public Sector Services who holds responsibility for the provision reported that they were particularly proud of the 'home-grown' staff delivering the provision. One of the first T Level students has just left the nursery to progress into a teaching assistant post to complete the third year of their degree studies. The team are exploring the expansion of the nursery estate to develop an outdoor space. A business plan/proposal will be worked through before reporting back to the committee.

The committee congratulated the leadership and the team of this provision. Applewood is important provision, a fantastic resource for the college and for the community. Governors are proud and wanted to celebrate this success and pass on their congratulations to the team.

HoPSS

R Boast left the meeting and C Pelling joined the meeting at 10.05am

### 13 Single Equality Action Plan

The Head of Learner Experience reported good progress against the plan; reaccréditation of the young carers award, multicultural awareness day, PRIDE was bigger and better than ever, the student newsletter has been redeveloped with a consistent approach and huge amount of student engagement. This has helped shape the direction of travel with clubs, students founded 'Neurounity' a club for neurodiverse people that continues this year. Work this year will include a focus to improve things for learners who are homeless or in poverty, improve policies around assistance animals, inclusive language guide and greater engagement in clubs and societies. Finally, there is a plan to review support for staff and students who are carers, and for those who are experiencing domestic abuse.

The committee was interested to know how recruitment for new student governors was going this year and asked to see the plan for 2025/26. There are five students who are likely to stand for student governor election which takes place week commencing 6 October 2025 and it was agreed that the 2025/26 plan will be shared with governors (through the governance portal).

HoG

### 14 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

It was proposed that references to the single equality scheme are removed from the policy as this has not been a requirement for some time and there are better ways of demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. It is proposed that an annual report is produced to highlight the progress made on the previous year and the aims for the coming year. The review of the policy however still integrates parts of the single equality scheme that are still meaningful to ensure that nothing of value is lost in the change. The committee was content to **approve** the amended approach and policy as presented.

C Pelling left the meeting at 10.15am

### 15 Strategic Targets 2024/25 Final Progress Review

The report confirmed a good proportion of targets achieved and progressed. Two however were behind target relating to the implementation of the HE strategy (discussed above) and that the target for study programme learners achieving appropriate placement/work experience fell short of the 85% target at 80.16%. There is confidence however that the 85% target remains appropriate and is achievable in this academic year. The Chair asked if the ability to secure placements will impact given that schools are also now looking for work experience/placements and employer engagement. This could impact although CWA has significantly increased the number of career interactions with over 9300 interactions achieved last year so there is lots of effort, and lots of opportunities to secure placements with employers for our learners.

### 16 Any Other Business

The Head of Governance commented that governor recruitment has taken place over the summer so the vacancies on this committee can be filled. A recommendation for appointment will go to the Corporation at the meeting to be held in October 2025.

### 17 Chair's Items for Briefing to Corporation

- The committee is seeing an improved apprenticeship picture. There are risks around the exit/transition of S4PL learners and the proposed system change to the student portal that are being managed.
- A Level provision is in intervention, and the committee has asked for a more detailed action plan. This is a priority focus area for the committee.
- Adult attendance, leading to poor achievement needs to improve. Faculty changes and a complete review of provision is expected to positively impact.

Chair

- The HE Strategy and Growth plan has been updated, and leaders continue to research different initiatives and strategies to achieve increased student numbers.
- Applewood nursery is at capacity and has had a successful year commercially, financially and is a valuable resource for the college and the community.
- The single equality action plan demonstrated high levels of student engagement, inclusion and new initiatives for the year ahead.
- The committee approved the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

**18 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 26 November 2025 at 8:30am (Remote Meeting, via TEAMS)

Meeting ended at 10.25am