

**College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Corporation Board Meeting
29 March 2023
8.30 am
Meeting Room, Principal's Suite, King's Lynn Campus**

Present	Gill Rejzl	Governor (Chair)	In Person
	Chris Ashman	Governor	In Person
	Dave Clarke	Governor	In Person
	Kay Driver	Governor	In Person
	Mark Eastwood	Governor	In Person
	Sam Fletcher	Governor	In Person
	Ray Harding	Governor	In Person
	Scott Leadley	Staff Governor	In Person
	Will McEvansoneya	Student Governor	In Person
	Fliss Miller	Governor	Remote
	Sally Mitton	Governor	Remote
	Alan Measures	Governor	In Person
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal/CEO)	Remote
	Carolyn Rand	Governor	Remote
	Lee Smith	Governor	In Person
Hein van den Wildenberg	Governor	In Person	
Donna Woodruff	Staff Governor	In Person	
In Attendance	Paul Harrison	Vice Principal Corporate Services	In Person
	Kerry Heathcote	Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality	In Person
	Paul O'Shea	Assistant Principal Student Services	In Person
	Rob Petto	Assistant Principal Funding & Performance	In Person
	Clare Pelling	Learning Experience Manager	In Person
	Jules Bridges	Head of Governance	In Person

No.		Action
1	Apologies There were no apologies for absence.	
2	Declarations of Interests There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Minutes of the last meeting – 7 December 2022 The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2022 were reviewed and agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.	
3.1	Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting – 17 February 2023 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2023 were reviewed and agreed as being an accurate record of the meeting.	
4	Matters Arising The progress against the outstanding matters from previous meetings was summarised in the report.	

12/10/22 Item 17 Any other business: The governors training/development day scheduled for 26 April 2023 will cover the accountability statement and the skills duty.

In addition, these topics align with the Ofsted enhanced inspections so this topic may also be entwined, or a separate briefing opportunity will be provided to governors to bring them up to speed with their responsibilities during an inspection. Principal HoG

07/12/22 Item 7.ii Audit Highlights Memorandum and Management Letter to 31 July 2022: It was agreed that the first action item would remain on the report until completed. The second action can be removed as it was noted that a full stock take of the college shop was carried out successfully over the February half term, and the third action has also been completed now that the annual report and financial statements for the year ending 31 July 2022 have been filed.

07/12/22 Item 10 Strategic Targets 2022/23 Progress Review: target dates against each target are to be added. HoG

07/12/22 Item 13 Management Accounts: The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes committee confirmed that good progress is being made to provide governors with better visibility and timely production of the monthly management accounts.

C Rand joined the meeting at 9.50am

07/12/22 Item 22.ii Governance and Financial Management Regulations: The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement has been updated to include the entire supply chain. The Corporation gave delegated authority to the Employment Policy committee to review and approve before publication. HoG

07/12/22 Item 22.iii Learning Walks – Feedback: the Chair will work with the VPC&Q to create a more structured approach to learning walks. Chair / VPC&Q

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

5 Governance Items:

i Recruitment/Re-appointments and Resignations

The Board was informed that Tony Kenber has resigned for personal reasons as of 14 March 2023. His departure creates a vacancy on the Finance and General Purposes committee. The Search and Governance committee will consider the skills and attributes needed to join the Board. Governors were encouraged to provide any professional contacts they may have to the Chair and/or the HoG. All

It was noted that the Corporation has appointed new governor, Fliss Miller, at the Extraordinary meeting of the Corporation, held earlier today.

ii Code of Good Governance Assessment and Plan

The assessment and action plan evidencing how the college (by way of 'comply' or 'explain') has reported against the revised code in the 2022/23 academic year has been completed. It was noted that there are three amber areas of the code where it is assessed as partially compliant and these three all relate to the same action, to develop a Scheme of Delegation.

A Scheme of Delegation has been developed and shared with the Board. The resulting action from the introduction of the Scheme of Delegation will be to review the committee terms of reference to ensure that they align. This will be completed in tandem with the annual review of the Governance and Financial Regulations at the end of the academic year. HoG

The Board was informed in the report that a new governance code is out for consultation and governors are encouraged to submit their responses through an online form. The Chair and governor, R Harding, had some additional comments for the HoG to note and Chair / RHarding

these will be considered outside of the meeting. Subject to these non-material amendments the Corporation **approved** the Code.

