

ESCG Board Meeting MINUTES

Date	16 th October 2023	Time	14:00 – Pre-Meeting 14:45 – Break 15:00-17:00 – Meeting
Venue	Board Room (SP5119), Station Plaza, Hastings		
Chair	Ian Mehrtens		

Membership – Ian Mehrtens (Chair of the Board), Rebecca Conroy (CEO & Principal), Alexandra Cheeseman, Aly Colman, Graham Cook (Vice Chair – Resources & Operations), Becky Cooke, Andy Davy, Charles Dudley, Ashley Heminway, Trista Jin, Priscilla Kendall (Vice Chair – Curriculum & Student Experience), Catherine Manning, Kirsty Reid, Angela Smith, Nicola Taylor, Jack Woodgate, Emel Yerlikaya

In Attendance – Hannah Caldwell (COO), Kym O’Mara (Vice Principal, Student Experience – *pre-meeting only*), Belle Howard (Director of Governance – *minutes*), Claire Alexander (Governance Assistant)

Apologies: Trista Jin, Nicola Taylor, Aly Colman

#	Item	Action
PRE-MEETING DISCUSSION		
-	<p>GOVERNOR SAFEGUARDING TRAINING</p> <p>0.1 The Vice Principal – Student Experience delivered a Governor Safeguarding Training session, which included an outline of the following key responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To nominate a Safeguarding Link Governor, who regularly meets with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). ○ To consider an Annual Safeguarding Report to identify themes, trends and priorities (initially via the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee). ○ To complete appropriate Safeguarding training on an annual basis. • The Safeguarding Link Governor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To understand the statutory safeguarding requirements, check that the College was compliant and that there are effective systems in place. ○ To support the work of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and check that there was consistent practice across the College. ○ To ensure that the College referred cases appropriately to Local Authority teams. ○ To complete comprehensive safeguarding training, led by East Sussex County Council. ○ To report back to the Board about the effectiveness of safeguarding. 	14:01

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	<p>0.2 The following discussion then occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of the Board asked – did the College’s safeguarding monitoring software still work when students logged onto their devices from home? The Vice Principal – Student Experience explained that the software worked both when students logged onto College systems via their personal account or accessed College Wi-Fi. However, the software would not work when students used their home Wi-Fi on their own devices for personal use. • The Director of Governance asked – were there particular watch areas related to safeguarding that Governors needed to be aware of, specific to Ofsted’s requirements? The Vice Principal – Student Experience advised that Governors needed to demonstrate a solid understanding of the College’s safeguarding procedures and be able to articulate the mechanisms for reporting and monitoring. The CEO & Principal advised that this information would be summarised within appropriate crib sheets for Governors nearer the time. • The Chair of the Resources, Culture & Impact (RC&I) Committee asked – how were complex issues such as bullying, racism and misogyny handled by the College? The Vice Principal – Student Experience explained that these areas fell under the remit of the Safeguarding Team, with related learning and development insights typically shared via the Student Personal Development Programme. Additionally, summary referral information was also routinely shared with the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Team. • The Chair of the Board noted the need for Governors to proactively share any safeguarding concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who was also the CEO & Principal. • The CEO & Principal explained that the College had recently transitioned away from security resources to Campus Support Officers, who also had a particular focus on student wellbeing. • The Chair of the Board asked – did the Safeguarding Team provide resource cover during the College’s weekend learning provision, as well as out of hours support? The Vice Principal – Student Experience confirmed that resource was in place to support weekend courses, international students (based within on site College accommodation), out of hours support and for any international trips etc. • The Chair of the Audit, Risk & Compliance (ARaC) Committee asked – did the College have adequate processes in place to support students with eating disorders? The Vice Principal – Student Experience confirmed that a range of appropriate support mechanisms were in place. Additionally, the College routinely leveraged local referral services as needed. • A Governor reflected that students may disclose safeguarding issues and concerns outside of the College setting to other agencies and asked – were such instances typically referred to the College? The Vice Principal – Student Experience reflected that this did occur on occasion, though not consistently. The CEO & Principal explained that the College occasionally received referrals from the police on occasion. • A Governor asked – could parents/carers be contacted in the event of a concern about students who were over 18 and accessing the Higher Education (HE) provision? The Vice Principal – Student Experience advised that the College could not contact parents/carers of students over 18 for privacy reasons, though depending upon the incident, the police could be contacted as needed. A Staff Governor noted that some HE students had opted to provide permission for their parents/carers to be contacted. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Staff Governor asked – what happened in the instance of students turning 18 within the school year? The Vice Principal – Student Experience advised that parent contact details could be removed from their records if specifically requested by the student. • The CEO & Principal reflected that there could be further opportunities for the College to engage directly with parents/carers to provide additional support on a range of safeguarding matters for adolescents. The Vice Principal – Student Experience advised that a range of local authority resources were already being shared via the parent portal. • The RC&I Committee Chair asked – did the college have a dedicated police liaison resource regarding safeguarding matters? The Vice Principal – Student Experience confirmed that a named resource had been provided, though contact had been limited by resource capacity issues at the police. • The RC&I Committee Chair asked – how do staff members access safeguarding support? The CEO & Principal advised that in the first instance, staff were able to contact their line manager or People Services to request support as needed and any referrals would be made as appropriate. Additionally, all staff had access to the Employee Assistance Programme to access support as needed. • The Vice Principal – Student Experience advised that the College had access to a 24-hour online support service for students called Togetherall, which included a useful chat function, which was particularly popular with male students. The service also provided high quality reporting data to the College. • A Staff Governor asked – could the Togetherall service be more widely publicised to students? The Vice Principal – Student Experience advised that the service was currently being promoted via wellbeing tutorials, student safeguarding training sessions, as well as more generally by the Safeguarding Team. That said, further opportunities to publicise the service would be explored. • The RC&I Committee Chair asked – were there processes in place to share historic safeguarding information regarding students at the point of enrolment? The Vice Principal – Student Experience explained that this information was routinely shared with the College as a part of existing student transition processes, which was supplemented by the College’s strong relationships with a range of inclusion partners. • The Vice Principal – Student Experience advised that she regularly met with the Safeguarding Link Governor, who had recently completed their local authority led safeguarding training. • The Chair of the Board asked – would the Ofsted Inspector usually meet with the Safeguarding Link Governor? The Vice Principal – Student Experience confirmed that they would. <p>0.3 Governors were required to sign an attendance register and confirm that they had read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe In Education, which had been updated for 2023.</p> <p>Governors took a short break at 14:48, returning to the meeting at 14:57.</p>	

