

East Coast College Corporation

MINUTES of the Quality and Curriculum Committee held at 9.30am on Tuesday 3 February 2026 The Place Great Yarmouth

Present:	Peter Lavender (Chair PL) Rachel Kirk (Vice Chair RK) Tina Ellis (TE) Mark Buckton (MB) Madeleine Moretta (MM) Vicki Paterson (VP) and Jacob Yates (JY)
In attendance:	Gary Jefferson (Deputy Principal) Wendy Stanger (Director of Governance WS) Paula Ottaway (Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND PO) Tom Roberts (Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality) Holly Chase (Assistant Principal) Lee Nevill (Teaching and Learning Manager) Kerry Payne (Principal Lowestoft Sixth Form/Assistant Principal (Higher Education and Access) and Alex Wallace (Student Services Manager.)
QC/26/02/1	Apologies and Membership
Apologies - Kirk Lower (KL) Robin Jackson (RJ) and Paul Padda (Principal and CEO PP)	
Jacob Yates who had been appointed as a student governor was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made.	
QC/26/02/2	Declarations of Interest
No declarations of interest were made in relation to the agenda.	
QC/26/02/3	Feedback from Informal Students Session – The Place
Before the formal meeting commenced, Governors and the Senior Team toured The Place and spoke with students and staff. Key observations and feedback included:	
- Governors noted the modern, high-quality facilities, commenting that the centre felt like an adult learning or higher education environment, offering a distinctly different atmosphere from the main campuses. - A concern was raised regarding new learners navigating the building. One example was shared by a governor of a student unsure where to go on their first day. Governors discussed whether a form of reception or welcome point would enhance the experience for new or occasional learners, while recognising that this would need to be affordable and appropriately staffed. - The Student Governor advised that the adult learners valued the independence of accessing the facility directly with their student cards without needing to pass through a formal reception. - Students and staff spoken to were unanimously complimentary about the Head of Department for Adult Learning & ESOL, noting the exceptional support she provides and the positive impact this has had on their experience. The Head of Department highlighted that The Place does not offer all the services available at other campuses, resulting in many queries being directed to her. The Student Governor remarked on her openness and approachability, stating that students felt confident that she would help resolve any issues. The Deputy Principal confirmed that her excellent work had been recognised and that additional support including enhanced MIS involvement in admissions had been put in place. - A mature HE student shared with a governor the transformational personal and family impact that their course had had, describing it as “the best thing that had ever happened.” This opportunity had been made possible through them firstly completing the College’s Access course. - A staff member had shared with a governor their own progression story, having entered through an Access course and progressed to two master’s degrees and a PhD, now teaching at the College, a powerful illustration of the importance and potential of the Access route.	

- Governors discussed the value of using such student and staff stories as ambassadors and case studies to promote the offer and raise aspirations within the community.
- Students had raised the challenge of developing independent learning skills for HE, and it was suggested that more study skills support might be beneficial.
- Students reported that they valued the small class sizes, being known individually by teaching staff, and the flexibility of the offer. Governors recognised this as the “superpower of HE in FE.”

Governors considered the challenge of engaging adults in a highly deprived area, recognising the aspirational nature of the building but questioning how best to encourage those who have not yet engaged with learning to take the first step. The public library, which was part of The Place, was identified as a potential initial contact point, and governors suggested exploring whether a small reception or advice presence there could further support engagement. Governors also noted that the children’s area of the library was very impressive and could be used to engage with parents/carers.

Governors asked how the College could help potential learners better understand “what learning looks like” at The Place. Suggestions included additional taster sessions and open days. The Assistant Principal (Higher Education & Access) confirmed that an additional open day was scheduled for 28 February.

Governors discussed the need to grow provision to ensure high utilisation and financial sustainability for The Place. The Assistant Principal confirmed that growth was central to the strategy, the Adult Skills Fund budget target had been achieved, new courses had been validated, and learning pathways established. Operational meetings were being held with the Library and Norfolk County Council adult education team, with joint events underway. Further opportunities, such as public-facing services delivered by students (e.g., counselling), were being explored.

Governors expressed disappointment that the University of Suffolk had not yet begun using their allocated floor at The Place.

QC/26/02/4	To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Quality and Curriculum 2 12 2025, and any other matters raised previously not otherwise included in the Agenda.
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The minutes of the last meeting of the Quality and Curriculum Committee 2 12 2025 were agreed as a true record.

QC/26/02/5	Rolling Action Log
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The Action Log was reviewed. It was noted that the action related to VCE Consortium was on hold.

The Deputy Principal advised that the team had reviewed CPOMS for safeguarding records; however, as the sector is moving away from this platform, alternative solutions are currently being explored.