Regarding the Scheme of Delegation, No.33, it was agreed that the recommendation to appoint the Principal/CEO and other senior postholders (inc. the Clerk) should be with the Search and Governance committee, not the Remuneration Committee. A governor also questioned if No.37, determine the level of staff annual pay awards, should be the recommendation of the Employment Policy committee rather than the Finance and General Purposes committee. The HoG confirmed that under the Instrument and Articles of Government it is the responsibility of the Principal/CEO to determine the pay and conditions of service of staff, governors are responsible for determining the pay and conditions of senior post holders. The Finance and General Purposes committee would consider if a pay award was affordable and recommend to the Corporation. It was agreed that the HoG would check the Governance and Financial Regulations to see if other byelaws had been applied in this respect.

It was also questioned if additional detail was required to explain the differing authorisation levels of awarding contracts and approving capital spend. The Principal/CEO explained that these levels are detailed in the college's Governance and Financial Regulations, but the HoG would perhaps include a drop-down function on the Scheme of Delegation to set out this level of detail.

The Corporation resolved, subject to these minor amendments, to **approve** the Scheme of Delegation.

iii **Committee Structure**

The Board considered the proposal to disband the Chairs' meeting group and transfer its membership to the Search and Governance committee to support their work.

The Chair reminded the Board that the Chairs' Group had been constituted during lockdown with remote meetings convened as a mechanism for the committee Chairs to keep on top of items and actions between Board meetings. However, latterly this has created some crossover of work and membership, so the proposal is to disband the Chairs' Group and transfer its membership into the Search and Governance committee with an independent Chair, D Clark.

The terms of reference for the Search and Governance committee were updated to reflect the increased membership number, quoracy requirements, Chair and Vice Chair nomination proposals and increased frequency of meetings.

After due consideration the Board **resolved** to disband the Chairs' Group, **approved** the revised terms of reference of the Search and Governance committee, and **approved** the transfer of membership and independent Chair arrangements.

The Chair asked that the HoG adds the responsibility of the oversight of the compliance of the Code of Good Governance to the Terms of Reference of the Search and Governance committee and amends point (i) to read 'To have oversight of the triennial external governance review including the monitoring of any action plans.'

iv. **Use of Corporation Seal**

The report confirmed that in accordance with the Instrument and Articles of Government a record is maintained by the Head of Governance of all applications of the Corporation Seal. It was noted that since the last report to the Board in October 2022 the seal has not been applied.

Furthermore, the use of the CWA Developments seal is held by the Head of Finance, and since the last report to the Board in October 2022, the seal has not been applied.

v. Learning Walks – Feedback

Governors were invited to provide feedback to the Board for any learning walks or Area Performance Reviews they have attended since the last Corporation meeting held in December 2022.

A governor reported that they had visited the Wisbech campus. It was interesting to see the growth of the Animal Care provision and to explore other potential growth and development ideas. Governors said that they felt it was important to keep contact with the other sites of the College. The Chair confirmed that today's Corporation meeting had been moved to the King's Lynn campus to offer hybrid meetings and improve attendance. Other events such as the training and development days may be scheduled at the other sites.

Another governor had visited the savoury and patisserie kitchens at King's Lynn campus. They had also visited the Cabin Crew, looked at the T Level provision and visited the catering facilities. The insight into the T Level provision was particularly interesting as this governor observed the relationship between the student and the employer and commented that it was valuable and impressive to see how this really worked effectively in practice.

The Chair commented that she will work with the VPC&Q to look at how the learning walks can be interlinked with the Area Performance Reviews. Governor D Clark volunteered to be part of this 'working group' also.

Chair
VPC&Q
D Clark

vi. Chair's Dinner

The annual Chair's Dinner will now be held on Thursday 11 May 2023 in the Novus Restaurant at the King's Lynn campus. The Chair commented that the invitation will be extended to alumni governors if the restaurant can accommodate additional numbers.

Chair /
HoG

6 Committee Chairs' Briefing Items
Performance Review & Quality

The Chair commented that newly appointed governor, Fliss Miller, had attended the last committee meeting as an observer. Her skillset will complement the membership of the committee as her background is HE and skills. The committee had been informed that there were maths teaching recruitment and retention issues, and this had been impacting the quality of teaching and learning.

In addition, it was noted that the committee had discussed strategies for ratification which included the Digital Elevator and Teaching and Development Strategies.

