

Full Governing Minutes

Meeting	Full Governing Body	Date	Tuesday 12 December 2023
Location	Yarrow Hotel, Broadstairs	Time	5.30pm
Membership	Charles Buchanan (Chair), Graham Razey (CEO) (Chief Executive Officer), <i>Allan Baillie</i> , Ella Brocklebank, Gail Clarke, Miranda Chapman, <i>Natalie Garner</i> , Jason Howard, Peter Troke, John Korzeniewski, Peter Cheney, Joanna Worby, Helen Hammond, Carmel Togher, Sam Lain-Rose, Tammy Mitchell, John Oliphant (JO), Luca Fasulo (Student Governor), <i>Karen Wilks (Staff Governor)</i> ,		
In Attendance	Lucy McLeod (LM) Deputy Chief Executive Officer Chris Legg (CL) (Chief Financial Officer) Paul Sayers (PS) (Chief Information and Strategy Officer) Dan Shelley (DS) (Chief Infrastructure & Transformation Officer) Sharon Hollingsworth (GDG) (Group Director of Governance) Georgia Shelton (Governance Officer) Kate Flounders (KF) – Joined for item 12 via teams Jamie Weir – Guest (Executive Director Office of the CEO) Paul Bulter – Guest (External Board Reviewer)		

Italics denotes absence

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies received from Karen Wilks, Natalie Garner and Allan Baillie.	
2	Declarations of Interest	There were no additional declarations of interest to the meeting other than those declared as standing.	
3	Minutes of the meeting held 6 October 2023, including any confidential minutes	The minutes and confidential minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on 6 October 2023 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.	

4	Matters Arising not covered by this agenda:	There were no matters arising.	
5	Chair's Report	<p>The Chair noted that he had attended the AOC Conference in November alongside other senior leaders; the event had been an excellent networking opportunity, and it was interesting to see other colleges facing similar challenges through the reclassification.</p> <p>The National Leader Away Day was well attended, with the National Commissioner present to discuss the Advanced British Standards; this was a very informative day for the Chair.</p> <p>Miranda Chapman joined the meeting at 17:39.</p> <p>The Chair stated how the Group had been shortlisted for a Beacon Award in Governance alongside one other College; members would be made aware of results once they had been published.</p> <p>It was noted how stimulating the School Trust Strategy Event had been on 5 December; those who attended were engaged and conversation demonstrated how the EKC Schools Trust are going from strength to strength.</p> <p>Thanks were given to Allan Baillie for his knowledge and contributions to the Full Governing Body over the last 4 years. The board wished him well for his retirement in Bournemouth.</p> <p>NOTED: The Chairs Report.</p>	
6	CEO's Report	<p>The CEO's report was taken as read, and the board was updated on developments since its' publishing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through great perseverance, Margate Digital is now live. This is still waiting to be approved by the local district councils, and members would be made aware once this had been completed. - The Group hosted the Shadow Education Secretary on the 12 December at Broadstairs College and toured the college exploring the resources available to students; this was beneficial in building links and understanding their perspective on the future of education. <p>Joanna Worby joined the meeting at 17:43.</p>	

