

Full Governing Minutes

Meeting	Full Governing Body	Date	Tuesday 10 December 2024
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), <i>Helen Hammond</i> , Carmel Togher, Sam Lawrence-Rose, Tammy Mitchell, <i>John Oliphant</i> , Evie Kuschel (Student Governor)		
In Attendance	Lucy McLeod (LM) (Deputy Chief Executive Officer) Chris Legg (CL) (Chief Financial Officer) Victoria Copp-Crawley (VC-C) (Executive Principal) Kerry Hickmott (KH) (Chief People Officer) Paul Sayers (PS) (Chief Information and Strategy Officer) Jamie Weir, Chief Communications Officer Dan Shelley (DS) (Chief Infrastructure & Transformation Officer) Sharon Hollingsworth (GDG) (Group Director of Governance) Nicole Leader (NL) (Minute Taker)		

Italics denotes absence

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and Apologies for Absence	<p>The Chair welcomed the following members to the meeting:</p> <p>Evie Kuschel the new Student Governor, Evie will also be joining the Education committee.</p> <p>Jack Collinson attended the meeting shadowing the Group Director of Governance in preparation for his new role.</p> <p>Apologies received from John Oliphant and Helen Hammond.</p> <p>Jo Worby joined by TEAMS at 17.40.</p> <p>Jaiden King had decided to step down from his student governor role on 25 November 2024.</p>	

2	Declarations of Interest	<p>Ella Brocklebank declared an interest regarding agenda item 11.</p> <p>There were no other declarations of interest under this item other than those declared as standing.</p>	
3	Minutes of the meeting held 4 October 2024, including any confidential minutes	The minutes and confidential minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on 4 October 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 that his main update would be covered in item 20.</p> <p>The Chair informed the Board that regular meetings have been taken place between the CEO, Deputy CEO, and Group Director of Governance.</p> <p>The Chair has also Interaction with the sector via AoA online.</p> <p>NOTED: The Chairs Report.</p>	
6	CEO's Report	<p>The CEO's report was taken as read, the CEO drew attention to the following political and national issues and news from the Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently there is a policy void, we are waiting on a number of announcements and reforms on certain qualifications and reverse decisions from previous government. - Re-announcement of funding and commitments for next year but nothing for in-year. There is an additional £300 million revenue funding for Further Education. The finding is expected to come through to the sector in April 2025, the next financial year. <p>The Group has grown in student numbers again and funding is expected for this growth.</p> <p>Two of our students from Canterbury College have received gold and bronze medals in the UK WorldSkills competition for Graphic Design. It is worth noting that one of the students received the first perfect score ever in Graphic Design. The Governing body are asked to write to Rob Black to thank him for his time, commitment and achievement.</p>	GDC

