

**College of West Anglia
Minutes of
The Chairs' Meeting
8 February 2023
8.30am
Hybrid Meeting
Meeting Room, Principal's Suite and Microsoft Teams**

Present	Chris Ashman	Governor (Chair)	In person
	Ray Harding	Governor	In person
	Sally Mitton	Governor	Virtual
	David Pomfret	Governor (Principal)	In person
	Gill Rejzl	Governor	In person
	Hein van den Wildenberg	Governor	Virtual

Attending	Jules Bridges	Head of Governance	In person
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No.		Action
1	Apologies Apologies for absence were received from Sam Fletcher.	
2	Declarations of Interests There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting – 7 September 2022 The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2022 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. The completed items are to be removed from the table.	HoG
5	Principal's Update on significant matters	
a)	ONS Reclassification The ONS reclassification is causing huge disruption for the sector, less so for CWA. The only noticeable current impact for CWA is our inability to publish the year end accounts because we need a letter of support for CWA Developments which cannot be provided without DfE consent and they hadn't been able to answer that question, until last week when finally, they have agreed that this can be done. KPMG will now conclude their work in preparation of the accounts being published. Because of the delay, caused by the DfE, an extension of the publication date had been granted. The college intends now to publish by the end of February 2023.	
b)	Skills White Paper In response to the White Paper the government is introducing 2-3 things that sit alongside each other. Firstly, there are the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) being developed by Employer Responsible Bodies (ERBs), which across the country tend to be the Chambers of Commerce as is the case for the NALEP area and Cambridge and Peterborough. There is not a huge amount of expertise in this area or time to get the plan done. LSIPs and consultation with employers have to	

be completed by the end of May 2023. The related aspect for CWA and every college is that we now have to complete an accountability agreement which is a condition of funding. There is a part a) that sets out the funding that the college will receive. Part b) is for the college to respond how it is going to use the funding and demonstrate how the college is meeting the needs of employers and priorities of the LSIP. Aligned to this is a requirement for the college to demonstrate how the curriculum planning and provision has been changed to respond to employer skills needs in the local area. This is articulated through our statement in the accountability agreement.

The added challenge to all of this is that CWA must get the accountability agreement signed off by the board and published by the end of May 2023. So, if Chambers aren't producing their LSIP until the end of May, bearing in mind we are to take account of this when developing and designing our curriculum and provision for next year and produce our accountability agreement, the timing doesn't quite calculate neatly. LSIPs will provide their outline priorities by the end of March 2023 leaving only a number of weeks for the accountability agreement to be drawn, signed off and submitted (by 31 May 2023). The Principal assured governors that deadlines will be met. The Principal and others have been actively involved in shaping two separate LSIPs.

R Harding joined the meeting at 8.45am

The other challenge with this is the expectation of governors. They are expected to play a significant role and not only to agree the colleges response to employers' skills needs but to have oversight of what is happening across the region.

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Moreover, Ofsted inspections are also focusing a key area of their inspections looking at how colleges meet local skills needs. The Principal will raise awareness of this at the March 2023 Corporation meeting and the search and governance committee will be used to scrutinise the shape and development of the accountability agreement and the training morning (April 2023) can be used as a planning day. There is also a session taking place across all local colleges at the Easton College campus of City College Norwich (invite to follow) for as many governors to attend on Friday 24 March 2023. We will convene an extraordinary meeting of the Corporation to sign off the accountability agreement prior to 31 May 2023 deadline.

HoG

c) Ofsted Nominee role

Sarah Anstiss (Head of Apprenticeships & Work Based Learning) will take on a second nominee role. VPC&Q, K Heathcote is the nominee. The second nominee takes up the lead on skills.

d) HE

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e) Higher Technical Education Boost Fund

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f) CPCA Devolved Adult Funding

The undershot of the AEB funding last year has been agreed can be rolled forward. The unspent allocation of c.£80K must be spent by March 2024 and doesn't necessarily have to be spent directly on provision. CPCA have agreed use of the funding against the appointment of a new Adult Community Education Manager, Andrew Houghton, who commences with CWA next week.

g) Cold Spots

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h) Health Education England

The Health Education England bid for £50K was successful for simulated learning equipment. This is the first time HEE has worked directly with colleges. All colleges in the region were invited to bid and it's not known whether many other colleges were also successful. East Coast College, and CWA will be working together with the University of Suffolk, and HEE, this time on a potential £1.5m project that will see a plan across the region to deliver apprenticeships from level 2 to level 7 in health. This could provide CWA with the opportunity to create a second floor on the school of nursing studies to extend our current offer.

i) LUF Outcome

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j) Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Planning Proposals

The draft MTFP is with the SMT and will be presented to the finance and general purposes committee.

