

Full Governing Minutes

Meeting	Full Governing Body	Date	Tuesday 25 March 2025
Location	Yarrow Hotel, Broadstairs	Time	5.30pm
Membership	Charles Buchanan (Chair), Graham Razey (CEO) Chief Executive Officer, Ella Brocklebank, Gail Clarke, Miranda Chapman, Natalie Garner, Jason Howard, John Korzeniewski, Peter Cheney, Joanna Worby, Francesca Lashmar (Staff Governor), Helen Hammond, Carmel Togher, Sam Lawrence-Rose, Tammy Mitchell, John Oliphant, <i>Evie Kuschel (Student Governor)</i>		
In Attendance	Lucy McLeod (LM) (Deputy Chief Executive Officer) Chris Legg (CL) (Chief Financial Officer) Victoria Copp-Crawley (VC-C) (Executive Principal) Nick Holbrook-Sutcliffe (NH-S) (Chief Education Officer) Paul Sayers (PS) (Chief Information and Strategy Officer) <i>Jamie Weir, (JW) (Chief Communications Officer)</i> Dan Shelley (DS) (Chief Infrastructure & Transformation Officer) Sharon Hollingsworth (GDG) (Group Director of Governance) Jack Collison (JC) (Group Director of Corporate Services) Claire Banks (CSB) (Governance Officer)		

Italics denotes absence

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	<p>The Chair welcomed members and noted the meeting would be recorded for the benefit of Jack Collison and Claire Banks in their new Governance roles.</p> <p>Apologies received from Evie Kuschel and Jamie Weir</p> <p>The Chair noted that Item 11 would be discussed after Confidential Items 16 and 17.</p>	
2	Declarations of Interest	There were no other declarations of interest under this item other than those declared as standing.	

3	Minutes of the meeting held 10 December 2024, including any confidential minutes	The minutes and confidential minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on 10 December 2024 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 his report will be a series of farewells to long serving members of the Full Governing Body, but began with a welcome to Claire Banks, new Governance Officer.</p> <p>On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Graham Razey, Chief Executive Officer, for 15 years of successful service and enthusiastic commitment to the Group. He noted particular appreciation that the Group now was unrecognisable from the college Graham had joined originally – grown from one college to a financially stable group of six with nurseries, junior colleges, The Yarrow and a sister MAT – all achieved under Graham's guidance.</p> <p>This will also be Helen Hammond's last Governor meeting as she is stepping down from her role. The Chair expressed gratitude for the contribution Helen has made to the Group with her outstanding knowledge of Adult Education.</p> <p>The Chair asked Gail Clarke (GL) to give thanks to Chris Legg (CL), Chief Financial Officer, who will also be leaving the Group. GL noted it had been a pleasure working with CL and gave thanks for the knowledge, expertise and commitment given to Governors, to the Group and to students.</p> <p>The Chair gave thanks to Sharon Hollingsworth, Group Director of Governance, for years of dedicated service. The Chair confirmed that Sharon will be retiring from her role with the Group and that this was her last working day. The Chair expressed that the support and guidance</p>	