		<p>A governor questioned whether the Group had considered becoming a teacher training college. It was suggested that it would be a great opportunity for the Group to consider in the future when licenses become available. The Group use a teaching academy for staff and community training currently, but it is restricted to certain programmes, and license approval can be challenging. Training teachers has been successful so far, but future opportunities for development will always be considered.</p> <p>It was queried whether there would be opportunity to form a partnership with Christ Church, who are considered a training university. The CEO advised that our training delivery would need to be provided in the same way as Christ Church, which would not be beneficial to our organisation.</p> <p>A member drew attention to the Advanced British Standard (ABS), and questioned whether this should be a cause for concern. The CEO suggested that the recommended changes to ABS are unlikely to come to fruition and should be seen as a political statement (at least for now). While some aspects would be beneficial, for example more hours and breadth, and continuation of T-level development themes, bigger statements such as the termination of A-Levels is unlikely to transpire.</p> <p>Jason Howard joined the meeting at 17:48.</p> <p>Governors questioned what impact the Autumn Statement would have on the Group. The CEO advised that the impact on the Group is dependent on what the government prioritise within the DfE, but that this might pre-empt approaching financial difficulty; fortunately, the accounts are in a good position, and it was noted how refreshing it is to be back to a good financial health.</p> <p>In reference to the strategic priorities, it was queried how digitising student enrolment would impact students without the use of IT at home. The Chief Infrastructure and Transformation Officer suggested that students will be able to use their own devices at college, as well as their phones to access college resources and sites. If they do not have their own equipment, students have the option to come into college with their documents where reception will upload these for them. There is also a bursary scheme to assist those who may not be able to afford IT technology, and early access to PayMyStudent.</p> <p>A governor noted the challenge of managing staff absence, and questioned whether there are any trends to this. It was suggested that the lowest paid jobs tend to have the highest absence rates due to less flexibility within these roles. Good progress is being made in improving this and challenging behaviour is having a positive impact.</p>	
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		NOTED: The Group CEO report.	
7	Group Director of Governance Report	<p>The Group Director of Governance presented and summarized the amendments to the Instruments and Articles of Government (I&A's) and the Governor Code of Conduct.</p> <p>A governor questioned Section 5 in the I&A's, Appointment of Chair, point 3 which suggests that in the Chair's absence, present members will choose someone to act as Chair. It was questioned whether this is necessary if a vice-chair is to be appointed. It was suggested that as a vice-chair has not yet been appointed this should not be amended; once a vice-chair is appointed, the Instruments and Articles will be revised.</p> <p>The terms "clerk" and "governance professional" are used interchangeably within these documents; it was questioned whether these roles need to be clarified. Members suggested that "governance professional" be used.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Instruments and Articles of Government and the Code of Conduct for Governors, subject to the above change.</p> <p><u>Governor Development Plan</u> The Chair emphasized the importance of governors undertaking training modules with the ETF FutureLearn platform; it is recommended that members take at least one session a year to help develop skills, and feedback to the Group Director of Governance the impact of these courses.</p> <p>Gail Clarke, Chair of the Business Committee explained that they had recently taken some AoC Masterclasses in Finance and recommended these to all members wanting to develop their understanding of finance.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Governor Development Plan 2023/24</p> <p>Mandatory Safeguarding and PREVENT online training The Group Director of Governance informed governors that they will be contacted at the beginning of the New Year to arrange for any mandatory training in Safeguarding and PREVENT to be completed.</p> <p>NOTED: The requirement to complete mandatory online Safeguarding and PREVENT refresher training.</p>	<p>GDG</p> <p>GDG</p>

		<p>Education and Training Foundation</p> <p>It was explained that training can now be accessed via FutureLearn. Most modules are now available to governors, and they will be informed on how to access this within the New Year.</p> <p>The CEO explained how the Group will be investing in a board management system to allow governors to use their own IT equipment on campuses. There are barriers to this currently, but this will be investigated further in the New Year.</p> <p>NOTED: The Group Director of Governance Report</p>	GDG
8	Strategic Plan 2025-29	<p>The Strategic Plan for 2025-29 was presented to members.</p> <p>The Chief Information & Strategy Officer emphasized the importance of setting out the timescales and process for developing the new strategic plan prior to the end of the current plan, to enable sufficient time for strategic review, strategy development and consultation..</p> <p>A governor suggested that while the process includes staff consultation, it does not incorporate the consultation of students. It was explained that whilst this has not been included in the paper, students were consulted on the current plan and will be for the 2025-29 strategic plan.</p> <p>Members noted how the July 2024 Strategy Day will be a key date in this Strategic Plan development process. It was suggested that research be shared in July for initial discussion, and that the October Strategy Day will be a fuller session to focus on key strategic questions.</p> <p>It was queried how the independent researchers will formulate questions, and whether there are key assumptions that go into this. It was suggested that the fundamental discussions taking place on Strategy Days will focus on key strategic questions and that the research will support these discussions.</p> <p>Governors asked whether we would be using the same independent researchers as previously. This has not yet been decided; while it would be beneficial for researchers to have context of the Group, it is also important to have a fresh perspective.</p> <p>NOTED: The Strategic Plan 2025-29</p>	

9	Microsoft 365 Campus License Renewal	This item was considered confidential and will form Confidential Minutes Part A.	
10	<p>10.1 Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Post Audit Management Report •Letter of Representation <p>10.2 Management Accounts – October</p>	<p>The Chief Financial Officer summarized the annual report and financial statements, as well as the management accounts for October 2023.</p> <p>It was explained that these have been scrutinized by the Finance Sub-Group, Business Committee, and Audit Committee, and are being recommended for final sign off from the Full Governing Body.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">APPROVED: Annual Report and Financial Statements 2022/23.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer explained that while Q1 is normally reported within the October accounts, due to the new business planning and forecasting model, this has been delayed; the accounts are in a positive position being on target for all but one income line; the adult education budget.</p> <p>It was questioned whether the trend in vacancies is likely to continue throughout the year. The beginning of the year always has the highest rate of vacancies as some of these are carried across from the summer, but that this will slow down over the year.</p> <p>Members queried the impact of underspending on staffing. It was suggested that a review of support areas would be beneficial due to the growth in student numbers; once a Group approach is decided, this underspending will be resolved. The CEO assured members that all colleges have the necessary resources for teaching following consultation; the main cause of strain for the Group to overcome is staff absence.</p> <p>A governor asked whether recruitment has become easier. It was suggested that resourcing has split for support services and teaching, which has sped up processing time, while the vacancy rate has reduced saving time overall. An imminent change of leadership within People Development and Services should also bring a fresh perspective to the department.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: October Management Accounts</p>	
11	Annual Audit Committee Report 2022/23	The Chair of Audit Committee summarized the report and on behalf of the Audit Committee recommended the approval and signing of the self-assessment evaluation and questionnaire.	

