

East Sussex College Group (ESCG) Board meeting MINUTES

Date	4 December 2018	Time	15.00
Venue	Boardroom, Station Plaza, Hastings, TN34 1BA		
Chair	Henry Ball		

Membership: Henry Ball (Chair), Tony Campbell (Vice Chair), Clive Cooke, Lucas Berhane, Pat Farmer, Mark Fisher, Eddie Flyte, Diana Garnham, Peggy Hall, Steve Hedges, Russell Higginbotham, Simon Hubbard, Ian Jungius, Vic Kempner, Caroline McKiddie, Joanne Rogers, Marie Sangster, Gill Short, Derek Stevens

In attendance: Biram Desai (Chief Finance Officer), Dan Shelley (Executive Director – Strategic Partnerships and Engagement), Tim Hulme (ED – Resources and Organisational Development) East Sussex College Group Principals [Rebecca Conroy (Eastbourne), Fred Carter (Lewes), Jim Sharpe (Hastings)]

Apologies: Lucas Berhane, Peggy Hall and Russell Higginbotham

This meeting was preceded by a board development session on the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) from Jim Sharpe at 14.00

	Item	Action
1)	<p>Apologies Apologies were received from Lucas Berhane, Peggy Hall and Russell Higginbotham.</p> <p>Resignations have been received from one Board member – Emily Beer due to work commitments who stepped down on 7 November 2018 and three co-opted members Kim Novis, Jeremy Leggett and Jonathan Reid.</p>	
2)	<p>Welcome of Staff and Student Governors</p> <p>Henry Ball welcomed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eddie Flyte – student at Station Plaza Lucas Berhane – student at Eastbourne (in his absence) <p>Their terms of office will be 4.12.18 – 20/7/18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marie Sangster – Business Support Staff member – based at Station Plaza Steve Hedges – Teaching staff member – based at Lewes <p>Their terms of office will be 4/12/18 to 3/12/20</p>	
3)	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pat Farmer declared that he is a member of the Hastings and Rother 	

	<p>Taskforce and a director of Plaza Trading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Fisher is a member of Council of the University of Sussex. He is also treasurer of Age Concern Eastbourne and a director of Good Money, a community interest company. • Simon Hubbard is an employee of Hastings Borough Council. • Caroline McKiddie is an employee of East Sussex County Council. • Tony Campbell is a trustee of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. 	
4)	<p>Draft minutes from the ESCG Board meeting held on 8 October 2018 AGREED: IT WAS AGREED THAT THE MINUTES WERE A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2018.</p>	
5)	<p>Matters arising There were none.</p>	
6)	<p>CEO report Clive Cooke presented his report and invited feedback on the format and content.</p> <p>Haywards Heath - There is currently a competitive process for colleges to bid to reinstate 16-18 provision in Haywards Heath. Ten organisations including ESCG expressed interest but the Group has been told that its quality and financial health excluded it from the shortlist. Three Colleges have been shortlisted. This will put the enrolment of 200 students in Lewes at risk when the new college goes live in 2020/21.</p> <p>Restructure - The College is currently in the process of the first wave of payroll savings [confidential item]</p> <p>Governors asked how many compulsory redundancies will be made. Tim Hulme said it is unknown how many until people have been placed in post. Clive Cooke said that whilst staff were understandably upset both these colleagues and the trades unions have been constructive and professional.</p> <p>Enrolments for 2019 is a huge focus for the College. Open events had not been encouraging for Eastbourne earlier in the year and bespoke, reinvigorated events 'College name Live' were devised for Eastbourne and Lewes to showcase each college's provision and these were promoted by significant social media and schools' liaison. This resulted in a 288% increase in footfall in Eastbourne when compared to the event held the previous year.</p> <p>The Beacon Shopping Centre Eastbourne - The College is working with Stephen Lloyd MP and the managers of the Centre, to establish itself as the supplier of choice for staff training and to forge a relationship which underpins employment opportunities for the Group's students.</p> <p>Ofsted - The Group is working tirelessly to ensure that provision is equally good for learners at all campuses. The details are included in the report.</p>	