		<p>provided by Sharon has been exemplary and Governors always praise the level of care and commitment shown by Sharon.</p> <p>The Chair reported that Jack Collison (JC) will be taking over the role of Group Director of Governance following SH's departure and advised Governors to redirect any future questions and correspondence regarding Governance to JC.</p> <p>The Chair noted there are challenging times ahead with continued reduction in education budgets and limited increases to funding rates, however with a robust Governing Body and strong Senior Leadership team the Chair is confident the Group will continue to flourish.</p> <p>The Chair noted that he is currently undertaking one-to-one meetings with all Governors which he is seeking to conclude over the coming weeks.</p> <p>NOTED: The Chairs Report.</p>	
6	CEO's Report	<p>The Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) report was presented. The CEO drew attention to the following political and national issues and news from the Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government Spring Statement will be of particular note to the Education sector. • The 6% reduction of the Adult Skills Funding and provision of 80% of the National Insurance coverage will have an impact on budgets, however despite these changes, the CEO is confident in the continued growth of the Group. • Whilst there is a 3.78% increase to funding rates, this will only provide a rise of 1.8% in real terms. • Ashford Borough Council has confirmed provision of funds to aid the Group with sustainability. • The Group's standing in the local community remains positive. • The next few weeks will be pivotal in understanding how the new Strategic Plan sits within the current landscape, but the Group are well positioned to continue to aspire to excellence. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Group have received a Beacon Award for the Group's innovative work with the prison service on the Isle of Sheppey. This is the Group's fifth Beacon award. • The Group recently won the KFE Skills Competition which is a great success and the CEO suggested this was a reflection on the focus the Group have on excellence. • The CEO gave thanks to the Chief Financial Officer for the good financial position of the Group. <p>Governors queried how the CEO views the Group Strategic plan working with the proposed local government reorganisation.</p> <p>The CEO commented that the proposal for three unitary authorities would be the preference for the Group. However, whatever the proposed configuration, the Group will reaffirm positive relationships with the new unitary authorities and minimise risk wherever possible.</p> <p>Governors queried what the Group could do to give politicians a greater understanding of the FE sector.</p> <p>The CEO reported but the Group are working with local MPs to demonstrate the value of FE colleges in the community.</p> <p>NOTED: The Group CEO report.</p>	
7	Group Director of Governance Report	<p>The Group Director of Governance (GDG) updated the Board on key governance matters and recent business of the Governing Body.</p> <p>The following approvals were requested on behalf of the Search and Governance Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the re-appointment of John Korzeniewski, Miranda Chapman, Ella Brocklebank and Jason Howard to the Full Governing Body. • Approve the re-appointment of Charles Buchanan to the Full Governing Body for a one-year term. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the re-appointment of Charles Buchanan as Group Chair of the Full Governing Body for a one-year term. • Approve the appointment of Siobhan Phillips to the Full Governing Body for a one-year Term. <p>The Group Director of Governance (GDG) confirmed Siobhan Phillips is to be invited to serve on the Business Committee, but subject to a final meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive Officer to agree the appointment.</p> <p>The GDG reported Miranda Chapman has agreed to undertake the role of Canterbury Local College Board Chair, and to serve on the Education Committee to replace Helen Hammond. Miranda will step down from her role on the Business Committee.</p> <p>John Oliphant has agreed to take up the vacancy on the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Ella Brocklebank has agreed to be the Chair of EKC Training Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GDG presented the proposed annual calendar of governance meetings for information. • The written e-resolution of the Full Governing Body was taken outside the cycle of meetings. The Special Resolution dated 24 February 2025 approved changes to Group Leadership structure and is formally noted for the minutes. • The GDG reminded Governors to complete the Mandatory Safeguarding and Prevent online training if they have not already done so. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - APPROVED: Re-appointment of John Korzeniewski, Miranda Chapman, Ella Brocklebank and Jason Howard. - APPROVED: Re-appointment of Charles Buchanan for a one-year term. - APPROVED: Re-appointment of Charles Buchanan as Chair of the Full Governing Body for a one-year term. 	
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		<p>- APPROVED: Appointment of Siobhan Phillips to the Full Governing Body for a one-year term, subject to a satisfactory meeting with the Deputy CEO.</p> <p>NOTED: The Group Director of Governance Report AGREED: Annual Calendar of Governance Meetings 2025-26 NOTED: Written e-Resolution of the Full Governing Body ACTION: Reminder to Governors to complete Mandatory Training</p>	JC
8	Accountability Agreement 2025/26	<p>The Accountability Agreement 2025/26 was presented to members of the Full Governing Body by the Chief Information and Strategy Officer (CISO) for approval and the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CISO proposed how the EKC Group's submission to the Department for Education should be managed to ensure it is approved and submitted by the deadline. • The CISO requested that delegated authority be granted to a Full Governing Body (FGB) sub-group to approve the 2025/26 Accountability Agreement. <p>The CISO explained the deadline for submission of the Accountability Agreement falls outside the designated cycle of business for FGB. A delegated sub-group is therefore needed to review and approve the agreement in order to meet the submission deadline.</p> <p>The CISO also noted that some key performance data will not be available in time for submission. The DfE are aware this is an issue across the FE sector.</p> <p>Governors agreed to use the same process as the previous year where the chairs of Audit, Business, and Full Governing Body form a sub-group to review the agreement, with the draft then being sent to Full Governing Body for e-resolution.</p> <p>Governors queried if the accountability rules apply to the other stakeholders such as the Invicta Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>The CISO confirmed the stakeholders have to produce their own plan that sets out the skills priorities. The Group collaborate with the stakeholder networks when producing these plans. The CISO noted this has been a useful process in helping stakeholders to understand in more</p>	