	<p>11.1 Audit Committee Self-Assessment Evaluation</p> <p>11.2 Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire</p>	<p>Governors questioned whether there would be a more local option than to use Buzzacotts as the External Auditors. It was suggested that while there may be other more local auditors, Buzzacott are experienced and specialist within the sector, whilst being relatively inexpensive; their contributions within the Audit Committee are invaluable.</p> <p>A member queried whether the reclassification would have an impact on audit requirements. The Chair or Audit suggested that this had not had an impact yet, but it could be a possibility for the future.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Audit Committee Self-Assessment Evaluation and Questionnaire.</p>	
12	<p>Annual Safeguarding Report 2022/23</p>	<p>Kate Flounders joined the meeting via Teams at 18:52.</p> <p>The Chair of the Safeguarding Committee summarized the Safeguarding Report and invited comments.</p> <p>Members were informed of the hard work taking place across the Group to ensure the safeguarding of students and staff.</p> <p>Governors noted how the top 5 safeguarding issues have remained the same since the last update. It was questioned what is being done differently to challenge this. It was suggested that this trend is national and so was not surprising. Despite this, tutorials are taking place to support staff and students, and build mental resilience. A mental health app is being piloted in Broadstairs College where students can adopt an avatar and learn about the issues they are dealing with and how to challenge and cope with them in a healthy way.</p> <p>It was recognized that bullying appears to have increased, and the reasoning behind this was questioned. The Chair of Safeguarding suggested that this may be a result of child-on-child abuse and immature behavior often being classified as bullying, as well as issues from secondary school being carried through into college. The majority of these cases are not classified as serious and are a result of immature student behavior.</p> <p>Members queried whether these incidents are categorized by department. Each college reports the departments with the highest number of incidents to Safeguarding Committee; trends are generally seen within Health & Social Care, and the creative subjects.</p> <p>Governors recalled reporting previously being an issue for safeguarding and questioned progress on this.</p>	

		<p>Due to the rapid growth of the Group, the Chair of Safeguarding Committee suggested that this will continue to be reported on, so to monitor any issues in terms of categorizing safeguarding issues; this however is no longer an ongoing concern for the Group.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Annual Report referenced PREVENT and the political landscape, members questioned whether an incident has arisen as a result of the conflict in Palestine. It was suggested that there has been no change in behaviour or attitudes across the Group. Members noted the discomfort and apprehension that staff may feel around delivering these tutorials but were reminded of the ongoing support for all those involved.</p> <p>A governor questioned whether there should be additional external membership to the Safeguarding Committee. It was suggested that current members may feel discomfort around reporting safeguarding issues if a governor were present, but members were reassured that the chair meets regularly with the lead Safeguarding Governor, Jason Howard, as well as the Deputy CEO, Lucy McLeod, to ensure that relevant conversations are taking place. As well as this, the Prevent Coordinator for Kent is invited to attend meetings when available and provide an external insight into key issues.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Kate for her report and presence at this full governing body meeting.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Safeguarding Annual Report 2022/23</p>	
13	Annual Remuneration Statement 2022/23	<p>The Chair of Remuneration Committee summarized the annual remuneration statement 2022/23 and asked for comment. Governors were comfortable with the statement.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Annual Remuneration Statement 2022/23.</p>	
14	Annual Report on Health and Safety	<p>The Chief Infrastructure and Transformation Officer summarized the annual health and safety report.</p> <p>It was noted that there have been 6 reported RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents; these are not due to workplace failings and have increased due to easier reporting mechanisms.</p> <p>A Governor questioned how the online reporting system works. It was explained that this is locatable on the Intranet and teachers and managers report incidents.</p> <p>Governors questioned why the number of reports doubled in Canterbury and Folkestone compared to other units; these incidents are mostly slips, trips and falls and due to the size of the campuses. These are all</p>	

