

## Business Committee minutes

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| Meeting       | Business Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Date | 20 November 2025 |
| Location      | Online Meeting via Teams                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Time | 09:30            |
| Membership    | Charles Buchanan (CB), Gail Clarke (Chair) (GC), Francesca Lashmar (Staff Governor) (FL), Joanna Worby (JW), Lucy McLeod (CEO)(LM), Siobhan Phillips (SP)                                                                                                                              |      |                  |
| In Attendance | Matthew Cooper, (MC) Chief Financial Officer<br>Dan Shelley, (DS) Assistant CEO, Infrastructure and Transformation Officer<br>Kerry Hickmott, (KH) Chief People Officer<br>Jack Collison, (JC) Director of Corporate Services and Governance<br>Claire Banks, (CSB) Governance Officer |      |                  |

*\*Italics denotes absence*

|   | ITEM                                                                        | COMMENTS                                                                                                                                                                               | ACTION |
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| 1 | Welcome and apologies for absence                                           | The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. No apologies have been received. JW joined the meeting during item 5.                                                                       |        |
| 2 | Declarations of Interest                                                    | There were no additional declarations to the meeting than those declared as standing                                                                                                   |        |
| 3 | Minutes of the meeting held 19 June 2025 including any confidential minutes | The minutes and confidential minutes of the Business Committee meeting held on the 19 June 2025 were reviewed and approved as an accurate record and will be duly signed by the Chair. |        |
| 4 | Matters arising not covered by this agenda                                  | No matters arising.                                                                                                                                                                    |        |

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| 5 | Terms of Reference for Business Committee 2025-26 | <p>JC presented the Business Committee Terms of Reference for 2025/26 and confirmed there were no changes from the previous version.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AGREED: Terms of Reference for Business Committee 2025/26</b></p> <p>JW joined the meeting at 9:48</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
| 6 | Capital Programme Update                          | <p>The Assistant CEO, Infrastructure and Transformation (DS) presented the Capital Programme Update. The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margate Digital and Sheppey Extension - Both projects are behind schedule. Margate Digital experienced significant delays due to extended delivery time for doors (22 weeks instead of 8), impacting other works. Commissioning has begun on the second floor, with EKC Training expected to move in by 19 January 2026. The lease at Mill Lane has been extended by six weeks to accommodate this delay. Penalty charges will apply for late delivery: approx. £6.5k/week for Margate Digital and £12.5k/week for Sheppey Extension.</li> <li>• Sheppey Extension - First floor completion is expected by Term 3, with the second floor shortly after. The delay is caused by late discovery of a fireproofing design issue.</li> <li>• Dover Bench Street - On track for fit-out and opening in August/September 2026.</li> <li>• Folkestone Phase 2 - On schedule; now weatherproof and expected completion by end of March 2026, with the Trust building demolition to start at the end of March.</li> <li>• FE Transformation - 4,000 LED lights installed; 90% of whole estate has now been completed. Toilet block upgrades to roll out over five years. Initial £3.1m will be fully deployed by end of March 26.</li> <li>• All projects are forecast to remain on or under budget.</li> </ul> <p>Governors queried if there are any additional costs due to the delays. DS confirmed there is an additional cost of approximately £7,000 due to the Mill Lane lease extension</p> <p>Governors asked whether the Group are capturing power consumption and energy savings compared to previous levels.</p> |  |

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|  |  | <p>DS confirmed half-hourly meter readings are taken and reported. Demonstrable savings include a 20% reduction in electricity and heating costs following roof and glazing upgrades, alongside the LED lighting installation.</p> <p>Governors suggested a report comparing projected costs versus actual energy savings would be useful.</p> <p>DS confirmed a paper will be presented upon programme completion.</p> <p>Governors queried the timeline for deployment of the second tranche of FE Transformation funding. DS confirmed the deadline for spending is March 2028.</p> <p>Governors asked if the funding can be used for growth projects, or if it is purely for condition improvements.</p> <p>DS confirmed the funding is currently restricted to condition improvements.</p> <p>Governors queried if IT or IT connectivity falls under the definition of condition improvements, for funding purposes?</p> <p>DS confirmed IT equipment is specifically ineligible and IT connectivity is covered under the Digital Transformation Strategy with allocated funds.</p> <p>Governors queried if the Group are able to recover additional costs incurred from staying at Mill Lane longer due to contractor delays.</p> <p>DS confirmed the Liquidated and Ascertained Damages (LADs) within the contract, set at £6,500 per week for Margate Digital, more than covers the cost of the lease extension at Mill Lane.</p> | DS |
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|   | Extra Care Facility at Folkestone                                         | <p>Governors queried the Ashford New Town works and the unused education element of the development. If this is secured against housing receipts, how would the timing risks be managed. There may be a delay in build, creating potential cash flow issues.</p> <p>LM confirmed that details of the growth funding bids or allocation are yet to be disclosed, however the Group would bid for the full amount and not separate the New Town Works element, to avoid unnecessary complication.</p> <p>DS confirmed the Group would not proceed with any development without the funding being fully secured and physically available.</p> <p>Governors emphasised the importance of ring-fencing funding for development.</p> <p><i>This part of the item is considered confidential and will form Part A of the Confidential Minutes.</i></p> <p><b>NOTED: Capital Programme Update</b></p> |  |
| 7 | 31 July 2025 Managements Accounts (including any changes following audit) | <p>The Chief Financial Officer (MC) presented the July 2025 management accounts, and the following was noted:</p> <p>MC reported there were two post-audit changes to note from last year's management accounts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottom Line performance - The surplus increased from £7.5m to £7.9m, representing a £400k improvement and raising the performance ratio to 9.7%.</li> <li>• Material Adjustment - The increase is primarily due to an insurance payout of £689k relating to the motor vehicle workshop fire. Initially recorded on the balance sheet to offset repair costs, auditors required this to be reclassified as income, thereby increasing reported income and the bottom line.</li> </ul> <p>Governors had no questions or comments.</p>                                                                                             |  |