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1. ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS																																		
1.1	WELCOME & APOLOGIES	14:57																																
	<p>1.1.1 The Chair of the Board opened the meeting at 14:57 with a warm welcome to colleagues and extended a particular welcome to newly appointed Staff Governors, Kirsty Reid and Jack Woodgate.</p> <p>1.1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Trista Jin, Nicola Taylor & Aly Colman.</p> <p>1.1.3 The Chair noted that there had been a significant reduction in the volume of meeting papers which had been distributed ahead of the meeting.</p>																																	
1.2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	14:58																																
	1.2.1 The Staff Governors declared an interest in the agenda item related to the Pay Award.																																	
1.3	MINUTES OF LAST MEETING	14:59																																
	<p>1.3.1 Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors considered the minutes from the last meeting on 3rd July 2023. Governors agreed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of what had been discussed. 																																	
1.4	MATTERS ARISING	15:00																																
	<p>1.4.1 Governors considered the following actions from previous meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3rd July 2023: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Item</th> <th>Owner</th> <th>Action</th> <th>Due Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0.9.1</td> <td>BH</td> <td>Distribute a copy of the Pre-Board Meeting Estate Transformation Programme presentation to Governors.</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.3.1.1</td> <td>HC</td> <td>Provide a cross-campus update on the college's Wi-Fi provision to the Board at its next meeting.</td> <td>Complete – per Item 1.4 (paper)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.3.1.2</td> <td>RC/HC</td> <td>Explore the feasibility of enhancing the security access controls at the Hastings Station Plaza site.</td> <td>Complete – per Item 1.4 (verbal)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.2.2.1</td> <td>BH</td> <td>Develop a Governor Learning & Development Programme for 2023-24, which serves to address priority Governor training needs and extends opportunities for Governors to participate in learning walks and campus visits.</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.2.2.2</td> <td>BH</td> <td>Develop individual Governor training and development plans for 2023-24.</td> <td>Complete</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.2.1.1</td> <td>HC</td> <td>Provide further details on how the 'Staff Recruitment – Time to Fill Rate' KPI metric is calculated.</td> <td>Complete – per Item 1.4 (verbal)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.2.3.1</td> <td>HC</td> <td>Validate whether the HR Review audit schedule needed to be amended to accommodate the timeline for HR system implementation.</td> <td>Complete – per Item 1.4 (verbal)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Item	Owner	Action	Due Date	0.9.1	BH	Distribute a copy of the Pre-Board Meeting Estate Transformation Programme presentation to Governors.	Complete	3.3.1.1	HC	Provide a cross-campus update on the college's Wi-Fi provision to the Board at its next meeting.	Complete – per Item 1.4 (paper)	3.3.1.2	RC/HC	Explore the feasibility of enhancing the security access controls at the Hastings Station Plaza site.	Complete – per Item 1.4 (verbal)	4.2.2.1	BH	Develop a Governor Learning & Development Programme for 2023-24, which serves to address priority Governor training needs and extends opportunities for Governors to participate in learning walks and campus visits.	Complete	4.2.2.2	BH	Develop individual Governor training and development plans for 2023-24.	Complete	6.2.1.1	HC	Provide further details on how the 'Staff Recruitment – Time to Fill Rate' KPI metric is calculated.	Complete – per Item 1.4 (verbal)	6.2.3.1	HC	Validate whether the HR Review audit schedule needed to be amended to accommodate the timeline for HR system implementation.	Complete – per Item 1.4 (verbal)	
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	6.3.2.1	BH	Include 'Financial Health Grade' on the agenda for the first Resources, Culture & Impact Committee meeting of the Autumn Term.	Complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27th March 2023: 			
	Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
	5.1.4.1	HC/LC	Provide a breakdown of EDI data by campus, with a view to share this at the next People & Culture Committee meeting.	Pending – the HR system upgrade had yet to be implemented, however the data would be generated manually and consolidated into a report ahead of the 30 th November 2023 RC&I Committee meeting.
	1.4.2 College Wi-Fi Provision Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief Operating Officer directed participants to the associated paper and shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a comprehensive review of the College's Wi-Fi provision, a wide range of networks with varying functionality had been identified. A key challenge arose as a result of tension between the need to meet key compliance requirements vs ease of user access. However, it was anticipated that a notable volume of user Wi-Fi issues at the College were currently being underreported. A programme of improvements was currently underway and moving forward, it was anticipated that the DfE capital fund could partially be utilised to enhance the College's cabling, Wi-Fi and digital provision. The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair of the Board thanked the Chief Operating Officer for the comprehensive report and noted the issue that prevented linking the Eduroam network with the College's KCSIE compliant web filtering solution, with a view to produce evidence of the user browsing. The Chair of the Board reflected that other colleges and universities had managed to circumvent this issue as they routinely utilised the full breadth of the Eduroam network Wi-Fi provision, and asked – could this be looked into further? The Chief Operating Officer committed to explore this further. 			

