College of West Anglia
Minutes of Search and Governance Committee
Wednesday, 28 May 2025
8:30am – 10.30am
Remote Meeting, via TEAMs

Present	Dave Clark	Governor (Chair)
	Gill Rejzl	Governor (Vice Chair)
	Ray Harding	Governor
	Sally Mitton	Governor
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal/CEO)
	Hein van den Wildenberg	Governor
Attending	Jules Bridges	Head of Governance

No.		Action
1	**Apologies** There were no apologies for absence.	
2	**Declarations of Interests** The Chair of Governors confirmed their interest regarding item 6.2 on the agenda.	
3	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 5 February 2025** The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2025 were reviewed and **agreed** as being an accurate record.	
4	**Matters Arising** 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 Head of Governance will try to incorporate a tour of the Milton campus at the Governors' Strategic Planning morning on 11 June 2025, but not all new governors are attending so this may have to be organised over the summer.	HoG
	All other completed items are to be removed from the report.	HoG
5	**Principal's Strategic Update** *Funding Update* The in-year growth funding has been confirmed at £809k (2/3rds of the £1.4m full allocation).	
	The employer national insurance contribution grant has been confirmed at 78%. CWA had assumed 50% in the budget. This is c.£314k for 2025/26 and £157k part year funded for the current academic year.	
	The CWA share of the £50m FE funding has been confirmed at £261,800 and this will be used, in part, to make a non-consolidated pay award for staff but will be dependent on financial performance and end of year outturn so modelling continues before any proposal is made.	
	There has been some FE lobbying to government around pay in response to last years' announcement on schoolteachers pay. The AoC have lobbied the Secretary of State to build into the STRB (School Teachers' Review Body) to consider the impact on FE when making decisions about teachers' pay. The School Teacher pay outcome has been confirmed at 4% for next year which may be unaffordable for most colleges but on the back of this the Secretary of State has announced a further additional £160m funding for FE	

which has been urged to be used to match at least a 4% pay award to staff. The CWA allocation of this funding is unknown but is estimated to exceed £500k. UCU are lining up for national strike action.

R Harding joined the meeting at 8.35am

Confirmation of our capital funding allocation has been received at £1.177m and will be used in part for the Tower Block Roof repairs. Funds are to be spent by March 2028.

The CWA underlying financial health is good, but the DfE has assessed as outstanding for the 2023/24 academic year despite challenging the decision.

Capital Projects management
The two LSIF funded projects are complete (the Green Skills Centre at King's Lynn campus, and the Darwin Centre at the Milton campus). The School of Nursing extension is on target and on budget, likewise the Green Skills Centre at Wisbech is also on budget, on track and out of the ground.

Student and Staff Awards
Both events will be held at the King's Lynn Corn Exchange on 11 and 12 June respectively.

QEHKL
The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is now part of a group structure with two other hospitals (Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and James Paget University Hospital). The senior management structure has changed with a new Chief Executive role overseeing the group. Lesley Dwyer (Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital) has been appointed to the role. CWA is to build a new relationship with the interim executive managing director of QEH, Chris Brown. The Principal/CEO is due to meet with Lesley Dwyer later today. The Principal/CEO is also to meet with James Cross, the Workforce Supply Lead for NHS England and the University of Suffolk Team to discuss the future of higher-level apprenticeship provision.

Painting and Decorating Course (Wisbech)
This course is not performing well so a proposal to discontinue the course and repurpose the area is being worked through.

High Needs Provision
A proposal to build staff capacity within this area to support the increased number of students is being worked up. It was noted that the college profile of provision is changing, and the Chair of Governors was mindful that strategically this is something that the board should keep in focus and ensure that our marketing strategies are relevant and appropriate to continue publicly as an inclusive college, and not specialist.

Employer Engagement
Confidential item under paragraph 17(2) of the Instrument and Articles of Government
This item was deemed to be confidential.

Head of Quality
The college has appointed a new Head of Quality, staff governor, Paul Gibson, who will take up the post as of September 2025.

2025/26 Strategic Plan
The strategic plan is under review and will be shared with governors at the strategic planning morning on 11 June 2025. An extraordinary meeting is to be convened to sign off the Accountability Agreement that must be submitted on/before 30 June 2025. HoG

6 Membership Review

1 *Resignations*
The resignation from Chris Ashman was received on 28 May 2025 with immediate effect as he has moved away from the area. Chris was the Vice Chair of the Corporation and the Chair of the Performance Review and Quality committee.

