**ESCG Board Committee**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | 8 July | Time | 1. 15 pm |
| Venue | Zoom | | |
| Chair | David Smith | | |
| **Membership**- David Smith (Chair), Rebecca Conroy, Kevin Cowley, Mark Fisher, Ian Mehrtens, Joanne Rogers, Gill Short, Josef Groves, Leo Hunnisett, Aleksandra Figat, Marie Sangster, Steve Hedges, Suzanne Green, Sue Maynard, Graham Cook, Catherine Manning, Andy Vincent, Angela  Smith  In attendance – Tim Hulme, Martin Penny, Dan Shelley, Becky Cooke, Mia Bryden | | | |
| **Apologies:** Josef Groves, Aleksandra Figat | | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Item | Action |
|  |  |  |
|  | **Welcome to new governors & apologies**  Sue Maynard, Catherine Manning, Graham Cook, Suzanne Green and Andy Vincent were officially welcomed as new Governors to the ESCG Board. |  |
|  | **Declarations of Interest**  No new declarations of interest were made.  David Smith reminded the Board that in September Mia Bryden would be asking all Governors and the Executive Team to complete annual declarations**.** |  |
|  | **Minutes of the last meetings 31 March & 6 May 2020**  THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING ON 31 MARCH WERE AGREED AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD.  Minutes from 6 May 2020, a meeting of Independent Governors, were agreed to be taken in Part C of today’s meeting. |  |
|  | **Matters Arising & Written Resolutions**  **Matters arising**  Angela Smith advised that the internal audit plan could not be fully carried out as envisaged due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but that since the last Board meeting an audit plan has been agreed for the remainder of the year.  Rebecca Conroy advised a meeting took place with Rob Cottrill, Ian Fitzpatrick, David Smith, Ian Mehrtens and Tim Hulme on Monday 18 May to ensure a collective understanding of perspectives on the College estates agenda. It was described as a positive meeting, setting up a successful partnership going forward.  Martin Penny updated on a positive meeting with Barclays and advised that close working around the covenant arrangement continues.  Rebecca Conroy advised that the first case conference since Tuesday 17 March had taken place on Friday 3 July, with the ESFA that was also attended by the FE Commissioner team and the PMO. The meeting was a useful precursor to the FE Commissioner visit on 27 July. She advised that the PMO reported positively on the information that had been received from the new CFO in terms of consistency and clarity. However, it is recognised that these are early ‘green shoots’ and there is more work to do to secure confidence.  David Smith suggested the Short term Board Focus Group continue to meet up until the end of July and once during August as a means of keeping in touch with the Executive Team and providing feedback to the rest of the Board on issues requiring full Board engagement and support.  It was **resolved** to continue the arrangements with a further review at the start of September 2020.  It was **resolved** to hold a Strategic Planning Group wash-up meeting.  **Written resolutions**  The written resolutions were noted. |  |
|  | **Acting CEO Report**  Rebecca Conroy advised that the Government have outlined their expectations for Colleges to re-open for 100% of students 100% of the time. She advised that the College will be continuing with online learning and homeworking for staff, where appropriate, and that risk management processes have been adapted to account for the updated guidance.  The Board were advised that Ofsted has announced they will be carrying out a phased return to inspection, starting with a phase of monitoring visits during the autumn term with the intention to resume full inspections from January 2021. These monitoring visits will be focussed on leadership and management actions to support students post lock down. The monitoring visit advisory letters will be published but will not contain judgements. The College is likely to be one of the first Colleges inspected and preparing an Ofsted readiness plan and strengthening quality assurance processes remains the top priority for the Acting CEO.  The Executive Team is refreshing the digital strategy and developing a three-year investment priorities plan to bring about much-needed business improvements. Sue Maynard asked when the plan will be shared with the Board. Tim Hulme advised a digital working group has been established. The outputs of the Education and other workstreams, will inform the revisions to the Strategy.  Kevin Cowley enquired how many people had expressed an interest in the voluntary redundancy scheme. Becky Cooke advised that 31 people had applied and that the Executive Team are currently reviewing these. She advised that some requests had been approved and some of those at risk could be offered a redeployment opportunity. Some of the posts will be declined as they are linked to business-critical posts that would need to be replaced and therefore can’t be justified.  