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Action 1.4.2.1 – Further explore the feasibility of more fully utilising the Eduroam Wi-Fi network, with a view to address the issue in linking the network with the College’s KCSIE compliant web filtering solution. <p>1.4.3 Security Access Controls – Hastings Station Plaza</p> <p>A confidential item was discussed.</p> <p>1.4.4 Staff Recruitment – Time to Fill Rate KPI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Operating Officer shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An update had been shared at the recent RC&I Committee meeting regarding the implementation of a new HR system. ○ Discussion had focussed on appropriate measures related to ‘time to fill rates’, with consideration given to exit date, duration of recruitment process and notice periods. ○ Governors had reflected that it was more important to assess the effectiveness of internal recruitment processes, rather than focus upon notice periods/start dates. <p>1.4.5 HR Audit Review Schedule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Operating Officer shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It had been agreed with Internal Audit that the date of the HR Audit would be delayed until the Spring Term. ○ This would enable the implementation and embedding of the new HR system to have successfully completed first. <p>1.4.6 The Chair of the Board thanked the Chief Operating Officer for sharing a comprehensive update on the matters arising from the last meeting.</p>	<p>HC</p>
2. WRITTEN RESOLUTIONS		
2.1	<p>INDEPENDENT GOVERNOR APPOINTMENT: SP&R COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board noted the following written resolution: <p>Search, Performance & Remuneration Committee to recommend the appointment of a prospective Independent Governor to the Board for approval, effective 28th August 2023.</p> <p>A confidential discussion occurred.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESOLUTION – The Board agreed to <u>reject</u> the recommendation to appoint the prospective Independent Governor. 	15:10