		<p>minor but they are being reported more.</p> <p>It was queried whether a near-miss report would be beneficial. It was explained that this is in place, but that this process could be stronger; it is difficult to get staff to report near-misses. It would be useful to investigate how other organizations do this. Members suggested that this would also be useful to investigate for students as the current process of reporting to tutors could be improved.</p> <p>JO informed the Chief of Infrastructure & Transformation that a colleague has a strong process for this and would be willing to link them.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Annual Health and Safety Report.</p>	<p>DS/JO</p> <p>JO</p>
15	Staff Disciplinary Policy	<p>The Chief Information & Strategy Officer summarized the key changes made to the Staff Disciplinary Policy.</p> <p>Members noted the comprehensiveness of the policy and stated how well it reads.</p> <p>A governor questioned the procedure for when it is unsuitable to contact the Group Director of Business Support. It was suggested that to overcome this, a mailbox for People Services could be put in place of the Group Director of Business Support.</p> <p>It was suggested that while attendance is stated as a reason for suspension, the absence policy is not stated within relevant policies.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Staff Disciplinary Policy subject to the above changes.</p>	PS
16	Group Self-Assessment Report	<p>The Group Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was summarized.</p> <p>It was noted that the SAR is not graded this year due to the recent Ofsted Report, and that despite receiving a positive report, it is important to continue to improve.</p> <p>NOTED: Group Self-Assessment Report.</p>	
17	Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24	<p>The Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24 was summarized.</p> <p>NOTED: Quality Improvement Plan 2023/24</p>	
18	Education CPIs 2023-24	<p>The Education CPI's 2023-24 were summarized and the revision of Apprenticeship Achievement Rates and Number of Applications due to feedback from Education Committee was explained.</p>	

		<p>A whole scale review of the CPI's will take place in Spring following curriculum offer changes.</p> <p>NOTED: Education CPIs 2023-24.</p>	
19	<p>Minutes of Committee Meeting's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Committee (16.11.23) • Search & Governance Committee (21.11.23) • Remuneration Committee (23.11.23) • Business Committee (23.11.23) • Audit Committee (28.11.23) 	<p>The Chair asked the committee chairs for comment:</p> <p><u>Education Committee</u> The Chair of the Education Committee noted the Director of EKC Training's presence at the previous meeting to provide input on apprenticeships; this was informative in understanding the challenge being faced.</p> <p><u>Search & Governance Committee</u> The Chair of Search and Governance made governors aware that she is reaching out to governors regarding interest in the vice-chair role. John Foster was recommended to the committee as an independent member of Folkestone College and this was approved by Search & Governance.</p> <p>NOTED: John Foster appointed as an independent member to the Folkestone College Local Board.</p> <p><u>Business Committee</u> The Chair of Business Committee informed members of the change to the number of independent governors within the terms of reference from 5 to 4, as well as the added responsibility of deciding local college board chairs.</p> <p><u>Audit Committee</u> The Chair of Audit Committee informed governors that he had met with the external auditors without officers present to discuss audit and performance. There were no concerns raised.</p> <p>NOTED: The Minutes of Committee Meetings.</p>	
20	Any Other Business	MC informed members of the Dover Campus Student Engagement event that took place; members noted the excellent students' engagement, and how involved the leader of Dover district was.	
21	Matters Considered Confidential	Item 9 was considered confidential and will form Confidential Minutes Part A.	

22	Date and time of next meeting	The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 26 March 2024 at 5.30pm.	
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There being no further business the meeting closed at 19:46pm

Signed: 

Print: Charles Buchanan

Date: 26/03/2024

The FGB Chair, CEO, and Group Director of Governance have been given delegated authority by FGB to review confidential minutes on an annual basis. The following minute was released for publication following the review panel meeting held on 14.10.24.

FGB Meeting of 12.12.23 Confidential Part A, Item 9

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
9	Microsoft 365 Campus License Renewal	<p>The Chief Infrastructure & Transformation Officer summarized the Microsoft 365 Campus License Renewal.</p> <p>It was suggested that following conversation with JISC, the best offer would be a 3-year contract at set fee to maintain a stable cost base; this would cost a maximum of £676,773.00 for 3 years.</p> <p>A member questioned whether this payment would be upfront. It was suggested that a third of the total cost would be paid each year, around £225,591.00 per annum (including VAT).</p> <p>It was queried whether other viable options had been researched. While the Group had investigated other options, Microsoft 365 was the most cost effective and used product on the market.</p> <p>APPROVED- Microsoft 365 Campus License Renewal.</p>	