The Vice Chair advised that the Governor Visit Form was being reviewed to help clarify expectations for governor visits. Governors commented that the form should remain user-friendly to encourage participation and completion. The Director of Governance advised that governor visits must not resemble formal observations and advised that further suggestions for visit activities from the college team were needed. It was noted that feedback from the college team regarding recent governor visits had been very positive. The Teaching and Learning Manager advised that it was the intention to offer governors an insight into the training that staff had been receiving in relation to class visits.

College team to send visit and activity suggestions, including events and celebrations to the Director of Governance.		APs
QC/26/02/6	Curriculum planning and development	
The Deputy Principal presented the report and outlined the curriculum planning priorities, emphasising the need for alignment with both the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) and national priorities. The College will focus on enhancing the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; supporting community needs as an anchor institution; reducing NEET numbers through targeted engagement and consideration of a 14–16 alternative provision; and embedding digital and soft skills across all programmes. Growth targets will also be a key area of focus. These priorities will be delivered through strengthened stakeholder engagement including employers and schools and co-design, investment in the estate, equipment and staff, and the implementation of a supporting marketing strategy. Each Assistant Principal briefed the Committee on their respective areas of responsibility as set out in the report, outlining current plans, key strengths, areas for development, and the curriculum changes required. Governors questioned whether the College was on track to meet the growth targets set for 2030. The Deputy Principal advised that the 16–18 provision was progressing in line with expectations; however, other areas would need to accelerate their growth in order to meet their respective targets. The Assistant Principal (HC) advised that tourism and the visitor economy are major economic drivers in Norfolk and Suffolk and as a result of this, a dedicated Visitor Economy Skills Sector Skills Plan has been developed separately. Currently, the number of students is increasing year on year. Health was also a growth area and courses were being adapted to meet need including the re-introduction of Health T Levels at Lowestoft campus and Level 3 Technical Occupational Entry in Social Care (Diploma). Work with employers demonstrates a significant demand for specialist short qualifications including mental health, dementia and safeguarding. These short courses will be incorporated into the curriculum for the next academic year. The Assistant Principal (Higher Education & Access) advised that the Higher Education provision had recruited to budget but needed to grow and additional courses were being introduced and clear progression routes to help with this. Access continued to be an outstanding area and this will continue to be developed including an online offer. Maritime growth was being impacted by the delay in the Visa's being granted and there was currently no indication of when a decision would be made. Governors expressed significant concern that the Maritime provision was currently on hold due to the visa situation. This was adversely affecting the College, as the team was not being utilised, planned growth could not proceed, and prospective students might seek alternatives. It was agreed that the College should work with the University of West London to explore whether political intervention, through the local MP or the Minister, could help expedite the visa process. The Assistant Principal (TR) updated the Committee on the apprentice provision's under recruitment, the reforms and the changes in performance measures. Providers will now be categorised as 'at risk' if the number of apprentices past planned end date (APPED) is greater than 15% and as at 'needs improvement' if the number of APPED is between 10-15%. The College would currently be categorised as needs improvement and was at risk of rising to 'at risk' due to the historical issues which are still playing out and an issue where an awarding authority did not have an Engineering EQA. Getting historic planned finishers completed will be prioritised by the College. The Apprenticeship Reforms will permit the End-Point Assessment		

