



BOARD OF GOVERNORS BRIEFING

EAST SUSSEX COLLEGE GROUP



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JULY 2021

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

The East Sussex College Group Board has a legal responsibility for the College. The Board's role is to give strategic oversight to the College and ensure its overall well-being and financial solvency. Governors do not involve themselves in the day-to-day management of the College as those responsibilities are fulfilled by the CEO/Principal and her Executive Team.

The Board last met on 14 July 2021. This was the final meeting of the academic year 2020-21. You can read the minutes [here](#).

The first decision of the meeting concerned the continuation of the Chair's term of office following his annual Performance Review. The Board were delighted to approve the Governance Development Committee's recommendation that the Chair continues in role until March 2022. The Chair has indicated he would like to step down after this time, and succession planning will commence in the autumn term.

The Board approved four new Independent Governors, one new co-opted member and six new Local College Board members to join the governance structure in the next academic year. Discussions will continue with the prospective members over the summer to finalise their committee roles contributions to governance work by the time of the next Board meeting (12th October) More information on the appointments will be published on the [Meet the Board](#) page.

The Board received an update from the CEO and her Executive Team on current College priorities. Student recruitment numbers and the subsequent impacts on the College's financial situation remains a real focus for the Board.

The Board were advised the College had been unsuccessful in its Further Education Capital Transformation Fund (FECTF) bid. The fund was available from the Department for Education to give Colleges the chance to bid for investment in capital projects to upgrade College buildings. The [Capital Development Project Board](#) (a time-limited Committee of the main Board) will now be considering options going forward, including a preventative maintenance programme to reduce the impacts of further deterioration on the College estate. The Executive Team will continue to explore all opportunities to upgrade Eastbourne and Lewes campuses.

The Budget for 2021-22 was approved, with the caveat that it may need further review in the autumn term.

The Board resolved to approve the proposal (supported by the Finance Committee) to wind up the subsidiary company, Plaza Trading Hastings Ltd. The Subway Franchise has ceased.

The Board received the Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Reports and were advised the College will be launching an approach with all new and existing staff in the new academic year to confirm and clarify the purpose and intentions of asking for personal data to better understand current challenges and opportunities in terms of EDI across the College.

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The following policies were approved, and will shortly be accessible on the Staff Intranet:

- Tuition and Fees Policy
- Student Support Funds
- Counter Fraud Policy
- Subcontracting and Supply Chain Policy
- GDPR
- Emergency Plan, Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan
- Health, Safety and Welfare
- Risk Management Policy
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy

The Board approved all Committee Terms of Reference and [Programme of work](#) for the Board and Committee's over the next academic year.

The Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee asked the Board to approve the Internal Audit Plan for 2021-22. Internal audit provides independent, objective assurance over the College's risk management, internal control, governance and the processes in place for ensuring effectiveness, efficiency and economy. Topics for scrutiny over the year include: online enrolment and student experience, health and safety and cyber-security. The Board also approved the extension of internal and external auditors for one further year.

The Board approved changes to the College's bank mandate. A bank mandate sets out the list of people that are authorised to access and manage the company bank account to carry out day to day business.

The College is reporting negative reserves (accumulated losses) in the annual financial statements as a result of the actuarial valuations of the local government pension liabilities. This constitutes a technical default of the terms and conditions of the facility agreement with the Bank (this is an agreement in which the Bank sets out the rules on which it is prepared to make a loan facility available to a borrower). As the College has been able to demonstrate improving financial health the Bank has agreed to amend the facility agreement and the Board approved the signing of the waiver and variation letters.

The Board next meets on 12 October 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 or on 07768335984.

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