		<p>East Kent Colleges Group has won the Employer of the Year Award at this year's Kent Invicta Chamber Business Awards. This is the first time EKC Group has been recognised as a business and received positive praise for what we are doing for our staff.</p> <p>Beacon award submitted and shortlisted in the widening participation category at Eastchurch. Assessments to take place and results announced in March.</p> <p>Within the CEO's report there is an update on the strategic priorities. The Task and Finish group's recommendations being considered by Group Leadership Board and will report back to the Board on the recommendations and impact.</p> <p>An announcement has been made by government regarding Devolution of Kent and Medway councils including the districts and boroughs. We are working with the authorities on this new development.</p> <p>NOTED: The Group CEO report.</p>	
7	Group Director of Governance Report	<p>The Group Director of Governance presented the Governance Report and asked the Board to consider the following:</p> <p>Three items required approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of the AoC Code of Good Governance 2024 - Senior Post holders Policies and Procedures - Governor Development Programme 2024/25 <p>These items have been previously reviewed by the Search & Governance Committee and are recommended for approval.</p> <p>A self-assessment exercise will be undertaken against the new code during the current academic.</p> <p>The Senior post holders policies and procedures are approved on the basis that a legal firm will be commissioned in the new year to review the Senior Post Holders Disciplinary, Capability, Redundancy, Grievance these against legal and sector compliance.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The following items were approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of the AoC Code of Good Governance 2024 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senior Post holders Policies and Procedures - Governor Development Programme 2024/25 <p>NOTED: The Group Director of Governance Report</p>	
8	Draft Strategic Plan 2025-29	<p>The draft goals and objectives for the Strategic Plan 2025-29 was presented to members of the Full Governing Body and governors were invited to comment.</p> <p>It was noted that this will be the last opportunity to discuss the plan before consultation.</p> <p>There had been a number of changes as a result of Governors' feedback at the Strategy event in October.</p> <p>There will be an internal and external consultation which will comprise of face to face meetings and online surveys. Consultation with local college boards will also take place in January.</p> <p>Responses from the consultation will feed into the drafting of the final version of the plan, which will be presented to the March 2025 FGB meeting for approval.</p> <p>NOTED: The draft goals and objectives for the Strategic Plan 2025-29 RESOLVED: The draft goals and objectives approved for consultation</p>	
9	2024-25 Microsoft licence renewal	<p>DS presented the paper setting out the proposal for the 2024-25 Microsoft Licence renewal. Based on current infrastructure and staff numbers the contract for the 2025 calendar year will be £251,796.36 including VAT. This is lower than the funding included in this year's business planning.</p> <p>DS informed the Board that there is no alternative to explore.</p> <p>A Governor asked if we have sight of next year's increase due to AI. There will be an addition of a few co-pilot licenses, which may be funded on a polit basis via a separate project.</p> <p>Approved: 2024-25 Microsoft licence renewal</p>	
10	Capital programme:	<p>DS presented a paper requesting approval for funding for phase two of the Folkestone College site and Sheppey College Development.</p>	

<p>Folkestone college phase 2</p>	<p>Phase 2 of Folkestone College will remove the poor-quality Trust building, secure the site and release the rear of the site for future development. The work would be carried out over two academic years with completion planned for December 2025.</p> <p>A Governor enquired how this would impact the Nursery at Folkestone. DS assured the Governors that most of the work is internal, and demolition work will be slow. It would be made clear to the contractors that this is a live site and consideration of this is needed and will be a requirement in the tender specification.</p> <p>Costings provided by B&M</p> <p>Approved: Folkestone College phase 2 with funding for this phase of the project from Group funds.</p>
<p>Sheppey College Development</p>	<p>[Ella Brocklebank left the meeting for this item]</p> <p>This paper is to seek an increase to the EKC Group contribution for additional funding for this project in the 2025/26 academic year.</p> <p>The increase is due to a number of VE items not being realised impacting the contract value.</p> <p>The sums provided within the report are actual and further changes expected.</p> <p>The contingency for the project will be reduced and the CFO has confirmed that this is affordable but will significantly reduce the capital programme budget for next year.</p> <p>A Governor expressed concerns with the additional cost and asked for options if the extension does not go ahead. The Board was informed that the Government may claw back funding. Leaving Swale Borough council to re-allocate the funding in Sheppey.</p> <p>The Sheppey Local board is very positive about the project and feels it is worth the additional cost to be able to deliver the programmes to the wider community. The extension will not increase student numbers dramatically but will make Sheppey College more competitive and may attract people from Sittingbourne. There is a lack of technical facilities on the Sheppey site and is an overdue investment.</p>

