



# BOARD OF GOVERNORS BRIEFING

EAST SUSSEX COLLEGE GROUP

## Welcome to the East Sussex College Group (ESCG) Board Briefing.

The college's governing body is known as the East Sussex College Group Board. We have legal responsibility for the college, and our role is to give strategic oversight to the college. Governors do not involve themselves in the day-to-day management of the College. Those responsibilities are fulfilled by the CEO & Principal and her Executive Team. If you haven't already, you can read all about the Governors here: [Meet the Governors](#)

The Board met on 7 December 2020.

An hour-long Board Briefing session focusing on the College Estates' Strategy preceded the Board meeting. Development proposals and rationale were noted, and the educational and running costs benefits of each phase, per campus, were debated. Assurance was provided that initial enabling works are funded by a Government grant. The Board approved the disposal of two surplus assets to support furthering the aims of the Estate's Strategy.

The meeting opened with a discussion about the Student Governor and Member elections. A number of strong applications to join the Board and its Committees have been received by a range of learners across the College. The Governance Development Committee of the Board will be reviewing these in the next few weeks.

The Board received the latest update on Covid-19 cases from the CEO. It was noted that internal auditors have judged that the college is effectively managing its response to Covid-19. The Ofsted interim visit in October 2020 provided similar feedback.

The Board received an update from the Executive Team on progress against the College Recovery Plan, (discussed in the [Board briefing from the last meeting](#)) and agreed to changing the consultation timeline for the ESCG Strategic Plan 2021-2024, which is due to be published in full, by Easter 2021.

Student engagement, attendance and retention was noted as broadly very positive. The Board were advised an early student 'pulse' survey delivered a student satisfaction score of 8/10 at each campus. Student Councils have met, and leaders and managers are currently working through the top 10 priorities identified by students. Local College Boards and the Curriculum and Standards Committee will support and challenge progress.

The Board is accountable to its students, to the wider community it serves, and to other stakeholders for the quality and standards of the provision offered. Throughout the year, the Board monitors and challenges performance against a set of key performance indicators and other sources of information. Annually, the college presents validated self-assessment judgements to the Board for approval. The Board approved the following 'Good' judgements.

AREA	GRADE
Overall Effectiveness	Good
Quality of Education	Good
Behaviour and Attitudes	Good
Personal Development	Good
Leadership and Management	Good
Education Programmes for Young People	Good
Adult Learning Programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for Students with High Needs	Good

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**OCTOBER**

Alongside the self-assessment sits a quality improvement plan, which contains clear targets and 67 actions for improvement. If you would like to know more about self-assessment activity or the validation process, please contact the Director of Governance at [mia.bryden@escg.ac.uk](mailto:mia.bryden@escg.ac.uk)

College finances continue to be fragile with issues reported regarding:

- 16-18 recruitment is short of target, but 'in year' starts are planned.
- 20% behind on AEB income with plans in place to narrow this gap.
- Impacts to commercial income which has been significantly impacted by Covid.
- c.10% overall income reduction likely (c. £500k) in apprenticeships.
- The EBITDA has been Impacted by changes to income streams.

You will be able to read the Board approved [Annual Accounts](#) in the New Year.

The Board approved the enacting of a 1% budgeted cost of living award. This will be backdated from September and paid in the January pay run for all college staff on a pay scale. The Board would like to be able to award more, but had to take into consideration the fragile financial position of the college and sector and the unknowns faced as a result of Covid-19.

The Board noted that a New 'People Strategy' with a renewed focus on values, culture, and morale, a targeted approach to addressing the issues that arose from the 2019 Staff Survey, is in draft ready for consultation with staff and key stakeholders in January 2021.

As reported in the last briefing the Board is reviewing its corporate governance. The Director of Governance provided an update on progress against the [Governance Improvement Plan 2020-21](#)

The College's policy on risk management has been aligned with the emerging Strategic Plan 2021-24 and centred on short-term recovery and long-term growth strategy. The Board approved the revised [Risk Management Policy](#).

The CEO presented a new draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. The CEO will lead this area of work moving forward to signal its significance. Governors asked for strengthening of the Reasonable Adjustments and Bullying and Harassment sections. The Board were advised that an 'EDI Committee' made up of staff, students, Governors and EDI community stakeholders will be established in January 2021. It is hoped that an EDI Strategy will be reviewed by this Committee and brought back for approval at the next Full Board meeting.

The Board next meets on 23 March 2021.

If you would like to discuss any aspects of this short briefing, please contact Mia Bryden, Director of Governance at [mia.bryden@escg.ac.uk](mailto:mia.bryden@escg.ac.uk) or on 07768335984.

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