#	Item	Action
3. MEMBERSHIP		
3.1	<p>MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT UPDATE 15:12</p> <p>3.1.1 Staff Governor Appointments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further to the recent Staff Governor recruitment campaign, the following new members had been elected to the Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jack Woodgate – Lewes (<i>Teaching Staff</i>) ○ Kirsty Reid – Eastbourne (<i>Teaching Staff</i>) • RESOLUTION: The Board agreed to ratify the appointment of Jack Woodgate and Kirsty Reid as Staff Governors on the Board. <p>3.1.2 Independent Governor Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director of Governance and Chair of the Board shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruitment for Independent Governors remained a high priority for the Board, given that there were currently 5 vacant positions. ○ The DfE Governor Recruitment Service had been approached to explore the feasibility of subsidised support in sourcing additional Governors on the Board, via Peridot Partners. ○ The vacancies remained live on the usual recruitment channels and an initial enquiry had recently been received from a potential candidate. ○ If subsidised Governor recruitment support was not feasible, Peridot Partners could be engaged to facilitate a search at their quoted cost, which ranged from £6K-£12.6K depending on the number of vacancies filled. 	
3.2	<p>BOARD & COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS 15:15</p> <p>3.2.1 Committee Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of the Board shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was recommended that the newly appointed Staff Governors joined the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee. ○ There currently remained membership and skills gaps for the ARaC and RC&I Committees, which would be the priority focus area of ongoing Independent Governor recruitment efforts. • The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Staff Governor asked – was it possible for Staff Governors to join the membership for the Capital Development Board? The Director of Governance confirmed that this was permissible. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RESOLUTION – The Board agreed to appoint Jack Woodgate and Kirsty Reid to the membership of the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee and Jack Woodgate to the membership of the Capital Development Board. 	
4. INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT		
4.1	<p>STAFF VOICE</p> <p>15:16</p> <p>4.1.1 Staff Governor Report Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief Operating Officer outlined the proposed approach for Staff Governor Reports moving forward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Governors would be invited to share key insights from Staff Think Tank meetings and highlight key strategic items related to their respective campuses. To support this process, the Director of People would routinely meet with Staff Governors to support them in preparing the report. The first report to the Board would be shared at the next meeting. The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vice Chair, Curriculum & Student Experience asked – who chaired the Think Tank meetings? The CEO & Principal advised that the Think Tank Chairs were annually nominated by the staff at each campus and were supported by the People Services Team. The Chair of the Board asked – were Governors able to attend Staff Think Tank meetings? The CEO & Principal confirmed that they were. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 4.1.1.1 – Share logistical details of Staff Think Tank meetings for 2023-24 with all Governors. The Curriculum, Skills & Quality (CS&Q) Committee Chair considered the use of ‘Staff Governor Drop-ins’ and reflected on the broad range of topics, questions or concerns that staff may raise during these sessions. The CS&Q Committee Chair asked – would Staff Governors require support for these drop-in sessions? A Staff Governor reflected on the need to ensure clear boundaries between strategic and operational matters, on which the Director of Governance had already provided clarity as part of the induction process. Staff raising questions or concerns on any operational matters would be redirected for support and reminded of the strategic remit of Staff Governors. The CEO & Principal advised that staff should be redirected to their line manager, Head of Curriculum or the Executive Team for such operational matters. The CEO & Principal suggested that it may be helpful for a representative from People Services to also attend the drop-in sessions to provide support to Staff Governors. Governors agreed. The Chair of the Board reflected on the need to ensure a co-ordinated approach to enable the Board to better understand the key variances between each campus. 	BH