(EPA) to be delivered in-house, which should provide a strategic benefit to the College. This will, however, require strengthened Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) processes, robust assessment arrangements and targeted CPD for staff. This programme of work has commenced. Governors challenged the likely impact of this categorisation. The Deputy Principal explained that it would trigger a formal discussion with the department and could place the College at risk of inspection. The DfE has been supportive of the College's position, understands the progress made to date, and the College had kept them proactively informed throughout. Governors challenged whether the apprenticeship provision was on track to meet its growth targets. The Assistant Principal (TR) advised that the 2030 growth target was highly ambitious and the College had not recruited to target in the current year, although in-year recruitment was continuing. Electrical and Motor Vehicle (Level 3) had both exceeded their recruitment targets for 2025/26 starts, whereas Engineering, Carpentry and Metal Fabrication had under-recruited. Recruitment continued to be affected by the legacy of the previous poor reputation in Engineering and by the wider economic climate, with some current apprentices at risk of redundancy. Higher-level apprenticeships were being reviewed to increase the availability of Level 4 and 5 opportunities to support local and regional employers with workforce upskilling, alongside the introduction of foundation apprenticeships. The Deputy Principal reiterated that the 2030 apprenticeship target was stretching and challenging. The Engineering department's reputation was improving following significant changes, but due to the length of the programmes, this would take time to translate into increased apprenticeship recruitment. Some employers were moving away from apprenticeships because of the increases in the national minimum wage and the additional costs associated with providing study time for apprentices. Governors asked whether the College's apprenticeship employers were predominantly SMEs. The Assistant Principal (TR) confirmed that the College's employer base is largely made up of SMEs, with very few large employers. The College has established a talent pipeline to support employers with recruitment, is focusing on job roles rather than apprenticeship standard titles, and is exploring employer incentives. The College is preparing to ensure it is well-positioned for the apprenticeship opportunities expected through the Sizewell project. The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND updated on the College's approach to supporting NEETs, including through its subcontracting provision and the possibility of pre-16 provision to help avoid learners becoming NEET. Governors agreed that there was a need for a deep dive into NEETs and the College's approach to support. The Deputy Principal advised that the free student bus in partnership with Sizewell had commenced and following some teething issues was working well. Governors agreed the following action: • Apprenticeship risk to be reviewed to take into account the apprenticeship reforms and the revised targets for categorised as 'at risk' if the number of apprentices past planned end date (APPED) reaches a set percentage. • College to liaise with the University of West London to coordinate an approach to seek political support to expedite the visa approvals. • Report on Marketing Strategy: Student Recruitment – March 2026. • Deep Dive into NEETs and the College's approach – June 2026.	GJ GJ/KP GJ GJ
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QC/26/02/7	Success Coaches & Personal Development	
QC/26/02/7.1	Success Coaches JD and Absence Data	
The Student Services Manager presented the report which had been requested by the Committee. He advised that where a Success Coach was in post and consistently available, they were having a positive impact. However, challenges remained in relation to retention and absence. The roles encompassed the delivery of Personal and Social Development (PSD) sessions, termly tutorials, support with attendance monitoring, and the provision of pastoral-style support. Governors challenged whether both recruitment and retention were issues. These were identified as vital aspects in which consistency is essential, with the right people in post. The Student Services Manager advised that recruitment was ongoing because staff had not been retained. The College had reviewed the job advert and the information provided prior to interview to ensure it more accurately reflected the role and the required skill set. The interview process had also been amended to include a presentation to assess delivery skills. The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND advised that the College was seeking a skill set similar to that of a Youth Worker within an FE setting; however, the role had not been job-evaluated at that level and was also term-time only. Governors commentated that these roles were critical to the College's success and emphasised the importance of learning from areas where similar roles were operating effectively. They advised that the College should consider whether changes were required to the role, its expectations, and the qualifications the post holders needed. The Deputy Principal advised that the College will be undertaking a full review of the Success Coach role. The Student Services Manager advised that a key element of the Success Coach role is the delivery of Personal and Social Development (PSD) sessions. These sessions include the weekly 'Question of the Week' discussion and activities drawn from the agreed Scheme of Learning. The Course Representatives Committee has suggested that the sessions should be more responsive to student needs. The College is currently considering how areas suggested such as banking and budgeting can be incorporated while still ensuring that all mandatory content is delivered. Governors agreed the following action: • College to review the Success Coach Job Description and Person Specification; if material changes are required, submit the roles for job evaluation. • Committee to consider the Success Coaches Review Report at a future meeting.		GJ GJ
QC/26/02/8	Careers - feedback and actions on the Governor breakout Session	
The Assistant Principal for Student Services & SEND presented the report, which responded to the issues raised by Governors during the recent Board breakout session. There was a need to further develop a whole-College culture around career development and to ensure the Careers Team is embedded within PSD timetables. Schools partnership work is progressing, now extending to primary schools. The Careers Team is considering a rebrand, although members expressed a preference to retain the title Careers Advisors as it reflects their professional identity. The College is undertaking a peer review with City College Norwich to identify further learning and opportunities to improve the service. The Student Services Manager reported that the College will again be hosting the Festival of Careers in March, with ten high schools confirmed to attend. The Assistant Principals advised that careers are embedded across curriculum areas through industry links, guest speakers, masterclasses, and the sharing of career opportunities.		