		<p>depth how the FE sector operates and the contribution it makes to the community.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Annual Accountability Agreement to be agreed by e-resolution following a review by the Audit, Business and Full Governing Body chairs.</p> <p>NOTED: The Accountability Statement 2025/26</p>	
9	Strategic Plan 2025-29	<p>The Chief Information and Strategy Officer (CISO) presented the final draft of the Strategic Plan 2025-29 to members of the Full Governing Body for consideration and resolution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the internal and external consultation on the draft plan, a summary of the feedback was circulated to FGB on 17th February. • The plan has been updated to take account of the consultation feedback. • KPIs and outcomes have been added against each objective. • The final version will be ready to publish on 1st September 2025. <p>The CISO will be developing a suite of local plans to reflect strategic objectives and meet specific community needs. The Local College Boards (LCB) and Education Committee will be involved in this development.</p> <p>Governors noted it was pleasing to see the ambition of the Strategic Plan and that there have been no dilution of objectives, despite the potential changes to the FE funding landscape.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed the Group need to continue the aspirations of excellence and ensure the focus remains on positive student experience.</p> <p>The CISO noted the positive feedback received from the stakeholder consultation event regarding the strategic plan.</p>	

[illegible]

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CITO confirmed all survey reports have been included in the papers. • Some work has already been carried out to make the building fit for habitation. There are also some long-term maintenance and improvements planned. • An estimate of £120K will be needed next year for the areas designated as priority in the report submitted by Cripps, the Group solicitor. <p>The CEO noted that whilst it has been a long process, it has been important for the Group to pursue security of tenure.</p> <p>The Group are optimistic that the Eastchurch programme can develop with the future growth of HMP Stanford Hill and will continue to have a long-term presence in the community.</p> <p>The Chair noted the Service Level Agreement is key in ensuring the continued commitment of the prison to supply learners. If the agreed number of learners are not provided by the prison, the Group have the option to break the agreement.</p> <p>The CITO commented that Cripps view the lease as a standard agreement. However, the inclusion of a clause is recommended in order to mitigate the potential of EKC Group investing in major capital development (e.g. over £100K) and the prison to take back control of the building. The clause should stipulate that EKC Group will be repaid by the prison for this investment within a set period of time in this circumstance.</p> <p>Governors queried if the Eastchurch programme could be used as a formula for other areas.</p> <p>The CEO suggested there could be further expansion into the hospitality and horticulture areas. The Eastchurch programme has shown to be helping with both prisoner rehabilitation and a reduction of re-offending rates.</p> <p>The Chair noted the Eastchurch building will be entered onto the Group's asset register so it will be included in the future condition work as part of the capital funding programme.</p>	
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11	OfS Regulated Higher Education (CEO, Deputy CEO and Independent governors only) Confidential item	<p>Only CEO, Deputy CEO and Independent governors in attendance.</p> <p>This item was considered confidential and will form Confidential Minutes Part B (1).</p>	
12	Group Management Accounts February 2025	<p>The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented the Group Management Accounts for February 2025 and the following was noted:</p> <p>The management accounts for February 2025 had been reviewed and thoroughly examined by the Finance Sub-Group prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The CFO noted that the item below has not been included in the Management Accounts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The increase in National Insurance Contributions (NIC) coverage funding is now confirmed as 80%, rather than 100% as previously suggested. <p>The CFO noted that the NIC coverage is going to be circa £20,000 per month lower than</p>	