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chair of the Board suggested that themes for each Staff Governor Report could be identified ahead of each Board meeting. Governors agreed. ○ A Staff Governor asked – does each Think Tank meeting also have an established theme? The CEO & Principal advised that these meetings typically explored several thematic areas. A Staff Governor suggested that it would be helpful to align the Staff Governor Reports with the Think Tank meeting theme(s). Governors agreed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Action 4.1.1.2</u> – Define key themes for each Staff Governor Report to the Board for the remainder of the 2023-24 academic year. ○ The Chair of the Board asked – should Staff Governors attend the Stakeholder Engagement Panel meetings? The CEO & Principal reflected that this may be feasible, either on a regular or ad hoc basis, subject to capacity. 	RC
4.2	<p>STUDENT VOICE</p> <p style="text-align: right;">15:25</p> <p>4.2.1 Student Governor Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Student Governors directed participants to the supporting paper and shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student Governor – Eastbourne: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Following a decision to make a course change in the summer term, excellent support was received from the College in completing the course transition process. ▪ There had been diminishing levels of student engagement and attendance at Student Council meetings in the latter part of the last academic year. ○ Student Governor – Hastings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A dedicated study room had now been made available to Higher Education (HE) students. ▪ The quality of lecturing continued to be very high across the HE provision, though there had been some recent staffing changes. ▪ The annual Fresher’s Fair had been very successful for both HE and Further Education (FE) students. ▪ Campus Security – further focus may be needed on the consistent wearing of ID lanyards. ▪ Health & Safety – possible concerns raised regarding levels of first aid support on site and the revalidation of first aider certificates. ▪ Student Behaviour – there had been instances of student vaping on site, particularly in the communal spaces, which had caused some concern. ▪ FE English & Maths Provision – this had been incredibly oversubscribed this year, with some lessons being taught online. • Governors also noted the Lewes Student Governor report, detailed in the paper. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The CEO & Principal reflected on the need to establish clearly defined themes for Student Council meetings, as well as to more widely promote these events. The CEO & Principal also noted that there had been varying levels of student engagement with Student Council meetings between the campuses. ○ A Student Governor suggested that the timing of Student Council meetings may be challenging for some students. The CEO & Principal advised that further consideration would be given to the date/time of the meetings, though student timetables would continue to be an important factor. A free lunch was also provided to students to encourage their attendance. ○ The CS&Q Committee Chair asked – was it currently too easy for students to request course transfers and if so, did this provide an administrative burden for the College? The CEO & Principal advised that a Course Helpdesk had been established to support students as they considered their options, with a view to smooth the transition process and maximise opportunities for student retention. To support students in course transfer decisions, the Course Helpdesk worked in close partnership with curriculum delivery teams. Additionally, during the induction process, students were able to access a range of opportunities to support their transition to the College, including taster days and welcome days. This additional support had been effective for the College, but it was usual for there to be a certain amount of churn in the Autumn Term. ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – were the reasons for student course transfer requests clear? A Staff Governor reflected that it was often the case that many students simply were not yet clear on their career aspirations at the point of enrolment at the College. It was also suggested that it may be helpful to develop scripts to support staff in managing initial careers conversations with students. The CEO & Principal advised that the existing interview process also helped to support this process. ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – were KPI targets currently in place related to the number of students enrolled on each course? The CEO & Principal advised that this data was routinely leveraged to support ongoing student recruitment efforts. However, all staff remained mindful of the need to ensure each student was enrolled on the right course for them. ○ A Staff Governor explained that teaching staff were actively involved in the student interview process, with detailed interview records being captured. However, consideration may need to be given to how this information was stored and leveraged moving forward. ○ The CEO & Principal advised that the Director of Learning Support was currently working to recruit and train some additional first aiders at the Hastings Campus. This was in recognition of the higher than usual levels of Health & Safety/medical incidents at the Hastings campus. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The RC&I Committee Chair asked – could students be appointed as First Aiders? The CEO & Principal advised that this was not possible due to the terms of the College’s insurance. ○ The CEO & Principal advised that the concerns raised regarding student behaviour at the Hastings campus had already been reported to the Assistant Principal and steps were being taken to address this. ○ The RC&I Committee Chair considered the oversubscription of the FE English and Maths provision at the Hastings campus and asked – how was this being managed? The CEO & Principal advised that this had been outlined in the Executive Team Report. 	
5. GOVERNANCE MATTERS		
5.1	<p>GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE 15:29</p> <p>5.1.1 Progress Update – Governance Improvement Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director of Governance shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Governance Improvement Plan related to 2022-23 would be refreshed following the recent Strategy Day, incorporating priority recommendations from the External Review of Governance. ○ A summary progress update had been provided with RAG ratings and commentary for each objective, following input from committees with oversight responsibilities. <p>5.1.2 External Governance Review – Draft Priority Recommendations for 2023-24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director of Governance shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The associated paper had been aligned to the External Review of Governance priorities that were considered at the recent Strategy Day on 13th October 2023. ○ Priority recommendations for 2023-24 would be finalised at the forthcoming GP&R Committee meeting. 	
6. EXECUTIVE ITEMS		
6.1	<p>EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORT 15:35</p> <p>6.1.1 The CEO & Principal shared a confidential update.</p> <p>6.1.2 The CEO & Principal then shared the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment & Income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 16-18 Recruitment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This remained strong at 118%, ahead of the census date on 20th October 2023. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was expected that approximately 300 students may transition to alternative courses or an online provision, with a proportion of these expected to withdraw from the College. ▪ Any students that opted to withdraw, would be referred to the Youth Employability Service. These students would also be contacted via an FE sector-based call centre, with a view to ensure ongoing support and tracking. ▪ As a result, 16-18 recruitment levels may slip to 115%, which still remained incredibly strong for the College. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adult Education Budget (AEB) – Delivery for 2022-23 had exceeded expectations and was now above the 97% threshold, subject to final validation. This would mean that the College would not be subject to an in-year clawback. ○ Higher Education (HE) – the College was slightly below target, though this was expected to improve. ○ Apprenticeships – enrolment levels were currently at 286, as at end of October 2023, which was above the target level of 270. ○ International – there had been significant growth in enrolment levels, with 158 students on international courses, as compared with 108 in the prior year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Newhaven Marine Workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All new students were now based on site and accessing the provision. ○ Work was ongoing with the local authority to complete final snagging checks. ○ An official launch was being scheduled for late November 2023, to which Governors would be invited, along with local schools, businesses and other stakeholders. <p>Becky Cooke left the meeting at 15:58.</p> <p>6.1.3 The following discussion then occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Vice Chair, Resources & Operations asked – how was staff recruitment activity for the Newhaven Marine Workshop site progressing? The CEO & Principal advised that plans were underway to ensure timely recruitment for teaching staff to deliver a Marine Engineering Programme from September 2024. Staff recruitment efforts to deliver a Marine Science course had been successful. There were several engineering staff already employed at the college and the feasibility of whether their skills were transferable was currently being explored. Additionally, the College was working with the Newhaven Enterprise Zone and Lewes District Council to potentially secure additional funding to support the provision. ● The RC&I Committee Chair asked – how reliant was the College on its existing partnership with SGN for the delivery of the apprenticeship provision? The CEO & Principal reflected that the College was heavily committed to this partnership, though other partnership opportunities continued to be explored. That said, the College remained SGN's sole educational provider, so the relationship remained mutually beneficial. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of the Board asked – was the ‘Vice Principal – Student Experience’ role being discontinued? The CEO & Principal confirmed that this position was being replaced by an Assistant Principal role, with some responsibilities having been redistributed elsewhere. <p>6.1.4 The CEO & Principal shared the following update on Curriculum & Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Assessment Report (SAR) – work was underway in collaboration with two experienced Ofsted inspectors to support the Heads of Curriculum through the annual SAR process. The key areas identified for quality improvement focus included apprenticeships, A Level high grades, English and Maths, work experience and T Levels. • 2022-23 had been a particularly volatile year and a number of resources had been put in place to drive improvements in progress and attainment, including course helpdesks and pastoral tutors. • There had been moderate improvement in English and Maths attainment, though further focus was still needed. • Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) – this was comprehensive, with clearly defined targets and actions for the year ahead. <p>6.1.5 The following discussion then occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RC&I Committee Chair expressed concern about current attendance levels and asked – what steps were being taken to address this? The CEO & Principal advised that pastoral resources were now located within individual Curriculum Teams, which had ensured more direct wellbeing support was being made available to students. This had already resulted in improvements in patterns of behaviour and attendance. Attendance continued to be a top priority focus area for the College. <p>6.1.6 The Chief Operating Officer provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance & Risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff Costs as a % of Income – this KPI target had received a red RAG rating as the current forecast was at 5.5% over target, though this was in line with the broader FE sector. This area continued to be monitored closely. ○ The first set of Management Accounts for the academic year would be available in November 2023 and would be reviewed by the RC&I Committee at its next meeting. ○ A revised pay award of 6.5% had been recommended and would be further considered later in the meeting. ○ The Risk Register had recently been reviewed in depth by the ARaC Committee and included a new risk related to ‘Staff Recruitment & Retention’. The Risk Register also reflected the specific management actions and risks linked to rapid growth in 16-18 student recruitment, e.g. Health & Safety, Quality and Staff Retention. 	