Audit Committee

The Chair of the committee reported that two meetings had taken place since the last Corporation meeting. A special meeting convened on 1 February to interview internal and external audit firms for appointment and a committee meeting held on 15 March 2023. The extraordinary meeting of the Corporation held on 17 February 2023 approved the appointments, recommended by the committee, of RSM UK as external auditors and Scrutton Bland as internal auditors.

It was noted that the annual report and financial statements for the year ending 31 July 2022 have finally been filed. There was a delay due to the ONS reclassification and approval of the letter of support for CWA Developments Ltd.

The Chair was pleased to report that significant progress has been made to investigate and resolve the compliance issues found within our apprenticeship provision.

Employment Policy

The Chair of the Employment Policy committee confirmed that the committee has considered and agreed the menopause and andropause policy.

It was reported that the college will have to respond to the National Minimum Wage differentials and increase 8 pay bands. These pay increases are non-negotiable. The committee in the future may consider if the college should sign up to the real living wage. The Principal added that there are challenges ahead with staff pay. Economically we are facing increased inflation rates and ever-increasing cost of living. Unions are seeking a national sector increase of over 14% and will look for support for collective strike action. The next pay round for the college will be a challenge and it is expected to be in excess of affordability.

C Rand lost remote connectivity momentarily and re-joined the meeting at 10.20am

The Chair of the committee commented that there is a new style KPI report that is giving members better oversight of the support and management of the college workforce. There are ongoing recruitment concerns with LSOs and maths in particular. There was also concern of agency staff recruitment processes and this is being controlled and managed swiftly by the HR and Finance teams.

Finance and General Purposes

The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes committee mentioned that the committee looked at the December management accounts at the meeting and there were no substantive changes to the bottom line to report.

As detailed in the report under item 9 below the finance team are drilling into overspends on staffing and catering costs. Pleasingly, savings have been achieved with the works to the Tower Block fire doors, options to replace the boilers in the Front Block are being worked up, and good progress has been made with pursuing an insurance claim for the failed Tower Block roof. The new Project Lead has assessed the design and build and provided the case to pursue a latent defect claim.

The ESFA has confirmed a 2.2% funding uplift and uplifts on programme weightings will also positively increase income for the 2023/24 year. At the request of governors, a funding workshop was delivered by the APF&P on 1 March 2023.

Search and Governance

Members were thanked for their attendance and contributions in the Area Performance Reviews and learning walks. It was noted that a review of link governors with curriculum and business support areas is being undertaken and a process for feedback is to be determined.

An extraordinary meeting of the Corporation is to be convened to approve the accountability agreement (agenda item 10 refers). Approval is required by 31 May 2023. The extraordinary meeting will be a remote meeting. The accountability agreement will be a focus item for the governors' training and development day to be held on 26 April 2023.

HoG

The committee seeks the delegated authority of the Corporation for the committee to lead on the external governance review, develop the scope and oversee the process. The Corporation **approved** delegated authority to the Committee and the terms of reference are to be updated to reflect this additional responsibility and authority.

HoG

7 Current Performance Data and KPIs 2022/23

The report was taken as read by the Board and the VPC&Q verbally highlighted that the range of some of the attendance is narrowing, so good progress has been made in terms of vocational maths and English. Since the last Performance Review and Quality committee meeting held on 8 March 2023 the VPC&Q reported that there has been a turnaround with the recruitment of maths and English staffing with four appointments made including a new programme manager for English. In addition to this the APF&P is working with the team to pilot a new Century platform, high quality maths and English

platform with individualised learning for students. Governors were informed that the resignations and staff absence in the department had meant that it had been a struggle in some instances to run some of the classes, but assurance was given that very few classes were cancelled. Some of the maths and English support staff have been reskilled so that resource can be provided to cover absence.

Retention for HE courses currently sits in year at 91.8% which is very robust, and the VPC&Q has carried out an analysis of the last five years and staff are scoping out the five-year plan for HE. The VPC&Q confirmed that the OU bid was successful, plans are in place to grow teacher education with the University of Huddersfield and positive discussions have been held with ARU.

The focus now is on retention to ensure that student withdrawals do not increase over the latter part of the academic year.

The Chair of the Performance Review and Quality committee commented that the maths and English recruitment was a concern for members at the last meeting, so it is good news to hear that the recruitment of four new staff is such significant and good progress.

Governors were interested to know more about the adult education offer and asked the VPC&Q to provide more detail about this area of college provision. The VPC&Q commented that there are more in year courses running in business and hospitality areas due to start after Easter. In terms of planning for next year, there is a consistent purge to increase the adult offer with opportunities identified and emerging in health, and the school of nursing studies. Attention has been refocused on the Skills Boot Camps so there are lots of new developments underway and planned.