Kevin Cowley asked for clarification of the eligibility criteria for the voluntary redundancy scheme. He asked for the HR Committee to be sighted on the rationale and numbers for approved and rejected requests.  **Action: To be tabled at the HR Committee**  Ian Mehrtens enquired about activity planned to support student recruitment for September. Dan Shelley advised of a range of Zoom and Instagram virtual open events for year 10 and 11 students. He said that over 1300 young people had signed up to these so far and early feedback has been extremely positive with high levels of attendance and satisfaction from visitors. A full report will be shared with the Board.  **Action: Dan Shelley to circulate when available.**  Gill Short asked whether the online sessions had resulted in increased recruitment. Dan Shelley advised that whilst the 16-18 applications are currently 6% (-174) compared to the same time as last year, work with the Youth Employability Service (YES) has been a powerful link. Members of staff from YES will be on site to support recruitment over the Summer.  Marie Sangster asked if learners can enrol on site. Rebecca Conroy said provision for face to face enrolment had been made.  Gill Short updated on discussions at the Lewes College Board regarding parents anxieties about young people travelling into Brighton & Hove and the opportunities for recruitment to the College this may bring.  Marie Sangster said that there is a feeling that a big staffing restructure is about to be announced. Rebeca Conroy advised of the need to provide some much-needed stability across the College and that there was clearly a need for further communications about the outcome of the business planning process for 2021. | Mia Bryden  Dan Shelley |
|  | **Curriculum Planning update**  Dan Shelley, Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships and Engagement, provided the Board with an overview of the new curriculum planning process enacted for 2020/21 alongside an update of the progress made implementing some of the key recommendations of the Education case.  It was noted that additional adult provision had been developed to plug some gaps in the College offer, although there remains further work to achieve this completely. Dan Shelly advised a post-Covid-19 education responsive offer is being developed in partnership with ESCC, JCP and Let’s Do Business Group. The Adult Prospectus will be circulated next week (w/c 13 July 2020).  The Board were advised Curriculum Teams had worked cross College to implement key recommendations from the Education Case including the revision of technical and professional qualifications to focus on locally agreed Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSB), endorsed by employers.  The Board were presented with a blueprint of the offer; every student on every level to receive the same range of programme regardless of the campus they attend.  Graham Cook inquired about art-based courses.  Catherine Manning asked about College planning for T-Levels. The Board were advised that the College are working on preparations all three routes (Construction, Education and Digital). Two groups of Education will run (Eastbourne and Hastings), one Construction (Eastbourne), and one digital group (Hastings). There is anxiety around industry placements and welcome update from DFE about financial support for employers. Tim Hulme, Executive Director of Resources & Organisational Development, is involved in a capital bid to support delivery of the T-Levels. The Board will be updated in the Autumn 2020.  Ian Mehrtens suggested it would be helpful to map to higher education courses/ groups of courses, to provide aspiration through to HE, and would be a useful marketing tool.  There was also a request to include volunteering to enrichment activity.  Angela Smith asked to what extent the College is ensuring course delivery costs and receipts are built in to the curriculum planning arrangements, and how this is built into the forecast budget. Dan Shelley advised this is fully built-in, with each budget pack having targeted contributions benchmarked against sector norms and in those areas.  Jo Rogers said that in Becky Shaw’s keynote speech to the Board on Strategy Day 1 (24 June 2020) she talked about customer service and digital areas being two key areas of focus. Jo Rogers recommended these aspects be bought out more transparently within the curriculum plan.  There was a discussion about business enterprise and opportunities to maximise on supporting learners with setting up their own companies and making this more overt in the curriculum plan. Mark Fisher noted both entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship are useful for learners to understand, not just in setting up businesses.  **Action: Dan Shelley to consider and incorporate suggestions made, where appropriate.** | Dan Shelley |