|   |                                                   | NOTED: July 2025 Management Accounts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
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| 8 | October 2025 Managements Accounts – Verbal Update | <p>The Chief Financial Officer (MC) presented a verbal update to the October 2025 management accounts. The following was noted:</p> <p>MC noted due to the ongoing implementation of the Sage system, management accounts have been delayed. September accounts are expected to be finalised by 28 November. October accounts should follow within the following two weeks. Progress may slow temporarily due to the impending vacancy in the Head of Financial Planning and Analysis role, but catch-up work will continue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>September Accounts:</b><br/>           Work is progressing well despite earlier delays. The team has resolved data issues, and the balance sheet now reconciles fully. Cash flow is balanced, and pay figures are largely accurate. Non-pay expenditure remains under review, with current recorded spend at £1.7m versus a budget of £3.2m.         </li> <li> <b>Process Improvements:</b><br/>           Significant efficiencies have been introduced, including:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamlined management accounts model with all monthly adjustments and validation checks consolidated in one place.</li> <li>Faster drill-down to transaction level, reducing analysis time from hours to minutes.</li> <li>Plans to enable direct drill-down in Sage for further efficiency.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Governors queried whether Sage would allow comparison with prior year data.</p> <p>MC confirmed that historic data will not be migrated into Sage due to complexity and resource constraints, but comparisons can be provided from existing spreadsheets. MC noted that current practice focuses on variance against latest forecast, which is generally considered most useful.</p> <p>Following discussion Governors agreed that prior year comparisons may be more appropriate on a quarterly or half-yearly basis rather than monthly.</p> |  |

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|   |               | <p><u>The Yarrow</u></p> <p>MC reported on the resolution of an historic bad debt issue relating to the Yarrow Hotel, which owed the Group approximately £328k. A detailed review was undertaken to establish a fair and realistic financial position for the Yarrow, recognising its unique role within the Group. Four key adjustments were applied, totalling £292K:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real Living Wage Impact: - Additional costs incurred by Yarrow due to Group policy.</li> <li>• Utility Costs - Transfer of Group office utility costs from Yarrow to the Group.</li> <li>• Room Hire for Group Functions - Adjustment for discounted or free use by the Group.</li> <li>• Student Training Provision - Recognition of the value of training hours provided by Yarrow to EKC students, calculated using average income per student hour.</li> </ul> <p>These adjustments have largely resolved the bad debt issue. Preliminary figures indicate that the Yarrow may now be operating at a profit after adjustments. MC confirmed the auditors have reviewed and approved the adjustment.</p> <p>Governors queried whether the adjustment was to be paid to the Yarrow or if it was an amount to write off the bad debt.</p> <p>MC confirmed this figure represents the value of adjustments, not a write-off of debt. Adjustments have been backdated to clear the historic debt.</p> <p>LM noted that the adjustments total £292k exceeds the Chief Executive's delegated approval limit of £150k, therefore Business Committee approval is required.</p> <p>Governors confirmed approval of the £292K adjustment to be paid to the Yarrow.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AGREED: £292K adjustment to be paid to the Yarrow</b><br/><b>NOTED: October 2025 Management Accounts</b></p> |  |
| 9 | Risk Register | <p>The Director of Corporate Services and Governance presented the Risk Register. The following was noted:</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |

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|    |                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Risk Register has been updated to align with the 2025-29 Strategic Plan and is now presented for review. Committee members were asked to consider risks 4,5,6 and 7 under their delegated responsibility, and recommend the register for submission to the Audit Committee.</li> </ul> <p>Governors queried risk 5, noting that the responsibility for '<i>implementing adequate safeguarding controls to protect students from harm</i>' is the responsibility of Education Committee rather than Business Committee, as a pastoral requirement. Business Committee cover the Health and Safety elements of '<i>providing a safe learning environment for all that promotes well-being</i>'.</p> <p>Following discussion, Governors agreed that risk 5 is referred back to the Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee to resolve and draw a clear distinction between physical infrastructure (Business Committee) and pastoral safeguarding (Education Committee).</p> <p>Governors also suggested a revised format of scoring would be helpful, (previously discussed at Education Committee on 13 November 2025), to reflect the following:<br/>Unmitigated Risk → Mitigation → Current Risk → Residual Risk → Target Risk.</p> <p><b>NOTED: Risk Register</b></p> | JC |
| 10 | Gender Pay Gap Action Plan | <p>The Chief People Officer (KH) presented the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, following the report previously reviewed at the Business Committee meeting on 19 June 2025. The data is based on the snapshot as at 31 March 2025. The paper outlines proposed actions that Group will be taking to address the gender pay gap. The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Group narrative reflects a high proportion of lower-paid roles occupied by women, largely due to societal factors and caregiving responsibilities, which make flexible roles more attractive.</li> <li>The two-year action plan aims to focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing support mechanisms to encourage more women into management and leadership positions</li> <li>Achieving a more balanced male/female ratio in the lower and middle pay quartiles</li> <li>Monitoring Data</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |    |



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|  |  | <p>Governors noted the Gender Pay Gap can be misleading – the real issue is unequal pay for the same role.</p> <p>KH confirmed the Group's pay scales have fixed points and do not differentiate by gender. The report reflects role distribution, not unequal pay.</p> <p>Governors noted the Group campaign to raise the profile of women in management. Could the Group undertake something similar for men in lower-level roles. Perhaps a male learning support network could be considered.</p> <p>Governors also suggested an analysis of staff turnover by grade and gender would be useful.</p> <p>KH will review turnover data and present in due course. KH suggested including this element in exit interviews to gather insights.</p> <p>LM clarified the women's network is open to all roles, not just management.</p> <p>MC supported the idea of a men's network, noting perceptions of imbalance.</p> <p>KH confirmed men can join the women's network and will make this clearer.</p> <p>LM will include messaging to this effect in a CEO update.</p> <p>Governors suggested including feedback on inclusivity in the next staff survey and reviewing how networks are labelled.</p> <p>KH confirmed the Staff Survey questions are set by York College, however a Group Pulse Survey could be an option and will explore this further. KH noted that other networks (e.g., fostering and adoption) are male-led.</p> <p><b>NOTED: Gender Pay Gap Action Plan</b></p> | <p>KH</p> <p>KH</p> <p>LM</p> <p>KH</p> |
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| 11 | Staff Survey Update and Management Action Plan | <p>Staff Survey Results were presented to the Full Governing Body meeting on 3 October 2025. This paper outlines actions to strengthen leadership capability, staff engagement, and organisational culture across the Group. Key initiatives include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Unit Action Plans: Targeted plans addressing survey feedback, monitored via Local College Boards.</li> <li>• Leadership Development: Internal training, CPD Hub resources, and the Aspiring Managers programme (21 participants).</li> <li>• Staff Survey Improvements: Broader reporting categories to ensure anonymity and increase participation.</li> <li>• Pulse Surveys: Focused surveys on communication, workload, and leadership visibility.</li> <li>• Strategic Communication: Launch of the new Strategic Plan to inform and involve staff.</li> <li>• Staff Voice: CEO forums, 'You Said, We Did' campaigns, and practical responses to feedback.</li> <li>• Collaboration: Sharing best practice with York survey colleges for benchmarking.</li> <li>• Workspace Flexibility: Hotdesk booking system and expanded workspaces at key campuses.</li> <li>• Academic Year Consultation: Proposal to reduce from 38 to 35 weeks for compliance and planning time.</li> <li>• Workload Management: Ongoing review of processes to improve efficiency.</li> <li>• Next Steps: Continue engagement, transparent communication, and targeted development initiatives aligned with Group strategic objectives.</li> </ul> <p>Governors queried if the proposed reduction of the academic year from 38 to 35 weeks relates to delivery time only and does not reduce contracted working time for employees.</p> <p>KH confirmed this is the case.</p> <p>LM reported that current arrangements make it difficult to evidence student attendance in the final three weeks of term, which could impact funding bands.</p> <p>A Governor noted at the Education Committee meeting on 13 November 2025, a request had been received from a Local College Board to view other College survey results for comparison.</p> |  |
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|    |                                 | <p>Governors agreed that sharing comparative data between colleges would not be appropriate and potentially damaging to morale, given differences in size, context, and structure.</p> <p>KH confirmed current reporting provides each college with its own results, the Group average and comparison against its previous year's performance.</p> <p>Governors also noted that sharing inter-college results may further undermine anonymity assurances.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOTED: Staff Survey Update and Management Action Plan</b></p> |  |
| 12 | Report on HR Matters            | <i>This item is considered confidential and will form Part A of the Confidential Minutes.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| 13 | Any Other Business              | No other business raised.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
| 14 | Matters Considered Confidential | <p>Item 6 – Section on Folkestone Extra Care facility</p> <p>Item 12 - HR matters</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
| 15 | Date and time of next meeting   | Thursday 12 March 2026 at 9:30am - ONLINE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10:59am.

Signed: GAIL CLARKE

Print: GAIL CLARKE

Date: 12-03-2026