Governors agreed the following action: • Peer Review learning to be included in the next Careers Update.		PO
QC/26/02/9	Attendance Deep Dive	
The Teaching & Learning Manager presented the Attendance Deep Dive which had been requested by the Committee. Attendance remains a high-priority risk, with current performance below the College target. Attendance is stronger in vocational areas, and lower in maths, English and PSD. Robust systems for identification, intervention and accountability are now embedded, with impact monitored weekly through senior leadership oversight supported by enhanced and detailed reporting. Progress in some areas has been impacted by the absence of their Success Coaches. Governors commented that there needed to be a whole College approach to improving attendance. The Teaching & Learning Manager commented that all needed to take a consistent and persistent approach and this was not as yet happening. The Deputy Principal advised that the College could not rely on the Success Coach only for attendance and that all Assistant Principals have been tasked with challenging their Heads of Department, who in turn must challenge Course Leaders regarding the actions they are taking to improve attendance. Course Leaders are expected to take full responsibility, act promptly, and apply a consistent approach in challenging non-attendance and supporting students to improve. The Assistant Principal (HC) advised that different strategies were being used such as competitions and a restorative approach. Where students felt a sense of belonging and cared for by their teacher attendance was good. This sense of belonging needed to be developed in all classes to help encourage all students to attend. The Principal Lowestoft Sixth Form advised that the Sixth Form had revised the timetable to be more akin of a school sixth form (9.30-3.15pm) and this was having a positive impact on attendance as well as on retention. Governors queried if this could be replicated across the College. The Deputy Principal advised this model could not be applied across the College as there would be insufficient availability of workshops and other specialist facilities during those hours. Governors challenged why students were not attending maths and English and asked whether the subjects could be better contextualised. The Deputy Principal explained that funding rules require students with a grade 3 to re-sit GCSE maths and English, which limits flexibility. The more effective vocational departments also contextualise maths and English within their classroom delivery. The English and maths teams have been asked to consider zoning classes and being based within curriculum areas so that similar courses are taught English and maths together. The Assistant Principal (HC) advised that learning visits have shown good-quality teaching across both subjects. Governors challenged why attendance was lower at level one. The Assistant Principal Student Services & SEND advised that attendance was at level one as students had not developed the soft skills and confidence. To help with this the curriculum design was being reviewed, including the numbers in class and lesson length. The Deputy Principal advised that the College is considering a bid to the Education Endowment Foundation to fund a youth-worker-style post to support 16–19 attendance, including home visits to non-attending students. Tina Ellis left the meeting.		

QC/26/02/10	QD221 Adult Education Strategy	
The Assistant Principal (Higher Education and Access) presented the strategy, and advised on the approaches within it aimed at increasing adult student participation, including provision based in the community. The devolution of the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) to Norfolk and Suffolk carries significant implications for the College and the College is actively involved in the devolution planning. Governors reviewed the Strategy and explored ways to encourage adult learners to re-engage with education. They emphasised the need for imaginative and flexible solutions, noting that opportunities arising from devolution and major infrastructure projects, such as Sizewell, could play a key role in supporting this work. The Committee resolved to recommend the QD221 East Coast College Adult Education Strategy 2025–2026 to Board for approval.		
QC/26/02/11	Digital Learning Strategy	
The Teaching & Learning Manager presented the Strategy and explained that it had been streamlined to focus on the key priorities, all of which are aligned with the College's overarching strategic aims. The next stage will be the development of a detailed implementation roadmap. Governors highlighted the importance of ensuring that students are equipped with the skills needed for the digitalised world of the future. The Committee resolved to recommend the QD135 - East Coast College Digital Learning Strategy 2025 to Board for approval.		
QC/26/02/12	Risk Register	
QC/26/02/12.1	Apprenticeships	
- Has the risk register been reviewed. Yes, January 2025. - Is the Committee content that the risks are relevant and are being updated. Yes, the risks are relevant and updated. - Is the Committee content that the risks are being mitigated? Yes, and the Committee had discussed the ongoing work to improve apprenticeship provision and considered whether the delay in visa processing should be escalated. - Where a red risk, is the Committee assured that appropriate action is being taken. The red risks had been discussed as part of the agenda reports. Maritime is a red risk and this risk has increased due to the delay in the visas being issued. There was currently no indication of when the visa application would be determined and this was therefore a cost to the College and creating a risk that future recruitment could be affected, as some students may choose not to wait and instead enrol elsewhere. - Where does the Committee have significant concerns The main concerns related to maritime and apprenticeships, and it was noted that these areas required further updating to fully demonstrate the associated risks and the mitigation being taken. Governors agreed the following action: Review of maritime risk due to the visa delay		GJ

QC/26/02/13	Agenda planning	
NEET – Deep Dive June 2026 Committee Colleges review of Success Coaches June 2026 Committee Marketing Strategy: Student Recruitment and Retention		
QC/26/02/14	Review of Meeting	
1. Confidential Items: Report details with named individuals. The Director of Governance advised that reports should not generally include named individuals. 2. Were Learners prominent in discussions: A focus always of the Committee. 3. Risk Management: Apprenticeship and maritime risk to be reviewed 4. Equality & Diversity: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: None. The committee had considered inclusion within the agenda items and discussed the impact this had in the context of the deprivation challenges faced across the area. 5. Health & Safety: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment: – None 6. Sustainability: any issues discussed which may require an additional Impact Assessment – None 7. Media: any issues discussed to inform local media – Marketing Strategy Review at the next meeting 8. How did the meeting go? A detailed one and it was positive to start with a tour of The Place.		