



THE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE, COLCHESTER

**Minutes of Corporation Meeting No. 118
21st October 2019**

Chair: D Morran

Members Present: I MacNaughton (Principal), N Gerrard, C Goldsworthy, M Atherton, J Leslie, S Carmel, G Gardiner, J Owens, B Shahrabi, I Vipond, A Beatty, J Johnson, D Williams, K Finnigan, P Barker

In Attendance: A Johnson, J Harker, G Rayner, S Williams, E Hawkins

Clerk: T Johnson

Agenda

118.1 Apologies for Absence

118.1.1 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from governors: M Perrin, I Hutchins, S Nolan, G Gardiner, R Wilson and observers: J Cadman, E Gibson and A Frost.

118.2 Any other Business

One of the Vice Chairs provided an outline of the Carbon Numbers initiative, including potential outsourcing of the College's gas and electricity supply. It was noted that a more detailed analysis, costs and risks report will be given at the next meeting. It is estimated that savings of up to 20% could be made.¹ The Vice Chair indicated that he will be overseeing the process with the Finance Manager and Director of Premises and Estates. In response to a governor query, the Principal agreed to investigate whether the energy sourced by Carbon Numbers will be 'green' energy.²

Action: College/ABe

118.3 Declarations of Interest

118.3.1 The Principal and Clerk declared an interest in agenda items; 118.11(c) Senior Post Holder Performance Management and 118.11(d) Senior Post Holder Remuneration.

118.4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

118.4.1 The minutes of meeting No.117 held on 16 September 2019, were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.

¹ <https://www.theparliamentaryreview.co.uk/organisations/carbon-numbers>

² It was subsequently confirmed that the Carbon Numbers initiative does not relate to energy sourcing - it focuses on instigating energy saving mechanisms.

Matters Arising

117.7.1 – Premises (Performance Studio Roof)

The cost of re-roofing the Performance Studio is estimated to be in excess of £50K. However, it is not currently expected that a total re-roof will be needed for several years as a patch repair carried out during the summer period costing iro £10k has been successful. Other works will be carried out on an as and when basis.

A governor suggested that a sink fund should be created in order that funds are available when the re-roofing becomes necessary. The Principal explained that the situation is kept under review. However, as previously discussed, there is no Government capital grant money currently readily available to the College. If required, an option would be to again submit through annual bidding round for the CIF (Condition Improvement Fund – the Government Fund set up to address, Health & Safety issues, building compliance, and poor building condition). Governors recognised that under the current criteria it is very difficult for Sixth Form Colleges to access the fund and if successful is likely only be a loan rather than a grant.²

The Principal advised governors that in the context of the demographic rise in the number of 16 year olds (locally expected to rise continuously to 2034) the College may, at the point an entire re-roofing project is deemed necessary (or if government expansion funding became available), consider adding an upward extension to the building. Governors discussed the very limited options for growth in other buildings or on areas of the College site.

117.5.5 – Premises (Risk)

In response to governor questions re preventing reoccurrence of the significant leak that had occurred in the Midsite building and in particular what steps were being taken to safeguard the IT server unit that resides very close to the point of ingress, the Principal explained that the responsibility for the leak had been identified as a fault in the manufacture of the newly fitted condenser unit and therefore there is no liability on the part of the College - the matter is in the hands of the contractors' and manufacturers' insurers. The College have asked for the replacement heat exchange unit to be relocated elsewhere. However, if this is not possible a mechanism for 'catching water' could be explored. It is likely that the cost of relocating the unit will be borne by the College.

Governors were reminded that last year the College made the decision to triangulate its servers i.e. move from 2 clusters of 5 servers, to 3 clusters of 4 servers, alongside the installation of a new server room. Should it be required the network will be able to run on any two of the clusters without loss of service.

117.5.8 – International Baccalaureate (IB) Qualification

In response to a query regarding whether it would be possible to emulate the model in some school sixth forms, i.e. combining elements of the IB Diploma with A Levels, the Principal explained that in these sixth forms running the IB

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/condition-improvement-fund> 'This year's criteria favours bids from applicants with strong governance and good financial management'

Certificate, it generally supports the mission of the school e.g. Anglo European School and often enhances their small A level group sizes. The Assistant Principal (Curriculum & Quality Assurance) informed governors that the College had considered whether particular elements of the IB e.g. career's modules, with the Certificate arrangements, would be a suitable offer to students. However, it was evident that students would not want to study such modules (alongside 2 or 3 A Levels) and the resourcing of the delivery of the modules would render the option cost prohibitive.