The Principal mentioned that the college is hosting a 'return to learn' event today at the Kings Lynn campus which is about attracting a wider suite of adults to return to learning at the College. Positive conversations have also been held with Health Education England about a new project called Apollo, a multi-million-pound Health Education England funded project to develop routes into health careers and flexibly and rapidly extending the suite of current available courses. Additionally, the Principal commented that the HE in FE Higher Technical Education Boost initiative, the injection fund from the DfE, modularising the approach to our higher education development, can be used for our adult provision so there is a lot of energy going into growing our adult market and developing our pathways into HE. Finally, the Principal spoke of the recruitment challenges and the successful bid with the Norfolk Investment Framework which has created a pilot fund for innovative approaches to various things and in the case of the college we bid to think differently about our recruitment and retention of staff. The bid was successful with £40K awarded to explore fresh approaches and longer-term benefits that address the major challenges that we face. The Head of HR is currently scoping out the project.

A governor had a question about the best-case apprenticeship achievement data presented in the report and asked if this was overall or timely achievement. The VPC&Q confirmed that this was timely achievement and furthermore it was confirmed that the national rates were 8 months old, and this was the most current rates available. The same governor mentioned that it would be interesting to know the progression from our own level 3 into our own HE compared with progression from our own level 3 into alternative providers of HE. This may inform our HE strategy for the future and expose the point at which our HE provision becomes viable in terms of numbers and sizes of groups. The VPC&Q commented that the strategy is to consolidate and move away from delivering to small numbers. Taking the OU as an example these courses will be aimed at cohorts of 20 with one associate lecturer responsible for each group of 20 students so it is about consolidating and managing the outturn for courses such as psychosocial, introduce psychology, criminology and bespoke sociology and the numbers will grow.

The other element of the strategy is about making the offer much more cohesive in terms of meeting skills and stakeholder needs so the offer will be much more LMI (Labour Market Information) focussed.

The Chair asked if there are any benchmarks for attendance. The VPC&Q confirmed that there are no national benchmarks, but CWA attendance is comparable with four other colleges in the region. The Chair, in summary, stated that the fewer withdrawals identified in the report is positive and with an increase in numbers, enrolments, and active maths students it is even more of a reason for CWA to make sure that we get the provision right. There is an opportunity here to turn the curve with maths but only if consistently high levels of high-quality education can be produced.

C Pelling joined the meeting at 10.40am

8 Student Governor Report

The report was taken as read by the Board and the student governor was invited to highlight any items of interest.

The student governor thanked governors for their support for the Novus restaurant. It can be a daunting prospect for front of house students to greet and serve customers particularly when they are governors or staff who hold more senior posts at the college.

Regarding the issue of smoking and vaping the student governor referred to the message shared by the APSS to remind students not to vape inside college premises, but this appears to have been ignored by some as there are pockets of instances where this is still happening. It was noted that many students on the student council were supportive of the college tightening up on this issue and agreed that vaping should be permitted outside and preferably in the designated sheltered areas.

There are particularly busy times in the Hub in the Tower Block and the student governor has been trying to encourage students to make better use of other social spaces but there are limited areas/space where students can go. Students tend to use the LRC as a social space rather than a learning resource which is a distraction for those trying to use the space to learn.

It was reported that 'A Level' students are happy with their common room and hospitality students would like adjustments made to create a social space for them around the café area, but this may need further consideration. In addition to try to make the Hub area a more attractive and useful space for students, funds have been used from the student union for table football tables at Wisbech and King's Lynn and the King's Lynn outdoor table tennis equipment has been repurposed and moved into the hub to hopefully increase its use in bad weather.

C Rand lost remote connectivity momentarily and re-joined the meeting at 10.45am

The student governor mentioned that students at the King's Lynn campus would like to see the red gate open at key times of the day. There are mixed views about enabling access recognising that this could pose security and safety issues for students as the gate leads onto a busy road with a small pavement area so at peak times/rush hour it is not safe for students to congregate around this area. Governors asked if students wanted the gate open all the time as this could pose security issues or just at specific times of the day. The student governor agreed with the concern around security and felt that the preference is that the gate is opened at busier times of the day but appreciated that this would place an additional burden on security staff to do this and 'police' the area when the gate was open.

