



**Minutes of the Governing Body Meeting No 114
18th March 2019**

Chair: D Morran

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

In

Attendance: J Harker, J Cadman, A Johnson, E Gibson, J Cadman, A Frost, S Williams, G Rayner

Clerk: T Johnson

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed Community Governors, S Carmel and M Atherton to their first meeting. The meeting commenced with a presentation by student governors on the work of the College Council.

Student Council Report

In their capacity as Chair & Vice- Chair of the College Council, student governors gave an informative presentation on the work of the College Council and other student activities arranged by the College.

In response to governor queries further information was provided on the following matters:

- College Council finances/income: It was noted the amount raised per annum is reflective of the fact that due to lack of student interest, the Council no longer organises any very large fundraising social activities e.g. May Ball and Christmas Party.
- The Charitable Russ Foundation monies, raised through sales in the Russ Shop (a student activity) and other College fundraising monies (for external charities) are accounted through the College Council account. A staff governor reported that all College fundraising monies are accounted through the College Council account. The Finance Manager indicated that if required it would be possible to have separate accounts. It was agreed that this should be looked into further.

Action: GRa & Finance Manager

- In response to governor questions re students' programmes of study. Governors noted that one of the positive outcomes of the move to 3 Linear A Levels, for the majority of students in year 1, appears to be increased student engagement with fundraising, citizenship and peer mentoring activities.

Student Governors were thanked for their presentation.

Agenda Item

114.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from governor, S Nolan.

114.2 Any Other Business

A Governor asked for further information re the provision of a gift aid option for persons making donations to the College. A report will be given at the next meeting.¹

Action: Finance Manager

114.3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared

114.4 Determination of Confidential items

No confidential items were identified

114.5 Minutes of Previous Meetings

114.5.11 The minutes of meeting No.113 held on 28th January 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

114.5. Matters Arising

None

114.6 Principal's Report

Governors considered the second spring term report prepared by the Principal. In response to governors questions the following points were noted;

114.6.1 Funding

The Sixth form College Association (SFCA) 'Raise the Rate' campaign continues. In early March, a number of press and media outlets, gave prominent national coverage of the need to increase 16-18 resourcing.

Nick Gibb, DfE Minister for Schools, has recently made a number of statements which suggest that improving 16-18 resourcing (recurrent funding) is now a high priority for the Government in the forthcoming 2020-23 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period (or a 2020/21 year funding plan). In addition the comments, made suggest that the very poor capital funding system that is currently in place

¹ Please see email and attachment sent to governors 20.03.2019

may also need to be reviewed in the context of the expected, significant rise in the 16-18 age cohort demographics.

The DfE instigated, 'Review of the Resilience of the FE sector' is ongoing. The SFCA have asked the College to host a visit from a Treasury Team, in relation to the review and preparations for the 2020-23 CSR exercises that the DfE and the Treasury are currently undertaking. A team of seven officials are scheduled to visit the College on March 29th, and will meet with the Principal, Chair of Governors and possibly also the Finance Manager.

Thus far, the College has been informed that agenda items will include discussions on Recurrent and Capital Funding, and the impact of the funding cuts, In this context the Treasury team asked for information re curriculum withdrawals, group sizes, hours of student contact and enrichments (as well as funding, finance information).

It is hoped that the agenda signals a recognition by the Treasury that the demographic dip of 16-18 age cohort, experienced locally² and nationally has ended and that the anticipated increase in student numbers and the additional places required to cope with the rise, needs to be proactively planned for, including significant 'up front' capital investment. It is anticipated that recommendations from the Review, will result in Comprehensive Spending Review outcomes that will influence 16-18 funding allocations from 2020/21.

The SFCA have recently briefed, (early March 2019), members that arising from the difficult passage of the Brexit considerations through Parliament, they understand there may now be a possibility that the Government will move to a new one year 2020-21 Spending Plan before instigating to a 3 year CSR in 2021-2024.