		Approved: Increase to the EKC Group contribution of an additional £212,990 (including VAT) of Group funding in addition to the £95,649 (inc. VAT) agreed in October for this project in the 2025/26 Academic Year.	
11	Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023/24	<p>[Ella Brocklebank returned to the meeting]</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer summarised the annual report and financial statements 2023/24, as well as the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Yarrow Hotel Ltd. It was explained that these had been scrutinised by the Business Committee and the Audit Committee and are being recommended for final sign off from the Full Governing Body.</p> <p>It was clarified that Folkestone College Restaurant Ltd is dormant.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Group Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023/24 approved. The e-signing by the Chair of the Governing Body and Chief Accounting Officer will be undertaken following the meeting.</p>	
	Post Audit Management Report	<p><u>Post Audit Management Report</u></p> <p>Resolved: The Post Audit Management Report was approved</p>	
	Letter of Representation	<p><u>EKC Group Letter of Representation</u></p> <p>RESOLVED: Letter of representation approved for signing. The e-signing by the Chair of the Governing Body and Chief Accounting Officer will be undertaken following the meeting.</p>	
	Management Accounts – October 2024	<p><u>Yarrow Hotel Ltd Letter of Representation</u></p> <p>RESOLVED: Letter of representation approved. The e-signing by the Chair of the Governing Body and Chief Accounting Officer will be undertaken following the meeting.</p> <p><u>Management accounts</u></p> <p>The management accounts for October 2024 had been reviewed and thoroughly examined by the Finance Sub-Group prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Quarter 1 review completed. Adult skills Funding close to hitting target. Apprenticeship has lower activity on the adult side, could make up some of the shortfall with an in-year push but will not make target.</p>	

	Sage Intaact contract	<p>Core pay expenditure underspent due to timing of posts being filled in time for September. Some additional posts have been added to facilitate the 16-19 student growth, so teaching costs are expected to level out.</p> <p>Non-pay expenditure is underspent but due to student growth additional resources will need to be purchased so the underspend is expected to reduce.</p> <p>Overall, it is a positive position and is expected to continue throughout the year.</p> <p>Monthly finance sub-group meetings continue.</p> <p>All banking covenants are met, and financial health is reported as “Outstanding”.</p> <p>NOTED: October 2024 Management Accounts</p> <p>The CFO reported that the current finance system is not fit for purpose and is proposing to move to Sage Intaact for Education. This system is designed around multi-academy trusts, so will work well in both the Group and the Trust.</p> <p>The finance team and budget holders have had a deep dive into the proposal and the support for the new system is widespread.</p> <p>A Governor asked what the impact of the change will be on the business. The Group are confident that this is well overdue and now is the time to change.</p> <p>Implementation will get underway in February 2025 with a launch in August 2025 for the Group and September 2025 for the Trust.</p> <p>The finance system is part of the service that we currently provide for the trust and the new system will not impact on EKC Schools Trust budget.</p> <p>Approved: Sage Intaact contract.</p>	
12	Annual Audit Committee Report 2023/24	The Chair of Audit Committee presented the Committees Annual Report to the Governing Body and assured members that there were no issues to report.	

	10.1 Audit Committee Self-Assessment Evaluation 10.2 Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire	<p>The report sets out the responsibility of the audit committee within the financial statements and provides assurance that the committee is fulfilling its duties.</p> <p>Regularity questionnaire identifies the controls in place to ensure that the Group is dealing with grants and value for money appropriately and provides the Board with assurance to sign off the regularity.</p> <p>Based upon the work of the Group's Internal Auditors and External Auditors, as well as management awareness, the Audit Committee is of the opinion and is satisfied that the internal control systems which have been reviewed have been adequate and effective and having noted that any action points have been addressed.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that the Audit Committee had previously reviewed the presented Regularity Self-Assessment, and the Committee Chair assured members that they were satisfied with the outcome.</p> <p>There were no concerns raised.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Regulatory self-assessment questionnaire was approved. The e-signing by the Chair of the Governing Body and the Accounting Officer will be undertaken following the meeting.</p>	
13	Safeguarding Report	<p>[KY joined the meeting via Teams at 18.43pm for this item]</p> <p>KY led the Governors through the annual report and informed the Governors that the processes in place have worked well considering student growth. Key personal changes have focused on consolidation and the Committee has focused on quality, resources and students are safe.</p> <p>A Governor asked if a comparison to other Colleges in Kent can be made but KY was unsure that this was something that can be compared. Themes are similar across the country.</p> <p>There were no further questions, and KY was thanked for her report and attendance.</p> <p>[KY left the meeting]</p> <p>APPROVED: The Safeguarding Annual Report</p>	