A governor stated that you must be at least eighteen years old to purchase vaping products so it was questioned what the college's policy was on vaping and whether the whole site should be made a no smoking area. The APSS confirmed that a vaping

phenomenon has increased since COVID and the college is now seeing the impact of this. Vaping materials cannot be sold to under eighteen-year-olds, but it is not illegal for young people to vape. It is difficult for the college to police and because it is not illegal for young people to vape the college has taken the view not to ban it but promote and encourage those who do vape to vape outside and where possible use the designated shelters. Strong messages have been circulated to remind students that vaping indoors is not permitted and strong action will be taken for those who fail to comply. The main reason for not enforcing a no smoking campus is because this would just move the smokers to the front of the college which is not only unsightly but would not be welcomed by the neighbouring community. Discussions to move smoking shelters and expand the vaping shelter have been held and this is being further investigated.

Concerning the red gate, the APSS mentioned that this has been a contentious issue since the decision was made to close it. It was shut for security reasons as there were several thefts from the Vancouver building and there was evidence to suggest that access through the red gate was an enabling factor. Discussions have been held about opening the gate and the feasibility of making changes to the layout of this part of the campus to allow safer access and how this could be adequately policed. More recently discussions have been held around the safety and security of the campus overall as there have been several unwanted visitors to the site that have been negatively and illicitly interacting with students. Additional security had been put in place for a while to deal with this and further discussions with Norfolk County Council are taking place to devise additional measures to secure the site with restricted access and consideration given to opening the area in/around the red gate. Potentially there are significant costs involved and the college is aware that the continued closure of the red gate is an issue for students.

A governor was interested to know where, other than at Board meetings, the issues of students are raised, discussed, and resolved. The student governor mentioned that student ambassadors take issues back to the relevant departments and the Learning Experience Manager confirmed that the feedback from the student council not only comes to the governors but relevant issues are reported and forwarded to department heads, if related to a faculty would go to the head of faculty or programme manager concerned or if property or catering related they go to the leads of these departments. Heads, leads and managers then feedback to the student council or are invited to attend to discuss the issues directly with the students. The Chair mentioned that it would be useful to see in future reports where and how issues have been resolved.

LEM /
Student
Governor

The Chair wondered if there was a subtext, indicating some divisiveness between, HE and FE students. The report highlights that HE students love the social space because it is theirs and HE students are requesting exclusive rights to parking spaces. It was questioned if there was anything that could be done about it. The Principal commented that exclusive rights to parking spaces would not be given to students. The social space created within the University Centre is for HE students but isn't intended to be divisive but is intended to raise aspirations and enable people to aspire to progress to HE at the college. The Principal said that he hadn't sensed divisiveness prior to this report but accepted that the more that is provided for specific groups of students the greater the potential for these sorts of risks.

C Pelling left the meeting at 11.00am

9 Summary Management Accounts

The January management accounts had been shared with the Board. The report highlighted a forecast small year-end surplus of £35K against budgeted £51K. Cash balances are strong and the in-year and forecast year end position retains a financial health rating as good.

The key pressures on the budget, in terms of income are around adult and HE that are falling short of budget, even though for adults a pessimistic budget was set at the beginning of the year expecting problems in that area, but we continue to fall short of even that although there is some optimism that some of the shortfall can be recovered as the year progresses.

The main overspends are against staff costs and at the end of January, costs were overspent by c.£500K. The Head of Finance is working through the detail to understand how this has emerged and to attempt to rectify this by the year end. The VPCS has met with managers to hold back on elements of recruitment and costs of teaching wherever possible.

The Chair of Finance and General Purposes committee ratified the presented detail from the report. The Chair thanked the Head of Finance and the team for their efforts and in particular for their persistence to improve the timeliness of the presenting of the monthly management accounts. As of April, it was noted, that the team will be in a rhythm and on track to produce the management accounts on time and they continue to work on updates on the format and presentation requested by the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes committee.

In terms of the year-end forecast, a governor asked if there was certainty that this was robust and a break-even position was likely, particularly given that there is a significant overspend on pay and other adverse variances. The VPCS commented that there was less confidence around the payroll position until the underlying investigative work has been carried out but there is more positive news coming out of some elements of funding. There are a few initiatives; property services for example are working with the hospital on site at Downham Market with the view to them taking over the remainder of the lease which could relinquish the £100K provision in the accounts for this. There are also of course remaining uncertainties economically with utility costs for example so one moderate invoice could easily knock the position into a negative against a £35K outturn.