|  | **Budget 20/21**  *This section has been redacted for publication as it contains financial or other information relating to procurement decisions, including that relating to the College negotiating position and information relating to the negotiating position of the College in industrial relations matters*  The Board were advised the budget for FY21 had been prepared using the outputs of the business planning process that has been finalised during early June 2020.  It was noted that the Finance Committee reviewed the budget at its meeting on 26 June 2020 and, following a minor amendment, recommend the budget to the Board for approval.  Martin Penny, Interim CFO, advised that despite the uncertainties created by Covid19 the ESFA still require the Corporation to set a budget for FY21 before 31 July 2020.  Martin Penny advised the College had benefitted from undertaking the business planning later than initially intended, as this has provided an opportunity to build into the budget the known impacts of Covid-19. The Board were advised that the budget has been set on a ‘business as normal’ basis, but taking into account expected reductions in Apprenticeship, Advance Learner Loan, HE and International income as a result of the impact of Covid-19.  It was acknowledged that the budget will need to be revisited as there are many unknowns moving into 2020/21.  Martin Penny advised the format allows reporting to both the Board and to external scrutineers, providing consistency and transparency to both audiences and well as supporting internal managers.  Mark Fisher said the budget is a statement of best projections at this moment in time, and the Finance Committee are content with the assumptions. He urged the need for open and honest conversations with external stakeholders when things move in the budget, noting this has not been the case previously.  Mark Fisher and Martin Penny talked of the challenges in getting to a Financial Health score of ‘Requires Improvement’ by the end of the year, and the need for rigorous cost management and Board oversight to stay on track in a rapidly changing context.  Angela Smith queried teaching and admin expenditure. Martin Penny advised the previous year’s staffing categories had been incorrectly assigned, but this has since been resolved.  Angela Smith questioned whether the College was putting enough emphasis on future-proofing.  Steve Hedges noted that it was nice to hear that potential short term financial sacrifices could lead to long term financial stability.    **Resolution**  The Board **approved** the Budget 20/21, with a proviso that Martin and Rebecca will contact Finance Committee and full board as required, should there be developments that require adjustment before submission deadline at the end of July. |  |
|  | **IFMC**  *This section has been redacted for publication as it contains information relating to the financial position of the College where disclosure might harm the College or its competitive position, as determined by the Corporation*  The IMFC return was tabled for noting. The final version of the model was reviewed by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 26 June 2020. It was agreed to be submitted to the PMO to meet the June deadline. |  |
|  | **Performance Update to include approval of financial and quality KPIs and targets for 2020-21**   |  | | --- | | The Acting CEO asked the Board to review and approve an updated set of  Finance and Curriculum KPIs for 2020/21. | | She advised the Finance KPIs have been chosen to support robust oversight to  help the College deliver its Requires Improvement status. She said the Executive  Team felt the KPIs represent achievable and stretching progress in gaining the  trust and confidence of the ESFA, FEC, Barclays Bank and wider internal and  external stakeholders. It was noted that the KPIs are embedded into the current  budget forecast for 2021 and are aligned with the current planning in terms of  resourcing. It was noted that activity to consider financial KPIs at high performing  Colleges had been undertaking in the setting of the proposed KPIs.  The Acting CEO said the curriculum targets had been similarly chosen to support  the delivery of a self-assessment of Good and are aligned to the new EIF. She said  the proposed targets in line with quality improvements and the quality improvement  priorities. As with the Financial KPIs it was noted that activity to consider quality  KPIs at high performing Colleges had been undertaking in the setting of the  proposed KPIs.  It was noted that there had been discussion at the last Curriculum and Standards  Committee on 16 June regarding the setting of appropriate and impactful KPIs.  The Committee supported a focus on qualitative KPI’s more reflective of the EIF,  including student satisfaction and employee engagement with course design.  **The Board approved the Financial KPIs.**  David Smith requested the Curriculum and Standards Committee be asked to  consider Quality KPIs with appropriate scrutiny and recommend to full Board  **Action: Mia Bryden to forward plan** | | Mia Bryden |