2 ***Reappointments***

There are no terms of office soon to expire for governors, but the second term of office (3 years) is due for the Chair of Governors, Gill Rejzl, and a Vice Chair to replace Chris Ashman for a 3-year term of office is required. The Corporation is to approve the reappointment of the Chair of Governors at the meeting to be held on 9 July 2025 and governors will be invited to nominate for the election of a Vice Chair ahead of that meeting. The Head of Governance is to release the nomination form further to this meeting. HoG

3 ***Vacancies and Committee Structure***

The maximum membership for the Corporation is 21 governors, although the current target composition is 20 governors to include the Principal/CEO, 2 staff governors, and 2 student governors. Currently there are 17 governors in post, and therefore 3 vacancies.

With the recent departure of Malcolm Pearson (co-opted member), Alan Measures, Sam Fletcher and Chris Ashman, each committee, except for Audit and Risk, currently holds one or more vacancies.

Contact has been made with Robert Cole of Norfolk County Council, a contact of Sam Fletcher's but he has not expressed an interest to join the board. The Principal/CEO is to contact Alan Fletcher, Principal of King's Lynn Academy. The Marketing Team are also to release a marketing campaign, through local and social media for governors to join the board of a 'good' college. Dave Clark is supporting the campaign with a short video to talk about the role of a governor and college life. Governors queried if there were contacts from commercial partners of the college who may be interested in a governor role. The Principal/CEO will give this some thought. Principal/CEO

Noting that two long serving governors (Alan Measures and Chris Ashman) have recently left the corporation at short notice was this something that the committee needed to review or was this a coincidence? The Chair of Governors commented that both left for differing reasons which resulted in their immediate departure.

Thinking about the imminent marketing campaign governors wondered if there was a pitch for attracting younger candidates for governor roles. Members will give this some thought, and the Chair of Governors questioned if student governor, Eva Remeikaite, who is off to university next year, could take on an independent governor role.

7 **Review Committee Members and Chairs for 2025/26**

The committee is asked to review the membership of committees and its Chairs for the next academic year, 2025/26 and recommend these to the Corporation at the meeting to be held on 9 July 2025.

The Vice Chair of the Corporation is proposed to be elected, subject to nominations received, at the meeting to be held on 9 July 2025. The Chair of the Performance Review and Quality committee has been offered to, and declined by Fliss Miller, due to ill health and work commitments. Jan Feeney has been approached and is willing to take on the role with help and support, which of course would be provided.

It was noted that staff governors, Donna Woodruff and Paul Gibson, are to switch committee membership as of the new academic year (2025/26). Paul will move to the Finance and General Purposes committee and Donna will switch to the Performance Review and Quality committee.

The committee supported the proposed committee Chairs and membership and would seek the approval of the Corporation at the meeting to be held on 9 July 2025. Chair

The committee considered if there were any other moves necessary in committee membership and decided to review this, once things had stabilised after recent governor departures and new appointments had been made. Some of this discussion can be held with individuals in their 'check-in' with the Chair meetings that will take place in the summer.

8 Skills Audit

Further to the committee meeting held in February 2025, the skills audit has been updated to exclude the scores of Sam Fletcher, and Chris Ashman who have both since left the membership of the Corporation. Also, at the request of the committee, the scores of Donna Woodruff (staff governor), Seb Ivanov, and Chloe Rothwell (student governor) have been updated.

Overall, the removal of Chris and Sam, and updated scores for Donna, Seb, have not exposed any new strengths to the top scores, just a re-order of the same skills and expertise. Likewise, the areas of development gaps are the same but slightly reordered in cumulative score.

The report further detailed the skills strengths and development gaps for each committee with only minimal changes, reordering of scores and/or the skills profile remaining the same. Members were appreciative to receive the updated report that confirmed a balanced board with no areas identified where a change of membership would enhance the performance of a committee.

In summary the areas for development or recruitment might include SEND, estates and property matters, sustainability and carbon reduction. It was noted that the scores of Malcolm Pearson (former governor) were still included in the main matrix, so these are to be removed. HoG

9 Governors Recruitment and Succession Planning Policy

The policy was overhauled last year and is subject to annual review by the committee for recommendation to the Corporation for approval. The policy is published on the governance pages of the college website.

The policy has been reviewed with only minimal changes to the footer to update the version number (v6) and proposed date of Corporation approval being, 9 July 2025. The committee **agreed** the changes and will recommend it be approved by the Corporation. Chair

10 Board Annual Self-Assessment

At the last meeting of the committee (February 2025) a revised governance annual self-assessment matrix with four judgements aligned with the language used in external governance reviews, 'Strong', 'Good', 'Reasonable', and 'Limited' was presented. Members liked the new matrix as if followed a key line of inquiry approach and a format that worked well although the content of the judgements against each principle was needed to better demonstrate the progression from a 'limited' grade up to a 'strong' grade. This review has been completed, and the committee was asked to comment on and agree its release in the summer this year for governors to reflect on the governance performance for the 2024/25 academic year.