Concern was raised by a governor around the overspend on staff pay and questioned the process for authorising requests for additional staff. The VPCS confirmed that a good proportion related to agency staff where there have been difficulties, particularly in maths and English, where we have had to recruit agency staff and, in this case, there is an authorisation route through SMT to sign these off but often the urgency for staff to teach outweighs the impacting overspend. The Principal added that there is also an element of demand led funding to consider, particularly around high needs learners as an example, a growing demand leads to an in year income growth but in order to meet the needs of these learners that attract additional income, additional specialist staff have to be put in place and as a consequence staffing levels have to be adjusted to accommodate the additional learners, and the income that comes with it. Governors were further assured that the new Head of Finance will undoubtedly provide better control over future budgeting and forecast. Curriculum planning will be started earlier in the year to ensure that required staffing levels are identified much earlier in the budget setting process which will enable closer scrutiny and earlier challenge.

The Chair mentioned that it would be expected that the Finance and General Purposes committee would be focusing now on the recovery plans for the second half of the year. The Chair of the committee confirmed that the focus will be on the forecast outturn for the year and less focus on the year to date. Additionally, the Chair asked how the college manages and increases its commercial income from facilities hire. The Principal commented that this is a complex area as it is not easy to rent out space and give third party access, evenings, and weekends for example. There are safeguarding considerations also and providing additional resource/staffing to operate safely is a challenge. There are some positives with increasing adult provision and the ongoing

dialogue with existing partners, for example the hospital, and the BBC to relocate BBC Radio Norfolk. There are commercial lettings, but certainly more can be done.

After a question from a governor concerning item 4.1.4 in the report the VPCS confirmed that the completion certificate for the School of Nursing Studies has now been received and back dated to last year so the capital grant release can now be liberated together with the associated depreciation.

9.i Capital Projects Programme 2022/23

A revised capital programme for the year was included in the report and the VPCS was seeking the approval of the Board. New capital funding has been allocated by the ESFA during the year and in total this comes to c.£900K. The revised capital plan and elements for funding were set out in a table at the end of the report. Originally the plan was intended to apply the majority of capital for the current year, £1.2m, to repair the roof to the Tower Block and with the additional funding, and the approval of the Board, there is now the opportunity to do some additional estate work as detailed in the report. The key element of the plan though is to replace the boilers in the Front Block which are out of service and deemed irreparable effectively and to also refresh some IT equipment.

The VPCS updated the Board regarding paragraph 8.13 of the report where it had been noted that the college was anticipating some additional FE capital funding and notification has been received that this will amount to £1.3m as part of the FE capital transformation fund, targeted to improve the condition of the college estate. Regarding paragraph 8.8 of the report the VPCS confirmed that Norfolk Fire and Rescue have returned to review the works undertaken to resolve the issues with the fire doors in the Tower Block and the VPCS was pleased to report that all these works have been signed off satisfactorily. The total cost of these works came in at less than £20K, well below the anticipated cost of £200K. The works were conducted in house, generating huge savings.

The Chair was particularly pleased to see that the capital programme and the additional funding enabled some improvement/investment in curriculum areas and not all the funding would be allocated to the Tower Block roof and Fire Door repairs.

In terms of the boiler replacement options for the Front Block the Chair asked what the difference was between the three options proposed in terms of greener/carbon reduction plans. The VPCS explained that the air source heat pump solution would have been the best option from a carbon reduction point of view, but the capital contribution/investment required of the college became unaffordable. Governors asked the senior team to investigate the greener option of the three proposals. There are no other green grants that the college can access but the carbon reduction element will be an important factor to consider when progressing this. Finally, a governor wondered if it would be helpful for the Audit committee to undertake an environmental audit although it was agreed that this is a specialist area and would require specialist personnel to undertake such a scope.

VPCS

Governors noted the January 2023 management accounts and **approved** the capital programme for the year as presented, on the proviso that a full assessment of the greener, carbon reduction options of the Front Block boiler replacement will be conducted.

