



Full Governing Body Minutes

Meeting	Full Governing Body	Date	Tuesday 20 October 2020
Location	Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams	Time	5.30pm
Membership	Charles Buchanan (Chair), Graham Razey (CEO) (Chief Executive Officer), Allan Baillie, Ella Brocklebank, Gail Clarke , Miranda Chapman, Jonathan Clarke, Jason Howard, Tim Kent, Peter Troke, Peter Wood, John Korzeniewski, Peter Cheney, <i>Richard Brooks</i> , Joanna Worby, Gregg Skinsley-Stephens (Staff Governor)		
In Attendance	<p>Anne Leese (AL) (Deputy Chief Executive Officer) Chris Legg (CL) (Chief Financial Officer) <i>Tammy Mitchell (TM) (Chief Education Officer)</i> <i>Paul Sayers (PS) (Chief Strategy Officer)</i> <i>Andrew Stevens (AS) (Chief Operating Officer)</i> Jamie Weir (JW) (Invited Observer) Sharon Hollingsworth (SH)(Director of Governance) Kerry Hickmott (Minute Clerk)</p> <p>Kate Young (KY) Independent Chair of Safeguarding (Item 10, Annual Safeguarding Report 2019-2020 and Safeguarding (including child protection) and Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy only)</p>		

(Italics denotes absence)

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and Apologies	<p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.</p> <p>Richard Brooks sent his apologies.</p>	

		<p>It was noted that Tammy Mitchell, Paul Sayers and Andrew Stevens had been stood down from attending the meeting due to the extended half term break.</p> <p>Due to the measures associated with the Coronavirus, the meeting took place virtually through Teams.</p>	
2	Declarations of Interest	There were no additional declarations to the meeting other than those declared as standing.	
3	Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 June 2020	<p>The minutes and confidential minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on 30th June 2020 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>The remote e-signing of the minutes will be undertaken by the Chair following the meeting.</p>	
4	Matters Arising	There were no matters arising.	
5	Chair's Report including a discussion on communicating the role of the Governors to the wider EKC Group	<p>The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the new academic year.</p> <p>The Chair praised the work that had been undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team and the wider staff body during the pandemic. It was acknowledged that staff had undertaken huge investment in the new methods of working.</p> <p>The Chair advised that it had been agreed at the Covid-19 Governor sub-group to extend half term by an additional week to allow for a circuit break.</p> <p>The Chair reminded members that a priority list of works had been agreed at the Governor Strategic event on 2 October 2020.</p> <p>The Chair advised that the Covid-19 Governor sub-group, which had been set up to consider the activities and decisions made as part of the pandemic, had now reached some level of stability, therefore these meetings have been suspended for the time being and will meet on an as-needs basis going forwards. The governors and staff were thanked for their input into these meetings.</p>	

		<p>The Chair advised that since the last meeting he had continued to have regular meetings with the CEO, the Clerk and the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Committee, along with discussions with other Chairs through AoC and ETF on-line seminars. The Chair was reassured that we have done as well if not better than other FE organisations and that a significant number of colleges were nowhere near as prepared as the Group was when the students returned in September.</p> <p>Following the recent interviews for senior staff positions it was apparent that there was a lack of awareness of the role of governors and governance within the Group. It was acknowledged that the visibility of governors has declined, partly due to the pandemic. A piece of work is required in order to raise the awareness of governors and their role within the Group as it is important that the staff and student cohort are at the heart of what is delivered.</p> <p>A governor noted that he was disappointed he could not attend college in person due to the pandemic. It was agreed that following the completion of a risk assessment, local Chairs could be permitted to visit a college provided it is safe and they are prepared to do so.</p> <p>It was noted that there was particularly poor IT connectivity at the Ashford Local College Board (LCB) which hindered the LCB meeting. Therefore, some governors would welcome the opportunity of a face to face meeting, whilst acknowledging the need to adhere to the guidelines and complete risk assessments.</p> <p>The Director of External Affairs suggested a programme of engagement between governors and staff aligned with the accountability and limitations of the role. JW and SH to take forward with input from GR.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: The Chair's report.</p>	<p>JW/SH/ GR</p>
6	CEO's Report	<p>The report was taken as read however the CEO noted the following updates since the report had been submitted.</p>	