#	Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Performance Management Reviews – a new, forward looking and agile appraisal process had been introduced called MyReview, which was more focussed on staff development needs. ○ Mandatory Training – the College continued to trend below target with 86.3% completion, presenting a risk in terms of process and legal requirements. In person training options were being leveraged where possible, along with the application of sanctions to staff following repeat requests for completion. <p>6.1.7 The following discussion then occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair of the Board considered the MyReview appraisal process and asked – were the College’s values now an integral part of the annual review process? The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that they were, and that the new process encouraged deeper discussion around behaviours and values. • The Vice Chair, Resources & Operations asked – had the first round of Employer Exchange Strategic Boards (EESBs) meetings taken place yet? The CEO & Principal advised that the EESBs were being led by the Vice Principal – Business Development, with the Autumn Term meetings due to be held in November/December 2023. As previously agreed, EESBs would be Executive Team led and for at least the first year and therefore would not include Independent Governors in their membership. • The RC&I Committee Chair reflected that the EESBs could provide a useful talent pipeline to support ongoing efforts to recruit additional Independent Governors to the Board. Governors agreed. 	
7. STRATEGIC ITEMS		
7.1	<p>CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UPDATE</p> <p><i>7.1.1 Estate Transformation Programme</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Operating Officer shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Space Planning Specialist was currently being recruited with a view to progress ongoing space planning work. ○ The Communications Plan was being developed, which would be considered by the Capital Development Board (CDB) at its next meeting. ○ The Stage 1 Report on Title had been received for the Eastbourne campus and was discussed at the last CDB meeting. A similar report was currently being finalised for Lewes, with a view for this to be considered at the next CDB meeting on 9th November 2023. Both reports had not identified any significant issues. 	16:11

#	Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Estates Strategy for 2024-25 was currently being developed by the Director of Capital Assets & Development, which would consolidate both the existing Estate Transformation Programme and a new Asset Management Plan. <p>7.1.2 Enabling Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Chief Operating Officer shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Green Centre of Excellence (Hastings Town Deal) – following an extended delay, the Grant Funding Agreement was being finalised, subject to agreeing an updated project delivery schedule. Consideration was also being given to the feasibility of securing additional funding, in recognition of the schedule delays and inflationary pressures that had impacted the project. ○ Institute of Technology – a new technology wing was planned at the Ore Valley site, with the Design Phase currently in progress. The existing classrooms and science labs had been relocated to a different floor, to free up space for the development to proceed, whilst enabling curriculum delivery to continue uninterrupted. A contractor was due to be appointed in mid-November 2023 to deliver this DfE funded project. ● The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chair of the Board noted that the appointment of the contractor would be considered at the next CDB meeting, with a view for approval to be subsequently managed by the Sub-Group. ○ The Chair of the Board asked – what was the total value of the associated contract? The Chief Operating Officer committed to confirm this ahead of the next CDB meeting. <p>7.1.3 Denton Island Lease</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The following discussion occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chair of the Board asked – was there any further update on the lease at the Denton Island site? The Chief Operating Officer advised that this remained under consideration and a range of options were being explored. In the meantime, SCDA remained in place as a tenant at the site. 	
7.2	<p>ESCG STRATEGIC PLAN – 2025-29</p> <p>7.2.1 Strategy Day – Reflections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The following discussion occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governors agreed that the Strategy Day had been a particularly useful opportunity to explore growth and partnership opportunities for the College. 	16:16