		<p>expected, and overall £250K less per year. The Department for Education has based the funding methodology on the number of students rather than employee numbers. The CFO confirmed that the same funding methodology has been used across the FE sector and it is not Group specific.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group performance is good overall, despite the impact of a reduction to funding. • There is an overall improvement of £2.4m to the cash budget. <p>Governors queried whether the impact of the NIC increase and reduction in coverage funding will impact on the education of students.</p> <p>The CFO commented that due to the extent of Group's positive growth in terms of student numbers there is no cause for concern.</p> <p>NOTED: February 2025 Management Accounts</p>	
13	Safeguarding Update Report	<p>The Executive Principal presented an update on Safeguarding and Prevent and the following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tutorial programme has built capacity to deliver more tutorials to respond to local, national or business unit incidents. • Bullying remains the highest trend in safeguarding incidents, however there is a focus on training to support awareness, categorisation of incidents and informed actions. • Some parts of the action plan remain 'amber' in terms of progress, but this denotes action that has not yet started, it is not an increase to risk. • Current work is underway to establish a consistent approach to safeguarding across the Group. • The Group is collaborating with the wider KFE network to discuss key themes and share good practice. • Work continues on the invacuation pilot at Folkestone College and recommendations will be presented for Committee approval in due course. 	

		<p>Governors questioned whether the Group is confident in covering the range of complex safeguarding issues required at the Alternative Provision setting.</p> <p>The Executive Principal confirmed the Head of Alternative Provision has expertise in safeguarding and there is a robust system in place.</p> <p>In addition to this, work is underway with the colleges to ensure specialist safeguarding provision is in place when students transition back into mainstream college life.</p> <p>NOTED: Safeguarding and Prevent Update</p>	
14	Students' Union constitution and propose future approval of the document sits with Education Committee	<p>It is an annual requirement for the Students' Union Constitution to be presented and approved by the Full Governing Body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The constitution has been re-written from last year and includes an addition to increase support for student governors and presidents at the start of the role. • There is a proposal that authority for the Students' Union Constitution is delegated to the Education Committee rather than the Full Governing Body. <p>The Chair requested a review is carried out of Group policies and procedures currently under the delegated responsibility of the Full Governing Body. Many of the policies will sit more appropriately under individual Committee or Executive level approval and can be delegated as such.</p> <p>APPROVED: Future approval of Students' Union Constitution to sit with Education Committee.</p> <p>ACTION: Group Director of Governance to review the delegated authority of Group policies and procedures for the next academic year.</p> <p>NOTED: Students' Union Constitution</p>	JC