117.9.2 – Executive Summaries

It was noted that on occasion and when considering the more extensive documents, some governors had difficulty in identifying the salient points from the information presented. Comment was made that the Board should receive the information it needs, in a way that enables governors to stay focused on its core strategic functions and identify and prioritise the issues that need to be discussed and addressed. In this context, governors requested that most document /executive summaries preface relevant supporting papers. The Chair expressed his disappointment that summaries were not accompanying relevant documents. As noted in the previous minutes managers are given discretion as to which documents executive summaries should accompany.

Action: College

118.5

Principal's Report

Governors considered the second autumn term report prepared by the Principal. In response to governor questions the following points were noted:

118.5.1

Recurrent Funding

The College is awaiting further detail regarding the Government's 16-18 funding frameworks and resourcing for 2020/2021, some announcements made September 2019. The Government's plans need to be incorporated into the November Government Budget and subsequently approved by Parliament. The Principal counselled that the political situation is still very fluid and in this context the funding situation is uncertain.

The SFCAs (Sixth Form College Association) continue to lobby for the £120m earmarked in the Government's spending round for high cost/high value subjects, to be applied to specific A levels and AGQs i.e. STEM (science, technology, English & maths) and language A Levels. It is hoped that an update will be given at the next meeting.

Action: College

118.5.2

Teacher & Support Staff Pay Awards

The continuing fall in the level and scarcity of resources (particularly for non-academy Sixth Form Colleges) continues to influence discussions regarding the 2019/20 national pay awards in the Sixth Form College (SFC) sector.

25 Sixth Form Colleges (a mixture of academy and non-academy SFC's) will experience 3 days (non-consecutive) of strike action during the autumn term following national ballots. The National Education Union (NEU) are also now re-balloting in 6/7 other SFC's where the required percentage of members

supporting strike action was narrowly missed. NEU are paying strike pay for the 3 days. The College is not in either of the categories above.

In the October, the National Joint Council meeting re the 2019/20 pay award the teacher's unions rejected the SFCA offer of a 1.5% rise.

118.5.3 The national collective bargaining discussions re support staff pay do not appear to have significantly advanced – as usual both sides are waiting to see the level that is agreed for teaching staff.

Applied General Qualifications

118.5.4 It is now not expected that the Government instigated review of Applied General Qualifications (and IB Diploma) will be finalised before the new year.

Academy Status

118.5.5 In late Spring 2019, the Government re-opened the opportunity for SFC's to apply to convert to Academy status. The SFCA are however, currently stating that any SFC applications for SATs (Single Academy Trust) or E-MATs (Empty Multi Academy Trust) will be rejected i.e. for academy status applications to be successful the application needs to be existing or create new and relatively sizeable MATs.

Auger Report (Higher Education Financing)

118.5.6 Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education, indicated in early October that the Government will publish its decisions arising from the outcomes of the Auger Report (financing of HE) 'very soon'³. It is not known whether any changes made as a result of these decision, will apply to students aiming to progress to higher education in 2020 or 2021. It is also not known whether there will be any retrospective adjustments made.

Local Sixth Form Provision

The Sigma MAT are re-organising and re-labelling their sixth form provision for 2020/21 onwards. The Sigma MAT has acquired the former Bishops Park School premises in Jaywick, with the intention of moving the Clacton County High Sixth Form to this site which will be known as 'The Sigma Sixth – Tendring'. The Philip Morant School Sixth Form will be re-branded as 'The Sigma Sixth – Colchester'.

Currently there has been here is no promotion of V16 provision on the University of Essex site for 2020/21 year in either the Sigma Sixth - Colchester / Philip Morant Sixth Form or Sigma Sixth – Tendring / Clacton County High School prospectuses for 2020/21 entry.

118.5.7 It is not thought that the re-branding will have any impact on student enrolments at the College.

College Enrolments

118.5.8 Currently enrolment numbers are almost identical to the figures reported for the same period last year i.e. 2950 – slightly 'up' in year 1 and slightly 'down' in year 2

Results Days 2020

³ Published spring 2019

The Government has 'drawn forward' the release of both A level and GCSE results in Summer 2020 from their historic positioning. This is very unhelpful and creates a difficult framework for staff dealing with the administration of results and advising and supporting students post A level and GCSE results.

118.6

118.6.1

Strategic Plan and Priorities

2018/19 Self-Assessment Review (SAR) Summary

Governors considered the early self-assessment summary review circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Lead Governor for Curriculum Offer & Educational Quality, advised governors of the importance of being conversant with the strengths and weaknesses of the College, the supporting narrative and the areas targeted for improvement. In this context, the SAR summary including contextual data should be considered a key governance document providing the narrative and data that ensures governors are focussed on the right areas.