		<p>Three new positive Covid-19 cases had been reported. Two cases were within the Ashford College Computing area and one in the HE Engineering area. Those bubbles have been locked down and will return after half term. Overall, the risk remains low. The highest risk area in Kent is now in Swale.</p> <p>The CEO advised that the opportunity had been taken to have a circuit break at half term to reduce the number of staff and students who are self-isolating and to give leaders and middle leaders a break. This has been well received by staff and students. The ESFA had sent a letter to advise that their permission is required should we wish to take similar action in the future, due to the possible negative publicity that might be gained. It was noted that a small article appeared in Kent Live, but it was stressed that this was in no way negative for the Group.</p> <p>It was flagged that attendance in on-line engagement has been poor since the start of term, using the mixed model. Physical attendance at college is good, however on-line attendance has been poor, specifically being engagement in English and maths. AL is working with the Principals to address this.</p> <p>Proposals for the Isle of Sheppey – <i>[this item was considered confidential and will form Part A confidential minutes]</i></p> <p>Potential land swap at Dover Technical College – <i>[this item was considered confidential and will form Part A confidential minutes]</i></p> <p>Plans have been submitted for the capital grant (£2.3 million). This investment is planned to progress improvements at Broadstairs College (Inspire window replacement) Dover Technical College and Folkestone College (Ames Building).</p> <p>The Carbon Trust have reported back the findings on our footprint. It was suggested that this be considered at the next Business Committee. SH to raise the suggestion at the committee’s next agenda-setting meeting.</p>	
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		<p>The CEO thanked the governors for their input into the recent senior leader interviews. A number of appointments had now been confirmed and the back-filling of posts has taken place. An updated structure chart will be issued in due course. Vacancies have appeared at Broadstairs College which will now be advertised. Interim arrangements have been put in place.</p> <p>Governors will be asked to participate in the interviews for the Chief People Officer, particularly to explore the theme of succession planning.</p> <p>The CEO advised that the first digital conference took place at the recent Group Development day with over 600 teachers in attendance to train in on-line delivery. There will be a focus on aiming to get our social action programme back on track. It was acknowledged that the pandemic has led to a limited student experience in this element of their wider programme.</p> <p>A governor asked for an update on the progress of the civil engineering project. It was noted that whilst the infrastructure is in place, there were still a number of stages to go through including planning applications and a judicial review with regard to the wider development with Redrow property developers. This project forms part of the community contribution through Quinn Estates. <i>[MC declared an interest in this item being a contractor to Quinn Estates]</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: The Group CEO's report.</p>	SH
7	Director of Governance report	<p>The Director of Governance advised that there was some outstanding mandatory training which is awaiting completion by some governors. Governors were advised to contact SH if they required any assistance with this.</p> <p>It was noted that it was a requirement to undertake an annual review of the Governing Body's annual log of confidential minutes. A decision is required as to whether the minutes need to remain confidential. In the interests of time, it was agreed to delegate the review of the annual log to the Chair, the CEO and the Director of Governance to make a judgement. It was agreed to involve the Chief Strategy Officer with regards to the confidentiality of the merger documents. SH to arrange a suitable time for the meeting to review the log.</p>	SH