#	Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chair of the Board advised that a further update as output of the recent Strategy Day would follow at the next meeting, pending the Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee meeting on 30th October 2023. ○ Action 7.2.1.1 – Distribute a copy of the presentation slides from the Strategy Day on 13th October 2023 to Governors. <p>7.2.1 Approach & Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The CEO & Principal outlined the following next steps in the development of the Strategic Plan for 2024-2029: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Executive Team would carefully consider the identified growth and partnership opportunities, in the context of the Board’s risk appetite. ○ A further planning session would be scheduled for the Spring Term, with a view to develop the Strategic Plan. This would be held at the Newhaven Marine Workshop site. 	BH
7.3	<p>COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>7.3.1 Staff Pay Award</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Chief Operating Officer shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Board had previously approved a 5% staff pay award in July 2023. ○ Since then, the College had received additional DfE funding of £1.5m and noted that the AoC had recommended a staff pay award of 6.5%. ○ The 1.5% increase in the pay award would equate to an additional cost of £440K. ○ The RC&I Committee had agreed to recommend the proposed staff pay award of 6.5% to the Board, effective 1st September 2023. ● RESOLUTION – The Board agreed to approve a Staff Pay award of 6.5% for all staff, except Senior Post Holders, effective 1st September 2023. 	16:19
7.4	<p>COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES</p> <p>7.4.1 Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ARaC Committee Chair advised that there were no significant strategic updates at this time. <p>7.4.2 Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The CS&Q Committee Chair shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The inaugural CS&Q Committee meeting had been scheduled for 20th November 2023, which would include a pre-meeting review of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). 	16:21

#	Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two Ofsted inspectors were currently working with the College to moderate the SAR and review the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). ○ Moving forward, a more strategic focus would be adopted for these committee meetings. ○ Priority focus areas for the next meeting would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The SAR (2022-23) and QIP (2023-24). ▪ An update on progress against the College’s contribution to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Sussex. ● The Chair of the Board encouraged all Governors to attend the SAR pre-meeting discussion and suggested that the Pre-Board meeting in the Spring Term should include a Curriculum Briefing, with a view to support early planning activity ahead of an Ofsted Inspection. <p>7.4.3 Governance, Performance & Reputation Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The GP&R Committee Chair shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The inaugural GP&R Committee meeting had been scheduled for 30th October 2023. ○ Priority focus areas for this meeting would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of the College’s brand and reputation. ▪ Exploring opportunities to maximise staff and student voice input. ▪ Senior Post Holder Recruitment – Deputy CEO & Principal. ▪ Independent Governor Recruitment. ▪ Insights from the recent Strategy Day. ▪ Governor training and development. ● The following discussion then occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Student Governor asked – were there any further updates on the appointment of a Deputy CEO & Principal? The CEO & Principal advised that following the recent and unsuccessful round of recruitment, interim arrangements were currently being explored, which would be discussed in the confidential part of the meeting. <p>7.4.4 Resources, Culture & Impact Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The RC&I Committee Chair shared the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The RC&I Committee met for the first time on 28th September 2023. ○ A new approach had been adopted, where detailed questions related to the Management Accounts were invited from Governors and considered by the Lead Officers in advance of the meeting. 	

#	Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Priority focus areas related to Finance would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximising opportunities to protect/increase the College’s income. ▪ Ensuring accuracy in forecasting. ▪ Improving the College’s Financial Health Grade from ‘Requires Improvement’ to ‘Good’. ▪ Oversight of cashflow for the Capital Development Programme. ○ Priority focus areas related to People Services would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment and succession planning. ▪ Performance management – ensuring consistent practice across all campuses. ▪ Mandatory training – increasing staff completion rates. ○ Moving forward, the Executive Director of Finance and the Director of People would deliver a joint presentation at termly committee meetings. ● The Chair of the Board reflected that it would be important for the output from the recent Strategy Day to feed into the RC&I Committee, in particular. 	
8. ANNUAL REPORTING		
8.1	<p>ANNUAL GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 16:33</p> <p>8.1.1 Governors noted that this report had been considered in depth by the Resources, Culture & Impact Committee at its last meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RESOLUTION – The Board agreed to approve the Annual Gender Pay Gap Report for 2023-24. 	
8.2	<p>ANNUAL RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT, RISK REGISTER & BOARD ASSURANCE 16:34</p> <p>8.2.1 Governors noted that this report had been considered in depth by the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee at its last meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RESOLUTION – The Board agreed to approve the Annual Risk Management Report & Risk Register for 2023-24. 	
8.3	<p>ANNUAL REGULARITY SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 16:35</p> <p>8.3.1 Governors noted that this report had been considered in depth by the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee at its last meeting.</p> <p>8.3.2 The following discussion then occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ARaC Committee Chair explained that the Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire was an important part of the year end Regularity Audit and Financial Statements process. 	