6pm J Leslie joined the meeting

In response to governor questions, it was noted that a significant strength of the College is the consistency of student attainment and achievement, across the spread of activities and curriculum offered by the College. The Principal highlighted that the College does not have any significant / major areas of weakness - one curriculum area is registering a 3rd consecutive year of negative value added however, data shows that this is only marginally negative and therefore is not considered a significant weakness.

Governors indicated that they concurred with the management assessment that the College is a 'Good' College with a number of outstanding features. As evidenced in the SAR and performance data the broad picture shows year on year improvements with continued movement forward since the last inspection. The Chairman expressed the view that the data evidenced that the previous year had been one of progress and achievement.

In order to ensure all governors can fully contribute to discussion re the areas of strength and those targeted for improvement, governors indicated that a summary page prefacing reports such as the SAR summary, would be helpful. In this context, the Chair highlighted the annual cycle of documentation presented periodically to the Board and the role that the early SAR summary performs in relation to the full SAR and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Those present were reminded that the Principal's annual report provides, (in an alternative structure to the SAR), a detailed narrative of the College's key strengths and areas for improvement.

It was acknowledged that all governors should be able to engage fully with data led discussions re the academic performance of the College and that new governors, unfamiliar with documents referenced in, for example in the SAR summary, may have difficulty in readily contextualising the information provided. A governor suggested that direct access e.g. hyperlinks, to secondary documents referenced in reports would be helpful.

118.6.2

Governors thanked the Assistant Principal (Curriculum & Quality Assurance) for

producing the summary document.

2018/19 Summary of departmental Self-Assessments (strengths and areas for improvement and support)

At this point the Head of the Business Studies and Economics Department gave an informative presentation on the work of the department. The presentation included an overview of the courses offered and examination results/student outcomes. A written report, framed on the Ofsted Quality of Education framework, was also tabled (appendix A).⁴ The report provided governors with detailed information under the headings of:

Intent: *What are we trying to achieve through our curriculum?*

Implementation: *How is the curriculum being delivered?*

Impact: *What difference is our curriculum and strategies for implementation making?*

It was noted that ALPS⁵ and L3 Value Added⁶ data evidences that student's results are improving in all A level subjects. The majority of the department's 2018/19 QIP targets were achieved.

Governors thanked the Head of Department for attending the meeting

6.35pm E Hawkins left the meeting

118.6.3

Strategic Plan [deferred to the next meeting]

It was noted that the plan will be populated with benchmarking & validated examination data, when received. Governors were encouraged to provide feedback on the draft plan to the Assistant Principal (Curriculum & Quality Assurance) in advance of final approval at the next meeting._

Action: All governors/College

118.7

118.7.1

Cross College Reports

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information report for 2018-19 year was noted. There were no matters arising.

118.7.2

Governor Visits to the College

Governors were reminded that visit reports are published on SharePoint. The autumn term governor visit day will take place on November 15th 2019. 12 community governors have indicated that they will be attending.

Action: All governors

118.8

118.8.1

Human Resources

People Management Plan [staffing strategy]

The report circulated in advance of the meeting was deferred to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

⁴ See also minute No.118.9.1

⁵ Purchased data analysis tool

⁶ Government generated data

118.8.2 Salary policy - teaching staff

The draft policy circulated in advance of the meeting, was deferred to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

118.9 Curriculum Offer & Educational Quality

118.9.1 2019 Ofsted Educational Inspection Framework (EIF)

The Lead Governor for Curriculum Offer & Educational Quality, and the Assistant Principal (Teaching & Learning) gave a presentation to governors on Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (EIF) including feedback from the October 2019 SFCA Curriculum and Assessment Conference.

7 pm T. Johnson (Clerk) and B. Shahrabi left the meeting

7.15pm T. Johnson re-joined the meeting

The main changes to the inspection framework, including the emphasis on inspectors gathering qualitative evidence to help assess whether the College is offering a curriculum that is 'broad, rich and deep', were noted. Those present were informed that governors, leaders and teaching staff will need to be able to demonstrate an understanding of and evidence, responses to 3 key questions:

- What are we trying to achieve through our curriculum? (**Intent**) What do we want for our learners, including the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life?
- How is our curriculum being delivered? (**Implementation**) How is teaching, learning and assessment fulfilling our intent? How are we integrating new knowledge of equality & diversity and British Values into larger concepts?
- What difference is our curriculum making? (**Impact**) How do we evaluate the knowledge and skills learners have gained against expectations?