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k) AoC Week of Action Campaign

The Principal will be joining the AoC to lobby government on 1 March 2023 raising awareness of the importance of FE in meeting skills needs which will generate future productivity for businesses. The principal sends his apologies for the finance and general purposes committee meeting that coincides on the same day.

l) County Deals

County Deals are a way off yet as they won't happen until 2025 but conversations have started with the skills team at Norfolk County Council. They are listening and asking for influence on how they may shape things. It's been a positive start and a harmonisation of approach.

m) NALEP Board Member

The Principal reported that he has been appointed a Director of the NALEP Board. This is expected to be short lived given that the LEP is likely to be wound up as Norfolk gets the county deal and the functions of the LEP, assets and staff become subsumed into Norfolk (and Suffolk) County Council.

n) Going back to the floor

SMT members are 'going back to the floor', meeting apprentices to experience what being an apprentice feels like and to meet with the training and management team of their business; cement relationships and showcase the importance the college places on its apprenticeship provision. The Principal visited a potato production and distribution company. SMT have visited an advanced engineering company, a nursery, and Heacham Manor so far.

6 Updates or Concerns from Committee Chairs on significant matters which may have an impact on other areas:

i. Audit

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the committee is in a position to recommend appointing external and internal audit services.

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ii. Employment/Remuneration

The Chair of the Employment Policy Committee confirmed that the last meeting was October and this was the first meeting for the new Head of HR so we're in a period of transition. There are some flags around diversity and ethnicity of recruitment and exit interview processes and policy updates and the impact of collective college policy culturally. This is a big piece of work to adapt and challenge 'dated' language.

The work of the Remuneration Committee was considered by the board under a confidential item at the corporation meeting held in December 2023.

iii. Finance & General Purposes

The Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee raised concern that the last management accounts seen by the committee were September 2022. The Principal is aware and is also concerned. This has been raised with the VPCS and Head of Finance. The audit wash-up meeting took place after being raised at the December corporation meeting. A task and finish project group will be established to oversee the implementation of a new finance system. The focus will be to implement an effective system, achieve value for money and a project management approach will be taken to get this underway.

iv. Performance Review and Quality

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, member, Chris Ashman, reported that PR&Q continue to specifically focus on aspects of the curriculum and learners' experience – Apprenticeships, mathematics and ESOL. The committee is also considering how it can sign off things that have been scrutinised and how these can reduce in focus so that time can be focussed on the issues that require greater attention. Area Performance Reviews (APRs) are working well, and it will be interesting to see the difference these are making going forward. Programme Managers are taking responsibility for their areas as a result of these APRs and the VPC&Q has also introduced 'elevator pitches' around how curriculum areas are meeting employer skills needs in preparation of evidencing and responding to the skills duty and Ofsted inspection. The Principal reported good results in both GCSE maths and English resits. Maths is markedly up on last year and English broadly where it was, reasonably strong, and the volumes on maths were around c100 resits with performance just under 50%, way above sector norm. An ESOL Programme Manager has been advertised to build capacity.

v. Search and Governance

The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee reported that they only met a week ago and covered a lot of revised national guidance on governance. A recommendation will go to the Corporation to adopt the 2021 version of the code of good governance albeit this will be short lived as the AoC Governors' Council are releasing an entirely new code which will be out for consultation in the spring. The HoG will undertake a 'comply or explain' assessment, the arising action plan of which will be monitored by the committee.

The Committee also covered the accountability statement, as detailed above. The Corporation must sign off the statement so an extraordinary meeting of the board will be convened.

Work to carry out the external governance review is on target. The next phase of the plan is to procure and appoint an independent assessor. A timetable and process has been drawn up.

The Chair was pleased to hear that the APRs are well received, and governors are attending. The structured approach is working really well to ensure that link governors are linked and attend. There are some gaps in areas and some gaps in links so these are being mapped to ensure areas are linked appropriately.

The Committee considered the appropriate size of the Board and concluded that this is currently sufficient and effective. There are currently two independent and one student governor vacancy. It was noted that co-opted member, Michael Andrews, term of office comes to an end in March 2023. A contact of D Clark will be approached as he has sustainability and apprenticeship experience which would bolster the skillset of the board.

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7 Feedback from AoC Network Meetings

The Chair of the Corporation has attended AoC Chairs' meetings. The impact of the ONS reclassification on colleges and the resulting restrictions on pending/existing borrowing was covered. This is not an issue for CWA.

Ofsted downgrading of colleges and experiences of the new Ofsted regime were also raised. There is an emphasis on skills and employer relationships but at Chairs' meetings there has been feedback that inspections were intently focused around safeguarding and prevent.

Confidential item under Paragraph 17 (2) (d) of the Instrument of Government

8 Any other business

None

9 Chair's items for briefing to Corporation

- Chairs are to report individually to the Corporation.

10 Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday, 24 May 2023 at 8.30am

Meeting ended at 9.45am