|  | 1. **Terms of reference**   **Resolution**  The Terms of Reference for all ESCG Board Committees and Local College Boards were **approved**.   1. **Cycles of business**   **Resolution**  The Cycle of Business for the ESCG Board and Committees was **approved**.   1. **Membership**   **Resolution**  Carlotta Zorzi was **approved** as a new member to the Hastings College Board member   1. **Board protocols**   The revised Board Protocols were considered. They will be reviewed again in light of feedback from the ESCG Strategy Days.  **Action: to be tabled at the Governance Development Committee** | Mia Bryden |
|  | **Policies**  A list of amendments made to the below policies was presented to the Board.  **Resolution**  The following polices were **approved** by Board   1. Subcontracting and Supply Chain Policy 2. Tuition and Fees Policy (annual) 3. Student Support Funds Policy (annual) 4. Governor Recruitment and Succession Policy 5. Board Code of Conduct 6. Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and annual report   **Action: Gill Short urged all Governors to read the Safeguarding and Prevent annual report and pass any comments onto Gill Short.**   1. Compliments, Concerns & Complaints Policy & Procedure (For Students and Stakeholders) 2. Staff Disciplinary Procedure and Policy 3. Staff Grievance Procedures   Becky Cooke, Interim Director HR, presented a revised Staff Code of Conduct. The following revisions were noted:   * Values on the first page temporarily removed pending agreement of new ones * Some language changed throughout * Removal of the word rules * Addition to Alcohol & Drugs section * Strengthening of Safeguarding responsibility under Section 10 * Amended wording under Section 14 – Gifts & Hospitality – proposal of creation of a Staff Register * Strengthening of statement at section 15 with particular reference to exams and assessment * Strengthening of statement regarding staff lanyards and responsibility for visitors in appendix 1   As part of People Strategy, the Staff Code of Conduct will be tabled for further discussion by the HR Committee ahead of approval by the Board. This may be done via Written Resolution.  **Action: Graham Cook to send comments to Becky Cooke.**  It was noted that the Whistleblowing Policy, Gifts and Hospitality, Staff Declarations of Interest and Financial Regulations are outstanding and will be approvedvia Written Resolution before the next ESCG Board Meeting.  **Action: Mia Bryden** | All Governors  Graham Cook  Mia Bryden |
|  | **Committees**    **Finance Committee - 28 April, 27 May, 26 June minutes not available)**   * Approval items as per Item 7   **Governance Development Committee – 6 May**   * To **note** - Governance Development Committee will take forward Governance improvement and training plan as identified on the ESCG Strategy Day 1 on 24 June.   **Audit and Risk Committee – 10 June**  **Resolution**  The Board **approved the** name change of the Committee to Audit, Risk and Compliance  The Board **approved** the Audit Strategy Memorandum (ASM)  The Board considered a request from the Audit and Risk Committee for £20k to be made available to Martin Penny, to support any further activity he might need to undertake to assure the Board about the quality of financial controls. Angela Smith said the Audit and Risk Committee felt the internal audit judgement of ‘reasonable assurance’ about financial controls was over-generous, given the recent referrals from Finance Committee into Audit and Risk Committee concerning several issues which highlighted poor internal financial controls. Mark Fisher supported this request and said he would welcome further assurance that systems and processes are robust behind the management accounts.  **Action: Rebecca Conroy, Martin Penny and Angela Smith to agree what may be necessary and ensure a resourcing arrangement is made**  **HR Committee- 21 May**   * Information only   **Transformation Committee - 24 April**   * Information only   **Curriculum and Standards Committee - 21 May and 16 June**   * To **note** Annual Safeguarding and Prevent Report (see Appendix 3)   It was noted that actions for departed senior post holders would be taken forward via Rebecca Conroy or her nominated leads.  **Local College Boards**   * Hastings- Ian Mehrtens raised an issue of ESCG staff having not been migrated to ESCG Accounts and the impact this is having on communicating with other staff and learners.   **Action: Tim Hulme to investigate**. | Rebecca Conroy, Martin Penny, Angela Smith  Tim Hulme |
|  | **AOB & Date of next meeting: 21 October 2020**  Suzanne Green asked if the Board routinely do communications at the end of each year, providing context for past year and view on next.  **Action: Mia Bryden to forward plan to Governance Development**. | Mia Bryden |