#	Item	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chief Operating Officer advised that the questionnaire reflected the College's response to new requirements related to Managing Public Money, which had arisen following the reclassification of the FE sector. The Chair of the Board considered the Funding Agreements section and clarified that major projects were monitored by both the Capital Development Board <u>and</u> the RC&I Committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action 8.3.2.1 – Amend the Funding Agreements section of the Annual Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Page 4) to state that <i>'Major projects are reviewed by the Corporation through the Capital Development Board and the Resources, Culture & Impact Committee'</i>. RESOLUTION – The Board agreed to approve the Annual Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire for 2023-24, subject to the agreed amendment. 	HC
9. CONSENT AGENDA		
<i>Approval</i>		
9.1	POLICIES & KEY DOCUMENTS	16:37
	<p>9.1.1 Governors considered the following policies, noting the Policy Change Summary sheet, which outlined the key changes made and had followed a comprehensive committee level review and scrutiny.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RESOLUTION – The Board agreed to approve the following policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of Practice – Freedom of Speech & Expression Policy College Financial Regulations Procurement Policy 	
<i>Committee & Local College Board Meeting Minutes</i>		
9.2	CHAIRS GROUP	16:38
	<p>9.2.1 Governors noted the minutes of the following meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20th July 2023 – <i>extraordinary meeting</i> 18th September 2023 <p>9.2.2 There were no questions.</p>	
9.3	CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD	16:38
	<p>9.3.1 Governors noted the minutes of the meeting on 21st September 2023. There were no questions.</p>	
9.4	RESOURCES, CULTURE & IMPACT COMMITTEE	16:38
	<p>9.4.1 Governors noted the minutes of the meeting on 28th September 2023. There were no questions.</p>	

#	Item	Action																														
9.5	AUDIT RISK & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE 16:38 9.5.1 Governors noted that minutes of the meeting on 5 th October 2023 had been delayed, due to the close proximity to the ESCG Board meeting.																															
9.6	GOVERNANCE, PERFORMANCE & REPUTATION COMMITTEE 16:38 9.6.1 Governors noted the minutes of the extraordinary meeting on 9 th October 2023. There were no questions.																															
10. OTHER MATTERS																																
10.1	ANY URGENT MATTERS 16:39 10.1.1 There were no urgent matters for discussion.																															
10.2	DATE OF NEXT MEETING 16:39 10.2.1 Governors noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 14th December 2023, 14:00-17:00.																															
10.3	LIVE MEETING EVALUATION 16:39 11.3.1 Five survey responses were received from Governors, online via Google Forms:																															
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>#</th> <th>ASSESSMENT QUESTION</th> <th>RESULT</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td>Was the agenda sufficiently balanced between core governance business and strategic priorities?</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td>Were the papers succinct, with clarity in the information being communicated and the action required by Governors?</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td>Did you have all the information you needed to fully participate in discussion and decisions?</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td>Was there sufficient time to debate priority items in depth?</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td>Were you satisfied that decisions were arrived at in a proper manner?</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.</td> <td>Was the student experience at the heart of decision making?</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.</td> <td>Did the Chair facilitate the meeting effectively, enabling adequate focus on strategic priorities and creating an environment where a range of perspectives were considered?</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8.</td> <td>Were opportunities created to invite input from Student and Staff Governors?</td> <td>80%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9.</td> <td>Any comments or suggestions?</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	#	ASSESSMENT QUESTION	RESULT	1.	Was the agenda sufficiently balanced between core governance business and strategic priorities?	100%	2.	Were the papers succinct, with clarity in the information being communicated and the action required by Governors?	100%	3.	Did you have all the information you needed to fully participate in discussion and decisions?	100%	4.	Was there sufficient time to debate priority items in depth?	100%	5.	Were you satisfied that decisions were arrived at in a proper manner?	100%	6.	Was the student experience at the heart of decision making?	100%	7.	Did the Chair facilitate the meeting effectively, enabling adequate focus on strategic priorities and creating an environment where a range of perspectives were considered?	100%	8.	Were opportunities created to invite input from Student and Staff Governors?	80%	9.	Any comments or suggestions?	Yes	
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	Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Good interaction and ideas from Student and Staff Governors.</i> 																															
10.4	CLOSE 16:39 10.3.1 The first part of the meeting closed at 16:39. 10.3.2 All non-Independent Governors (and other participants) left the meeting, with the CEO & Principal and Director of Governance also remaining.																															

Action Summary

Item	Owner	Action	Due Date
1.4.2.1	HC	Further explore the feasibility of more fully utilising the Eduroam Wi-Fi network, with a view to address the issue in linking the network with the College's KCSIE compliant web filtering solution.	14 th December 2023
4.1.1.1	BH	Share logistical details of Staff Think Tank meetings for 2023-24 with all Governors.	Complete
4.1.1.2	RC	Define key themes for each Staff Governor Report to the Board for the remainder of the 2023-24 academic year.	14 th December 2023
7.2.1.1	BH	Distribute a copy of the presentation slides from the Strategy Day on 13th October 2023 to Governors.	Complete
8.3.2.1	HC	Amend the Funding Agreements section of the Annual Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Page 4) to state that 'Major projects are reviewed by the Corporation through the Capital Development Board and the Resources, Culture & Impact Committee'	31 st October 2023