As an inclusive institution, the College has always strived to maintain a breadth of opportunity, choice and additionality for its students, despite declining resources and the need to secure positive good outcomes for every single course and every single programme. In this context, the College welcomes the recognition that Ofsted will give to 'extra-curricular activities and additionality' as a key part of the curriculum.

Attention was drawn to the tabled handout, which provided extracts from the EIF Inspection Handbook. Governors concurred that the prime objective will always be to achieve outstanding academic and pastoral outcomes for students and as a result an outstanding Ofsted grading. Within this, there is a need to recognise; the Corporation's role and responsibilities and that inspectors will seek evidence of the impact of governance including; '*whether governors provide confident strategic leadership, oversight and assurance of educational performance to sustain continuous sustainable improvement.*' It was also noted that '*inspectors will need to satisfy themselves that those responsible for governance understand and fulfil their responsibilities effectively.*'^{7/4}In this context, it was reiterated that governors should '*understand the College's strengths and weaknesses, ensure*

^{7/4}https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/822103/Further_education_and_skills_handbook_July_2019.pdf

*that the College meets its statutory responsibilities, provide challenge and hold senior leaders to account for improving the quality of learning and the effectiveness of performance management systems.*⁸

Quality of Teaching & Learning

118.9.2 2018/19 Outcomes

The Quality of Teaching & Learning Report including the 2018/19 lesson observation summary and effectiveness of improvement measures, as circulated in advance of the meeting was received. The following points were expanded upon

The Core Observer Group (COG) consists of 14 staff members whose observation reports are graded and observations quality-assured. A further 100 staff are 'observer' trained. Three learning walks are also carried out in each department annually, and evidence used to set further targets for improvement as required.

For the 2018/19 year the teaching & learning theme was 'Stretch and Challenge', in line with strategic and departmental priorities

COG data lessons were graded post-feedback for both quality of teaching and student learning/progress. Outstanding teaching and learning is judged as an outstanding lesson, in line with current Ofsted (higher) expectations. The % of lessons graded 'good' or better increased to 99.9% (97% -2017/18 year),

The College continues to operate a no-grade policy during observation feedback. Rather, a professional discussion on improving teaching & learning takes place and a teaching & learning development plan is agreed.

2019/20 Aims

The 2019/20 teaching & learning focus is again 'stretch and challenge'. The purpose of the focus to develop a culture where all students are keen to challenge themselves develop improved resilience and mindfulness and to aim high – both in the classroom and in their independent learning.

As part of the focus all A-level subjects planned and delivered a 'getting A-level study ready' programme at the start of the autumn term. The vast majority of subjects also have peer mentoring arrangements in place and positive impacts have been reported from many subjects.

Enrichment continues to be extensive and broad, and students are encouraged to participate to increase their broader knowledge and skills in addition to developing softer skills such as communication, team-working and problem-solving. The College is working towards achieving both Arts Mark and Science Mark status.

118.9.3 Quality of Education at The Sixth Form College 2019/20

Governors received and discussed the report circulated in advance of the meeting. The Assistant Principal (Teaching & Learning) explained that the narrative within the document provided governors with an overview of where the College currently stands in terms of the quality of education provided i.e. the College's curriculum intent including the rationale behind the programmes of study offered and the various strands within those programmes, how those programmes

are implemented in practice and the demonstrable outcomes for students (impact).

The Lead Governor for Curriculum Offer & Educational Quality stressed the importance of being able to accurately assess 'where the College is' and for governors to have confidence in that assessment through; knowledge of the College, careful consideration of documentation presented by managers, and interpretation of internal and external data.

Governors thanked the Assistant Principal for her reports.

At this point observers and the student governor left the meeting

118.10

Governance Matters

118.10.1

2019 Governor's Award

In recognition of his long-standing voluntary work, offering sign language classes for students. Gordon Duncan was unanimously nominated to be the recipient of the 2019 award.

Action: Principal/Clerk

At this point the Clerk and Principal left the meeting.

In the Clerk's absence D. Morran was appointed Clerk.

118.10.2

Remuneration Committee Matters

The draft minutes of the meeting No.1 held 11.10.2019, circulated in advance of the meeting were received and noted. There were no urgent matters arising.

The senior post holder remuneration policy and procedure, as approved by the Remuneration Committee and circulated in advance of the meeting was received and noted.

Senior Post Holder Performance Management Review

[See confidential minute no.118]

Remuneration Committee recommendation to the Corporation re the senior post holder terms and conditions of service

[See confidential minute no.118]

Action: Chair

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 19.25

Signed

Dated