<p>15 Minutes of Committee Meeting's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Committee (27.02.25) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Committee (04.03.25) 	<p>The draft minutes from the recent committee meetings were presented to the governing body for information and the following was noted:</p> <p><u>Education Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair of the Education Committee noted the useful input from the Deputy Director of Alternative Provision at the Education Committee meeting. It clearly demonstrates a good programme has been established and it is pleasing to note external referrals have been able to access the Alternative Provision Unit. It will be interesting to see progress going forward and opportunities for expansion. Standards of Teaching, Learning and Assessment discussions were positive, but noted the disappointing results for English and Maths. The Group have once again been awarded the Matrix Certificate. This is a Department for Education standard to ensure the quality of Information, Advice and Guidance services offered by the Group. The Quality Improvement Plan focused on improvement for sixth form and other examination based programmes. There is support underway to help students manage private study and revision sessions. Nurseries are doing well both in terms of educational provision and financially. <p>The Chair queried if the future governance of Alternative Provision would fall under the remit of Dover College Local Board.</p> <p>The Deputy CEO confirmed it will do so next year.</p> <p><u>Audit Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the outstanding £38,000 VAT claim discussed in the meeting has now been received. The Group will be proceeding with VAT claims for additional years. Work has been completed on financial management controls. An examination assurance audit is to be completed to ensure procedures are consistent
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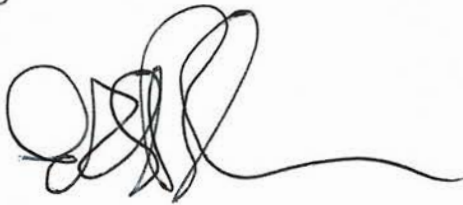
		<p>across the Group. The CFO confirmed that this work will be completed by the external auditor Azets.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search & Governance Committee (10/03/25) 	<p><u>Search & Governance Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of the Search and Governance Committee noted there are a number of governor vacancies. A selection of potential candidates is being reviewed by the committee and recommendations will be presented for FGB approval at the July meeting. • The Chair welcomed any additional candidate recommendations from existing governor members. <p>Governors suggested it would be beneficial to have a range of age groups on the Full Governing Body.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair commented that the Governor Skills Audit data had been reorganised into individual committees, and this was extremely useful in determining correct allocation of skills. • The Chair reminded governors not to be overly self-critical in the completion of the Skills Audit. • The Chair noted that legal refresher training had been arranged to take place prior to the July FGB meeting. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration Committee (10/03/25) 	<p><u>Remuneration Committee</u></p> <p>Nothing to report to the FGB outside of the committee minutes.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Committee (13/03/25) 	<p><u>Business Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of Business Committee noted the innovation of the sustainability project in Canterbury College where the Group are employing students to install LED lighting as part of work experience. The students will be supervised by electricians and paid for the work over the summer holiday. The IT department are providing similar opportunities to 	

		<p>IT students. It is really positive that students are working on the fabric of their own college buildings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growth plan in Ashford was discussed. The Group Leadership Board are investigating how the Group can expand the current site and planning applications will be submitted in due course. • The CFO has completed the first draft of 2025/26 revenue forecast which will give the incoming CEO and CFO a strong foundation for the coming year. <p>Governors questioned whether the Group can better deploy the surplus growth income to benefit students.</p> <p>The CEO confirmed a percentage of the growth income will be deployed to provide curriculum equipment, however it can be challenging to have capacity to initiate large-scale improvement projects e.g. installation of mass IT equipment.</p> <p>Governors noted it is often the smaller value projects that provide immediate impact and enrichment to students.</p> <p>Governors suggested that the surplus could perhaps be used to engage extra tutors to support students with Mathematics and English GCSEs.</p> <p>Governors noted student enrichment is very important and asked if more could be done to improve real life opportunities for student experience.</p> <p>The CEO commented that following the 2024 A 'Level results, the Executive Team were rapidly consulted to establish what resources could be made available to greater support students to make improvements. This was only possible due to available funding from the surplus income and is a good example of how this income can be effectively utilised.</p> <p>NOTED: The draft minutes of Committee Meetings</p>	
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16	Staff Pay including National Living Wage Confidential item	Only Independent Governors, CEO and GDG in attendance. This item was considered confidential and will form Confidential Minutes Part B (2).	
17	Senior Post holder Policies Confidential item	Only Independent Governors and GDG in attendance. This item was considered confidential and will form Confidential Minutes Part B (3).	
18	Any Other Business	The CEO reported on the success of the recent Ofsted thematic monitoring review of teacher training. Three Ofsted Inspectors reviewed the Initial Teacher Education programme and spoke to the Group trainees. The provision and support were noted as positive and particularly so for teachers of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). There is no formal feedback for a thematic review, but it was a very positive inspection. The CEO commented that the Executive Team performed very well for the visit. No other business.	
19	Matters Considered Confidential	Items 11, 16 and 17.	
20	Date and time of next meeting	The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 8th July, 2pm FGB Strategic Event followed by FGB meeting at 5:30pm	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19:31

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Print: Charles Buchanan

Date: 8 July 2025