<p>The Priory school, Lewes - is working closely with Fred Carter, Principal at Lewes to develop initiatives and form a closer working relationship. Examples include scholarships for 2019, masterclasses, joint CPD and student mentors.</p> <p>Governors asked what the budget for this project was and number of students involved. Fred Carter responded that they anticipate 25 students on the pilot scholarship in the first instance. Dan Shelley explained that this initiative is key as the Priory School is adjacent to the Lewes College site and the cohort attending has reduced to the lowest levels ever seen.</p> <p>[confidential item]</p> <p>Governors asked the Principals of Eastbourne and Hastings if they are going to roll out similar programmes. Rebecca Conroy explained that she is working with a cluster of local schools in a different way. However, if the scholarship programmes work well at Lewes, Eastbourne College may look at replicating it. Jim Sharpe responded that in Hastings, the situation is not the same so different approaches are appropriate.</p> <p>UCAS – 562 students have been seen at Lewes for UCAS apply sessions. Oxbridge applications have increased from 3 to 7 and 2 have already been accepted. Governors commented that this was very encouraging.</p> <p>It was proposed that the monthly Governor updates from the CEO and Chair are sent to the Board for each month except those in which a CEO report is made to a Board meeting.</p> <p>Governors congratulated Clive Cooke on his report and particularly on the increase in footfall to the ‘Eastbourne Live’ events driven by the increased focus.</p>	<p>Clive Cooke</p>
<p>7) College year-end audited accounts 2017-18 including financial statements and regularity auditor’s management letter.</p> <p>This year there are two sets of annual accounts and two sets of auditors. This item was deferred and the Group accounts will be scrutinised by an informal group of members of the Finance and Audit Committees on the 18 December. It will then be circulated to the Board for electronic resolution in order that it can be signed by 19 December.</p> <p>The accounts for SDC will be signed in January 2019.</p> <p>Governors asked how the Group accounts which incorporate the Sussex Downs accounts can be signed off, yet the SDC accounts are not complete. Biram Desai explained that there are different auditors preparing each set.</p> <p>Governors asked for a draft set of accounts to be sent in advance in order that they may scrutinise them and submit questions in advance of the 18 December. This will be done.</p>	<p>Audit/Finance Commtees/Dir Govs</p> <p>Biram Desai</p>

8)	<p>Management Accounts – October 2018 Biram Desai presented the October 2018 management accounts. He said that once the education case is linked to the estates strategy he is very optimistic for the medium to long-term future of the Group. The banking of land disposal receipts will be discussed as part of the confidential item later in the agenda.</p> <p>There are some challenging messages in relation to the short-term trading position and cash flow [confidential item]</p> <p>Governors asked what has been done to mitigate the expenditure on agency staffing. Biram Desai said that there is a thorough understanding throughout the Group of the cost of agency staff and there have been significant interventions by HR to limit the expenditure. Tim Hulme added that the Group has just completed its analysis on agency staff and is in advanced discussions with three new agencies. The new talent initiative is focussing on addressing the issue of attracting and retaining high-quality staff.</p>	
9)	<p>College Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plans College Self-Assessment Report 2017-18</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eastbourne and Lewes 2. Hastings <p>Quality Improvement Plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Eastbourne 4. Lewes 5. Hastings <p>Jim Sharpe reported that the local SARs and quality improvement plans had been presented to, and discussed by the Local College Boards; local validation panels and also to Quality and Standards Committee.</p> <p>Tony Campbell said that the validations had been carried out by the principals challenging each other and were attended by some governors. The process was robust and extensive providing both internal challenge and external support from governors. Pat Farmer encouraged all governors to attend at least one SAR validation meeting each if possible as it is an opportunity to learn a great deal about the Group.</p> <p>6. Monitoring visit update Jim Sharpe explained that the monitoring visit has still not taken place and the Group remains prepared for the inspectors' arrival.</p> <p>7. Summary of key risks Jim Sharpe said that quality processes had been rolled out across the Group and had gone smoothly. Currently if the Group were to have an Ofsted inspection, he considered that the Group outcomes for learners would be closest to a Grade 3. The second challenge is overall Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA) which is not yet consistent across the campuses. Staff vacancies/agency teachers are too high which affects consistency of pedagogy.</p>	

	<p>The key areas for improvement are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention on study programmes • Consistency of TLA and not enough learners make sufficient progress • TLA in GCSE maths and functional skills • Attendance in English and maths • Tracking and monitoring of learner progress • Improvement in some A Level areas including sociology, computing, economics and sciences • More work on work experience • Adult achievement and retention in AAT, Access, ESOL, functional skills and GCSE maths • Timely achievement in apprenticeships. <p>Governors thanked the Executive and their teams for their hard work and honesty in ensuring that areas for improvement are highlighted and robust action plans put in place.</p>	
10)	<p>ESCG Strategic plan 2018-21</p> <p>1. KPIs for the strategic objectives</p> <p>Clive Cooke said that the suggested amendments made by governors at the October 2018 Board meeting have been included in the new version of the strategic plan for 2018-21. The new plan had been issued to governors on 30 November and there are new KPIs to reflect this.</p> <p>The Executive Team believes that the KPIS will impact either negatively, if they are not achieved, or positively, if they are met, on the strategic objectives. The KPIs were proposed to each of the relevant committees which then helped to scrutinise and shape each one. The 17/18 outturns were taken into account to inform the starting position. There is one exception for the new strategic models with local authorities and ESCC and there are meetings scheduled with both to map these out. The Executive Team proposes that it will share these KPIs with key local partners and stakeholders with appropriate sensitivity.</p> <p>Clive Cooke outlined the risk of not meeting the targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial - The financial health is likely to trigger intervention from the agencies or the bank • Standards – current data and practices show that the Group is a clear Grade 3 – this must be improved to a Grade 2 to avoid intervention from Ofsted. • Low staff morale as there is a risk of absence or attrition. The Group is struggling to recruit staff for hard-to-fill areas. Some areas of teaching and finance expertise will be addressed by the talent recruitment programme. • There are no safeguarding risks. <p>Governors asked if there is a need for greater transparency. Clive Cooke responded that the plan will be published on the website when the timing is considered to be appropriate and the current restructure is complete. Governors asked if the staff and student would like to share their views on the strategic</p>	Exec Team