14	Annual Remuneration Statement 2023/24	<p>The Chair of Remuneration Committee summarised the annual remuneration statement 2023/24 and asked for comment. Governors were comfortable with the statement.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Annual Remuneration Statement 2023/24 for publication.</p>	GDG
15	Annual Report on Health and Safety	<p>The Chief Infrastructure and Transformation Officer summarised the annual health and safety report.</p> <p>There was a slight increase in the number of incidents reported but this is not a concern, as the reporting arrangements have been simplified to make reporting more accurate.</p> <p>It was noted that there have been 6 reported RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) incidents, the same figure as the previous year; these are not due to workplace failings and have increased due to the easier reporting mechanisms.</p> <p>The Chair meets with the H&S lead and gives assurance that this is being well managed.</p> <p>APPROVED: The Annual Health and Safety Report.</p>	
16	Gender Pay Gap Reporting	<p>The Chief People Officer presented the Gender Pay Gap Report seeking approval for publication.</p> <p>The report had previously been reviewed by the Business Committee and recommended for approval by FGB. This paper outlined the progress the EKC Group has made towards closing the Gender Pay Gap across all Statutory reporting measures for the reporting period 2024/25.</p> <p>The data snapshot was taken on 31st March 2024 as is required for consistency. It was clarified that an action plan is in place to continue to reduce the Gender Pay Gap.</p> <p>APPROVED: Gender Pay Gap report for publication</p>	CPO
17	Policy Update - Complaints Policy	<p>The Chief Information and Strategy Officer summarised the key changes made to the Complaints Policy.</p> <p>Members noted the comprehensiveness of the policy and stated how well it reads.</p> <p>A Governor questioned the procedure for situations 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.</p> <p>It was suggested that while attendance is stated as a reason for suspension, the absence policy is not</p>	


		stated within the relevant policies.	
		APPROVED: The Complaints Policy subject to the above changes.	
18	Minutes of Committee Meeting's: Education Committee (14.11.24) Group Self-Assessment Quality Improvement Plan Education CPIs 2024-25 Search & Governance Committee (19.11.24) Remuneration Committee (19.11.24) Business Committee (21.11.24) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit Committee (26.11.24) 	<p>The Chair asked the committee chairs for comment:</p> <p><u>Education Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sub-contractor selection process approved at Education committee in November 2024 - Attendance noted on learning walks conducted by Governors <p><u>Group Self-Assessment Report (SAR)</u> was summarised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The SAR is graded this year comparing like for like provision and has an additional section for new and developing provision that is supported by the Quality Improvement Plan. It is agreed the new provision of Sixth Form, T levels and 2 year level 2 would sit under the standard judgement sections after completing the first year of delivery moving forward. <p>The SAR Graded all areas Outstanding with the new and developing provision ungraded in year 1.</p> <p>NOTED: Group Self-Assessment Report (SAR)</p> <p><u>The Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25</u> was summarised, there were no comments.</p> <p>NOTED: Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25</p> <p><u>Education CPIs 2024-25</u> were summarised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes to CPIs were highlighted. - CPIs form part of the Performance and Quality Cycle that reflects the performance of provision - Termly Group CPIs will be monitored by Group Leadership Board and The Student Experience Group - Local College Boards will monitor the Business unit quarterly performance - Education Committee will monitor the Group quarterly performance - Teaching Learning and Assessment CPI % of courses good or better was only slightly increased from last year. The Chairs of the local boards were asked if they are challenging Principals on target for improvement. Education Committee to review and challenge targets with local board chairs. <p>NOTED: Education CPI's 2024-25</p> <p><u>Search & Governance Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results from the recent skills audit will be discussed in governor 1-1 with the Chair of Governors. - Online directed internal training sessions to take place for governors; the first of which to be a legal 	