		NOTED: The Director of Governance report.	
8	Folkestone Project Master Plan and approval of stage 1	<i>This item was considered confidential and will form Part A confidential minutes.</i>	
9	Group Financial Performance Update	<p>The Chief Financial Officer presented the key headlines from the report.</p> <p>The apprenticeship income was £160,000 above budget, which was a significant improvement. AL noted that a number of apprenticeships have started earlier in the year than budgeted.</p> <p>There is an underspend in both pay costs and non-pay costs. EBITDA is on track and our financial health was reported as Good at the end of the year and slightly better than budgeted.</p> <p>The Yarrow Hotel has exceeded its income budget by £236,000 and is controlling costs with £160,000 above budgeted costs for the first 2 months of this year.</p> <p>The Nurseries are performing in line with their budgets.</p> <p>However, the refectories turnover has been lower than normal due to students bringing in their own lunch during the pandemic.</p> <p>Recruitment for 16-18 years is 350 ahead of allocation with in-year enrolment still to come. This will have a significant positive impact on next year's ESFA 16-19 contract value.</p> <p>It was felt that the increased numbers were due to a number of factors including an improved reputation along with a demographic upturn. Minimal new curriculum has been introduced.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: The Group CFO's report.</p>	
10	Annual Reports	[Kate Young, Independent Chair of Safeguarding joined the meeting for this item].	

		<p><u>Annual Safeguarding Report 2019-2020</u></p> <p>The Independent Chair of Safeguarding praised the staff for what had been an exceptionally difficult year. The efforts from the Student Mentors through to the SLT has been phenomenal and it was excellent that this had been recognised by Ofsted during their visit to the Group.</p> <p>There had been a small increase in the number of safeguarding incidents reported, however the top 5 issues were not substantially different to other years:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suicidal tendencies 2. Self-harm 3. Domestic abuse 4. Bullying 5. Sexual abuse <p>KY confirmed that Safeguarding teams had undertaken numerous training sessions.</p> <p>A governor queried the rise in ESOL students. It was noted that Ashford College had a similar number of ESOL students to Folkestone College. It was queried whether there was a need to offer additional courses for asylum seekers. GR advised that there was not a critical need at the current time, but this will be kept under review.</p> <p>It was queried whether the circuit break would have a detrimental effect on the number of domestic abuse cases. It was not felt this would have a severe impact. It was noted that the circuit break is welcomed by staff who were dealing with a number of complex welfare issues within the colleges.</p> <p>A governor queried the success of the safeguarding staff in on-line delivery. KY confirmed that comprehensive processes were in place. A new observation process is in place because of lockdown, which will be explored by the Education committee.</p>	
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		<p>NOTED: The report from the Independent Safeguarding Chair.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding (including child protection) and Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy</u></p> <p>The amendments to the policy were approved.</p> <p>Approved: The Safeguarding (including child protection) and Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy</p> <p>[Kate Young, Independent Chair of Safeguarding left the meeting following this item].</p> <p><u>Staff Survey Results 2019/20</u></p> <p>The results from the Staff Survey were reviewed. The survey showed an improvement in the majority of areas and was very pleasing, particularly against the merger of Ashford College and Spring Lane. The results were very positive around communication. The Business committee may wish to explore the results further.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that, in comparison to other colleges, the Group are in the middle, however this comparison includes a high number of outstanding colleges. The Group's aim is to be in the upper quartile. It was agreed that the distance travelled is moving in the right direction. It was noted that management style is an area for improvement.</p> <p><u>Complaints 2019/20</u></p> <p>The complaints log for 2019/20 was reviewed. GR advised that complaints were relatively low. There were less complaints compared to previous years regarding the curriculum quality and delivery. Complaints were more of a general nature for example one complaint centred around students that were not given an option for the next level of a counselling course.</p>	
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		<p>A governor queried the number of complaints logged as alleged discrimination. Whilst a breakdown of these was not provided, it was confirmed that these were not racially based but largely regarding the discrimination on challenging performance.</p> <p><u>Use of Group Seal</u></p> <p>Noted: The Use of the Group Seal.</p>	
11	Any Other Business	None.	
12	Matters Considered Confidential	Items 6 and 8 will be reported under Part A confidential minutes.	
13	Date and Time of Next Meeting	Tuesday 15 th December 2020 at 5.30pm	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19.33pm

Signed: 

Print: Charles Buchanan

Date: 16th December 2020