	<p>that it would be helpful if any member of the Board would let the Directors of Governance know if they would like to join the Committee. The last external working group would be in mid-January and the new Committee would take effect after this. Pat Farmer commented that there will be monthly meetings so members would need to commit to attend these.</p> <p>There will be two informal briefings or webinars in January for members to offer them more detail.</p> <p>AGREED: THE BOARD AGREED TO DELEGATE DISCUSSIONS ON THE CIC TO HENRY BALL AND PAT FARMER.</p> <p>2. Outline Financial and Estates Linked Strategy This was discussed as a confidential item later in the meeting.</p> <p>3. Execution of an Accession Agreement under seal The accession agreement had been executed under seal and the document of record was issued with the papers.</p>	<p>Farmer</p> <p>Dan Shelley</p>
12)	<p>Risk management, risk management policy update and strategic risk register</p> <p>Tim Hulme reminded everyone that the Board had agreed seven strategic risks which are owned by the Executive Team and these are taken to the subcommittees for oversight. The Executive Team then cascades the risks and has quarterly meetings with the internal auditor which reviews them and reports back into the cycle.</p> <p>The risk register needs to be updated to reflect the current risks.</p>	<p>Tim Hulme</p>
13)	<p>Recommendations from Committees for approval</p>	
14)	<p>HR Committee – 16 October and 27 November 2018</p> <p>The following policies were recommended for approval by the HR Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff Code of Conduct 2. Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure 3. Recommendation of the HR related KPIs for the transaction unit (discussed under item 10) <p>AGREED: THE BOARD AGREED THE STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT, STAFF GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE AND THE HR RELATED KPIS.</p>	
15)	<p>Remuneration Committee – 16 October 2018</p> <p>The following items were recommended by the Remuneration Committee for approval:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terms of reference 2. Cycle of Business for 2018-19 <p>AGREED: BOARD AGREED THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CYCLE OF BUSINESS FOR 2018/19 FOR THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE.</p>	

16)	<p>Audit Committee – 20 November 2018</p> <p>The following items were recommended by the Audit Committee for approval:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whistleblowing Policy 2. Fraud Policy 3. Emergency Plan, Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan <p>AGREED: THE BOARD AGREED THE WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY, FRAUD POLICY; EMERGENCY PLAN, DISASTER RECOVERY AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN</p> <p>It was noted that the annual report of the Audit Committee will be reviewed by the extraordinary Audit Committee and then circulated to the Board for electronic resolution.</p>	Biram Desai
17)	<p>Finance Committee – 20 November 2018</p> <p>The following items were recommended by the Finance Committee for approval:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Estates Strategy Committee oversight and establishment of the Capital Infrastructure Committee (CiC) (see item 11) 2 Outline Financial and Estates Linked Strategy (see item 11) 3 Execution of an Accession Agreement under seal (see item 11) 4 Recommendation of the Finance related KPIs for the transaction unit (see item 10) <p>These had all been agreed under prior items on the agenda.</p>	
18)	<p>Quality and Standards Committee – 26 November 2018</p> <p>The following items were recommended by the Quality and Standards Committee for approval:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HE update and HE Quality Report and Action Plan and signed Annual Assurance Statement 2018 for the Office for Students (OFS) 2. Student Union Constitution 3. Safeguarding, (including child protection) and Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy and Position Paper for information 4. Recommendation of the Q&S related KPIs for the transaction unit (see item 10) <p>AGREED: THE BOARD AGREED THE ITEMS LISTED ABOVE FOR APPROVAL.</p>	
19)	<p>College Boards:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eastbourne – 6 November 2018 2. Lewes – 7 November 2018 3. Hastings – 12 November 2018 <p>The chairs reported that these had been very successful meetings but that there were no items for recommendation.</p>	
20)	<p>Search and Governance Committee – 2 October 2018</p> <p>This item was considered verbally at the last meeting</p>	
21)	<p>AOB notified in advance to the Director of Governance</p> <p>There was none.</p>	

The meeting ended at 17.45