		<p>refresher session, followed by a session on finance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governors' overall attendance has improved from the previous year, it is higher than the FE sector average, however the overall governor attendance target of 90% is not being met. Individual governor attendance to be discussed in governor 1-1 with the Chair of governors. - Broadstairs Loal Chair is temporarily being covered by the Chair of Governors, but recruiting is in progress. <p><u>Remuneration Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terms of Reference for the Remuneration Committee were approved. - Annual Remuneration Statement 2023-24 covered above under agenda item 14. <p><u>Business Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ToR changed slightly and approved - The property sub committee disbanded; the work of the sub committee will be absorbed by the Business committee moving forward. Capital Programme reports will continue to be worked up for distribution to members of the Business Committee. <p><u>Audit Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting with external auditors without officers in attendance provided assurance to the committee and confirmation that there is nothing to report on the conduct of the audit. The finance team were praised for their support and cooperation during the Audit. - No changes in the audit and accounting structure to report. - Meeting with CL to discuss areas of risk to include in the internal audit work moving forward. Chair of Committee also met with the finance team to discuss audit and how important their work was. <p>NOTED: The Minutes of Committee Meetings</p>	
19	<p>Staff Pay Full discussion is Confidential</p>	<p>Only Independent Governors, CEO, KH and GDG in attendance.</p> <p>The Chief People Officer presented the Staff Pay Report. Governors carefully considered 3 scenarios as options to implement the Real Living Wage costs from 1st April 2025 which would positively impact on staff and workers on our lowest salary points. All 3 options had been thoroughly examined by the Group Leadership Board and the recommendation is that option 2 is implemented. Full details can be found in confidential Minutes Part A item 19.</p> <p>In line with the previous two years, it is recommended that all staff are issued with a voucher ahead of the Christmas break. Full details can be found in confidential Minutes Part A item 19.</p>	

		<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved option 2; revised salary scale in response to the renewal of the Real Living Wage accreditation and the National Minimum Wage for 2025 Approved staff are issued with a voucher for Christmas 	
20	<p>Group CEO Recruitment Full discussion is Confidential</p>	<p>Only Independent Governors and GDG in attendance.</p> <p>The Chair presented the paper relating to the Recruitment and Selection of the new Group CEO. Full details can be found in confidential Minutes Part B item 20.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To appoint Lucy McLeod as CEO of the Group, subject to, and following, Department of Education approval of Senior Pay application The nature of a statement to be put out to all staff Remuneration Committee to set the pay for the new CEO 	
21	<p>Any Other Business</p>	<p><u>Governance Agreement Between EKC Group and EKC Schools Trust</u></p> <p>A shared meeting had taken place directly prior to the Full Governing Body meeting to discuss the joint working arrangements and mutual support between the EKC Group and EKC Schools Trust (EKCST).</p> <p>The shared meeting concluded that both EKC Group Governors and EKCST Trustees were comfortable with the joint working arrangements and with the updated version of the Governance Agreement subject to one small change at 4.1.1 to state 'three (3) Members appointed by EKC Group'</p> <p>Tammy Mitchell declared her interest in the matter given her position as CEO of EKC Schools Trust and abstained from voting.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Governors approved the updated Governance Agreement subject to the above change and gave their consent for the Agreement to be signed by the Chair and the Group CEO following the meeting.</p>	<p>Chair/ CEO</p>
22	<p>Matters Considered Confidential</p>	<p>Items 19 (part) and 20 (part).</p>	
23	<p>Date and time of next meeting</p>	<p>The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 25 March 2025 at 5.30pm.</p>	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19:46pm

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Charles Buchanan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Print: Charles Buchanan

Date: 25 March 2025