114.6.2 Teacher Pay Award 2018-19

There has been limited progress on both the Teaching Staff and Support Staff national Sixth Form College (SFC) sector 2018/19 pay negotiations. The negotiations have, as expected been very difficult; due in part to external factors, including the inconsistent application of the DfE teacher pay top up grant.³

It is now evident that the Teachers' Pay Top-up Grant (TPTG) afforded to school and academies (including 16-18 academies), 2018/19, will not be afforded to Sixth Form Colleges (SFCs). This funding disparity effectively creates a 0.5% difference between the pay awards of schools and academies, compared to SFCs. It is not yet known whether the TPTG will be a one year award or whether it will be repeated in future years.

The national 'Joint Council' collective bargaining exercises have resulted in an offer by the SFCA (employers side), which union representatives are currently considering. The offer involves an average pay award averaging 1.6%; which is slightly above the level of increase the College has budgeted for and would therefore add approximately £25k of unexpected/unbudgeted costs to the 2018/19 year.

² The current year 1 (2018 intake) is the lowest point in the local age cohort demographic 'dip' trend before numbers start to rise (2019 intake, through to 2034)

³ Direct funding of the salary cost increases above 1%

114.6.3 Applied General Courses

The Government will now withdraw all of the unreformed Applied General courses from Autumn 2020 (commencement). For the College this only effects Applied Law as all our other Applied General courses offered by the College have already been reformed. However, this development will have a major impact on institutions who are still offering 'unreformed' courses and is also likely to lower the national benchmark re grades.

114.6.4 Funding Allocation 2019-20⁴

The College's funding allocation for the 2019-20 year was received late February and is broadly in line with expectations, although much relevant information regarding resourcing is still unknown e.g. the level of unfunded cost increases including pay awards and the situation regarding promised financial support from the Government in relation to the much higher levels of Employer Contributions to Teachers Pensions from September 2019 (one year only). The College is disappointed with the reduction of the 'disadvantage factor' and also the ESFA/DfE methodology used to calculate the 'net growth in level 3 Maths'.⁵ In relation to the funding allocation.

The 2019/20 year will be a very difficult year for the College, due to further resource cuts of at least approximately £700k (see above). This comprises of further funding cuts of approximately £440k and approximately £260k of estimated unfunded cost increases. Although the Government have indicated that they will fund the further increases in Employers Contributions to Teachers Pensions for the 2019/20 year, (approximately £400k) no details have yet been released. The SFCA fear that the Government may only fund the increase for the fiscal year i.e. to the end of March 2020 and not the full academic year i.e. only 7 months of the annual cost to the College would be funded (approximately £220).

It is hoped that the Government will, for the 2019/20 year, repeat the 'Capital Extras' grant. If not, this will represent a further £239k funding cut from the overall funding received in 2018/19.

The Principal stressed that although from 2020/21 year there are potential 'improvements' from the Resilience Review of the FE Sector feeding into the CSR and the anticipated increase in student numbers which will increase funding and also resulting in economies of scale and therefore a positive impact on resourcing from 2020, the 2019/20 year is going to be a very tough year for the College – the College's most fiscally challenging year to date. Governors were reminded that during the strategic evening governors discussed the likelihood that the College would be operating a deficit budget for the 2019/20 year with a higher and significant proportion of income spent on staffing i.e. as previously reported an amendment to the Staffing Plan for 2019/20 to a level of 79% of income. The transitional plan would be to reduce the deficit and the percentage of budget spent

⁴ *Linked to Strategic Priority 2: Maintain the financial health and resource strength of the College*

⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/797482/Funding_rates_and_formula_201920.pdf

on staffing over the ensuing 3-4 years.

In the context that the Treasury do not generally like public bodies to have excessively high levels of Reserves in the bank i.e. not being used, a governor asked whether the level of Reserves held by the College would cause any queries to be raised. The Principal explained that the majority of the Reserves currently held by the College are to i) to pay off the outstanding mortgage at the appropriate time ii) hold the minimum required for cash flow (plus a small amount on top), and in this respect the current level of reserves were fiscally prudent at a time of resource squeeze and the need to operate deficit budgets to maintain quality.

The Chairman reported that 'Nick Gibb, Schools Minister, had stated during a TV interview, that the Government's priority should be the FE sector rather than the schools sector'.