Item 14 preceded agenda items 10 to 13, and 15 onwards

10 Principal's Strategy Report

The Principal reminded governors of the Accountability Agreement and Public Duty to review how well the education and training of the college meets local needs. Governors are required to approve the accountability agreement for the 2023/24 academic year for submission to the DfE by 31 May 2023. The governors' training/development day on 26

April 2023 will be used to focus on these topics as governors are expected to not only ensure that the college has an approach to meeting and responding to employers' skills needs, but that there is oversight of how the work of the college fits into the wider local area and the dialogue between other colleges in terms of, are we duplicating the curriculum offer, are there gaps, are we in active competition and/or working collectively for the better good. A final draft accountability agreement will come to the Board at an extraordinary meeting of the Corporation to be convened for 30 May 2023. The HoG will send out the invitation to this remote extraordinary meeting after today's meeting.

HoG

A regional Curriculum Review workshop took place on 24 March 2023 with other colleges across the New Anglia Colleges Group to explore how governing bodies are discharging their responsibilities with representation in attendance from the CWA Corporation and the HoG. Discussions with other colleges took place with presentations from each of the college's Deputy Principals for Curriculum and Quality around curriculum plans and wider discussions held around gaps and how we can work more collaboratively. A number of actions fell out of this day which will be used to inform our work on the accountability statement and skills duty. Sarah Anstiss, Head of Apprenticeships and WBL, has been appointed to work closely with the Principal, and others, to develop the accountability agreement draft and she will also take on the second 'skills' nominee role around the new element of Ofsted enhanced inspections.

The Principal mentioned that Ofsted inspectors visited the college recently to complete their study of how effectively T Levels have been introduced by colleges. This is a longitudinal survey over 2 years and the college was selected to take part. Health and Social Care and Child Care teams represented the college well, and we gained valuable insight into how the EIF, deep dive, inspection process works. The college is looking to introduce more T Levels from September with a digital offer. There is increasing concern however for the withdrawals of BTec qualifications, the timing is problematic, and withdrawal will expose gaps for many Level 3 students who will have no pathway onto a T Level as there is no T Level that will replace it.

Discussions continue with our investor, Anglian Water, about the Carbon Net Zero centre at Wisbech. They are understanding of our position and share our disappointment of losing the levelling up fund bid but are keen to continue to work with us. They are expecting around 430 vacancies in the next nine months and recognise that CWA has an important part to play. The Principal will continue discussions with CPCA about their contribution and some initial work has been done to assess what could be achieved on a modular level with a smaller pot of investment. It was noted that the Corporation is keen to progress the development of the Wisbech campus.

The Principal's report to the Board highlighted that Norfolk and Suffolk will sign County Deals with the government, devolving funding for a number of investment areas, including Adult Skills, from 2025/26. This would result in the college receiving devolved funding contracts with CPCA, Norfolk and, to a lesser extent, Suffolk, and a reduced central non-devolved budget from the ESFA. The Principal continues to engage with the Norfolk County Council skills team to set out the college expectations.

11 **CWA Property Strategy (2020-2023) Review**

The report was taken as read by the Board, but the VPCS added as reported above the emphasis is to progress the opportunity to offload the lease at Downham Market and that the college is still in discussion around the future use of the farmland but with no conclusion yet.

A governor asked if anything had progressed concerning the lease of farmland to a local bioenergy company who may be interested in renting the land on the farm for a short period of time (12–24-month agreement) to grow maize and/or sugar beet to feed their anaerobic digester. The VPCS confirmed that the college has asked Cheffins to get

involved in the discussions with the agent to negotiate the terms of the lease. This governor had raised concern that harvesting maize and sugar beet from wet ground late in the year may compact and so adversely affect the soil profile, so this has been handed over to Cheffins to negotiate and progress.

A governor asked if anything had progressed with the initiative to offer an electric vehicle training facility. The VPCS confirmed that unfortunately there is no funding available, so this has not progressed. Some investment however has been made to purchase electric vehicles and some equipment so that we can offer some provision around electric vehicles in the current motor vehicle workshop.

On the subject of renewables, the Principal commented that ahead of getting a carbon net zero green skills centre at Wisbech a workshop has been created for renewables and retrofit in the existing technology centre where one of the workshop spaces has been repurposed to deliver programmes with immediate effect.

As part of the refresh and review of the property strategy over the summer the Chair mentioned that increased commercial income, sweating our assets etc should be explicitly wound into the new strategy. After a question from the Chair the VPCS confirmed that the land to the west of the A10 at Milton is outside of the development zone currently so if it were subject to compulsory purchase it is likely to be at agricultural value whereas the college's ambition is to hold onto the land until such time as residential development spreads further up the A10 as this may then, at some time, become part of that envelope and attract a higher value for the land.