The committee supported the new self-assessment and is thought will become a strong piece of evidence for the Board that will enable governors to demonstrate evidence-based compliance.

S Mitton left the meeting at 9.30am

Governors questioned how governors would be expected to populate and score the assessment. A weighted score could be applied but this may over complicate the process so it was agreed that it would be released for the first time to see how it lands and then use the November training/development morning to discuss the assessment and collectively reach a consensus on the overall governance performance judgement. The Head of Governance will provide a preamble on how the assessment might be used and what the value of it is upon release to governors. HoG

11 External Governance Review/Action Plan Progress

The tracker confirmed that 15 out of the 18 (83%) actions are now completed and there are two actions marked blue, to be discussed (action 1.3 and 2.1). The committee was asked to discuss if these targets are achieved given the commentary provided in the report or determine if further work is required.

	Regarding action 1.3, it was agreed that this could be closed as complete. The Board isn't required to approve lots of strategies, and it is for the Principal/CEO to determine how these are to be shared and presented to the Board. Governors receive progress against strategic plan targets and are involved in the development of the strategic plan and the accountability agreement so this area for development was considered complete.	HoG
Hein van den Wildenberg left the meeting momentarily at 9.45am returning at 9.50am		
	Action 2.1, it was agreed that would always be work in progress and could potentially be closed but kept as a working brief. It was felt that the work on improving the executive summaries would help but that there was more work to do around linking the issues with risk and assurance so it was determined that this should be marked as reasonable progress, rather than closed.	HoG
12	**Code of Good Governance/Action Plan Progress** The tracker confirms that the plan is now 91% complete with 21 of the 23 targets achieved. The remaining 2 are still planned to be achieved, the sustainability strategy is on the agenda for the next Property Steering Group meeting to be held on 30 June 2025, and the finance team are to establish a regular cycle of monthly management accounts now that the budget and MTFP has been recast.	
13	**Review of Committee's Performance, Terms of Reference, and Annual Business Agenda** The committee considered the prepared review and concluded that it provides a fair and accurate summary of the committee's performance during the year. The committee agreed that it would meet no fewer than three times in the year (once a term), and the April meeting would be removed from the schedule. In addition, it was noted that the review mentioned that there are currently two Board vacancies and this should be three so this would be amended.	HoG HoG
	The Terms of Reference were considered and the addition to the Powers of the committee, to employ the services of such external advisers as they deem necessary, to fulfil their responsibilities, was accepted and the committee concluded that the terms of reference remain fit for purpose. The addition to the powers was agreed with the caveat that this clause explains that non-executives do not have any delegated authority to spend college funds so the request would be deferred to an executive for authorisation.	HoG
	Similarly, the annual business cycle was considered, and it was agreed that the business items covered in the year would enable the committee to fulfil its responsibilities. In accordance with the business cycle a review of any latest guidance, information etc relating to governance (AoC, DfE etc) is a standard agenda item so whilst this has been covered at meetings it hasn't been labelled as such on agendas so this will be reinstated. A good example of latest sector information and guidance is the recent FE Week article concerning the governance failings of another college (Weston College) and it was agreed that it would be good practice to share these with the committee.	HoG
14	**Any other business** There were no other items of business.	
15	**Chair's items for briefing to the Corporation** • The corporation will be informed of the resignation received from Chris Ashman. • The corporation will be asked to approve the reappointment of the Chair of Governors for a second term of office of three years. • Nominations for a Vice Chair of the Corporation will be released with the hope to approve the appointment at the corporation meeting to be held on 9 July 2025. • The Board currently holds three vacancies, so a recruitment campaign is underway. • The corporation is to approve the committee membership and committee chairs for the 2025/26 academic year at the meeting to be held on 9 July 2025. • The committee recommends that the corporation approves the Governors' Recruitment and Succession Planning Policy.	

- The committee recommends that the corporation approves the new annual governance self-assessment which will be released in the summer reflecting on governance performance of the 2024/25 academic year.
- Good progress has been made against the external governance review action plan (now 83% complete) and the Code of Good Governance action plan (now 91%).
- The committee has agreed that it will meet once a term in the 2025/26 academic year as opposed to four times in the year. This is reflected in the committee's review of its performance, terms of reference and its business cycle.

16 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 8 October 2025 at 10.00am, Remote meeting via TEAMs

Meeting ended at 10.00am