It was noted that the Carbon Reduction Strategy, intrinsically linked to the Property Strategy will both be shared with the Finance and General Purposes committee and the Corporation. VPCS

12 Risk Register Review

The risk register has been reviewed and the key changes since the Board last viewed the register were detailed in the report. It was noted that there are two changes to the register. The safeguarding risk has been raised further to discussion with the APSS and the COVID risk removed as for some time there has been only limited operational impact.

The Chair had several queries that were to be shared with the VPCS to address outside of the meeting. These essentially were around if risks were appropriately RAG rated or appropriately reflected progress or known issues. Chair VPCS

A governor asked if risk 11 around mental health should be a higher likelihood score given that mental health is an increasing issue for students and staff. The VPCS will give this further consideration. VPCS

Governors considered if risk 24 (ONS reclassification) was still a risk for the college. It was agreed that this may well be archived at some point as the implications of the changes of reclassification emerge over time.

13 Policy Review – Whistleblowing Policy

The Whistleblowing policy is subject to biennial review and has been considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting held on 15 March 2023. No substantive changes were proposed, and the minor amendments were tracked and related to dates of version control and some contact details for third party arrangements. The VPCS confirmed that the cases are reported to the Audit committee and the two cases reported related to procurement and were not substantiated. The Employment Policy committee will consider the awareness of the policy among staff to ensure that staff are aware of how to raise concerns as governors questioned if the small level of cases raised was actually

reflective of the number of concerns. After due consideration the Corporation **approved** the Whistleblowing policy as presented.

14 College Charters

L Smith left the meeting at 11.40am.

The APSS confirmed that the Charters, detailed below, have been reviewed by governors before, apart from the Young Carers Charter, which is new. As well as changes to some of the wording, all charters have had minor changes to design and layout for consistency of appearance.

i. Student Charter

The report highlighted that the last paragraph has been re-worded to reflect a change to contact details.

ii. Employer Charter

Following a more significant update last year, the changes this year included three minor punctuation changes and a re-wording of the fifth bulleted point in the middle section. This was detailed with tracked changes in the document.

The Chair suggested a similar section to that in the Student Charter, 'in return we ask that you,' is included in the Employer Charter so high-level expectations of employers are set out. The APSS will take this back to the author of the Charter for potential inclusion.

APSS

iii. Mental Health Charter

The APSS mentioned that there is an increasing focus on staff mental health and wellbeing, so the fifth bulleted point has been expanded and an additional bulleted point added to reflect this work.

The Chair asked if the college had the capacity to deliver additional support for people? The college is a lead partner with Norfolk County Council in the King's Lynn Youth retraining project (Boost project) and as part of that the college has used funding to create an additional mental health support practitioner role and has recently recruited to this post. With the growth in mental health issues there is always more that the college will need to do but support is being increased for students. In terms of support for staff an assessment of support needed and intervention available is being undertaken. College policies are being refreshed and reviewed to focus more on the help and support available to staff.

iv. Student Carers Charter

It was noted that this is a new charter, not previously presented to the Board. The charter was developed together with students in June 2022 to articulate the college's commitment to recognising and supporting young carers and young adult carers, and as part of the college's preparation for achieving the Quality Standard for Carer Support (QSCS). A requirement of the QSCS is that this is approved by governors.

Subject to the amendments suggested above the four Charters were **approved** en bloc by the Corporation.

R Petto and P O'Shea left the meeting at 12.00pm

15 Strategic Targets 2022/23 – Progress Review

The appendix provided an update on the progress with the strategic targets set for the year. Governors were invited to raise any questions or concerns. The HoG commented that an additional indicator had been added to ease identification of the colour code, e.g., GP = Good Progress, RP = Reasonable Progress etc.

A governor asked if strategic targets 4.15 and 4.16 are actually strategic targets so the Principal said that he would look at reshaping these. On target 2.3 it was questioned if this was green given the need to grow our adult and HE offer. It was agreed that it is difficult to fit the commentary into a small box and the plans, discussed at the meeting, are not yet realised which would lessen the progress to reasonable rather than good progress. Finally, a further question was raised about target 1.9 and it was asked if destinations at 85% was acceptable. The VPC&Q commented that this was a self-imposed aspirational target and is particularly ambitious in the context of the sector. Principal

16 Any Other Business

None.

17 Date and time of next scheduled meeting

Wednesday, 5 July 2023 8.30am - Principal's Suite, Meeting Room, KL Campus

Meeting ended at 12.35pm