114.7 Finance Matters

114.7.1 2018/19 Staff Pay Awards

[See minute 114.6.2]

114.7.2 Resourcing (2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21)

The Finance Lead governor's reported that the 2018-19 budget is currently forecasting a deficit. A clearer picture of the budget position will be obtained and reported to governors once the 2018/19 pay awards and examination fees have been finalised.

[See also minute 114.6.1 & 114.6.4]

114.7.3 Treasury Visit

[See minute 114.6.1]

114.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT / QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Strategic Priorities - 2018/19

Strategic Priority 1: Give high priority to strong quality of teaching and learning and the student experience to achieve positive outcomes for each individual student, in a context of an inclusive College⁶

The Lead Governor for Curriculum and Academic Achievement reiterated that the process of periodically monitoring the strategic priorities, alongside presentation of evidential detail, focused on the quality of outcomes, is critical to carrying out a governor's strategic monitoring role. In response to governor questions the following action points were expanded upon:

⁶ Final DfE Qualification Achievement Rate Data for 2017/18 will be available on the DfE website from 28 March 2019. <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/130680/the-sixth-form-college-colchester>

114.8.1 Student Progress

Governors were informed that the February student progress reviews for year 1 student and reports for year 2 students, were in line with earlier reported target and current grades.

114.8.2 Applied General (AG) Qualifications (resit and first time entries)

The Applied General BTEC results from January exams/assessments have recently been received and were very good. The Computing and ICT department were particularly pleased with the results for both year 1 and year 2 students. The Sport and PE department entered students for a January module for the BTEC Sport Certificate qualification for the first time and were very pleased with the results. The pass rates for both departments were in the mid 90's%.⁷ Resit results were also very pleasing. Governors acknowledged that the results provide the evidence that this curriculum offering is working well.

114.8.3 Other Applied General courses

Applied General Criminology (176 students), Business Studies (77 students) and ICT (65 students) have also been undertaking controlled assignments. The internal feedback from controlled assessments undertaken thus far, which are externally assessed, indicates that results will again be very high.

114.8.4 Quality of Teaching: Interim 2018/19 Central Observation Group (COG) Data

The focus for the 2018-19 year is 'stretch & challenge'. Of the 145 lessons observed thus far, 21% were judged to be outstanding, 78% good and 1% requiring improvement. The Assistant Principal (Teaching & Learning) reported that despite the more challenging grading criteria requiring both teaching & student progress to be judged outstanding in order for the overall observation grade to be assessed as outstanding, there had been an increase in the number of lessons recorded as outstanding, compared to the 2017-18 year.

See also confidential minutes 114 [1]

114.8.5 Student Retention

Student retention for the October to March period remains high. The current retention rate is 97.6%. At year end it is expected that the overall retention rate will to be slightly up on last year.

114.8.6 Mid-year Departmental / Course Progress

The mid-year departmental progress report, circulated in advance of the meeting was discussed. Governors agreed that the level of detail included in the reports was very valuable. Discussion was held regarding governor suggestion that uniformity across the departmental reports would be helpful, for example all reports to include information on intended outcomes.

Governors were advised that requesting uniformity across departmental mid-year reports was problematic, due to each departmental report being reflective of the individual department priorities and their unique recording & target setting

⁷ Would likely be 100% - if students who did not turn up for the exam were discounted

methodologies. Also, in the context of linear courses not all departments will have any quantitative results to report at this point in the year (and those that do are likely to be largely only be mid-year resit and AG modular courses).

In response to governor questions regarding progress measures, governors were reminded that multiple and collective approaches are engaged to monitor students' academic progress including; lesson observations, student reports & reviews, awarding of standard assessment grades (current and target grades - reported at five points spread through the year), and ongoing measures for subjects that have coursework elements. In addition, all A level courses will have May internal assessments which are a significant progress measure, as will the January Year 2 mock examinations. Governors were reminded of the disparity between course awards i.e. numerical GCSE grades, alpha A Levels grades and AG grades awarded as 'distinction' through to 'fail' and the Government has instigated changes in national grade allocations for the reformed GCSE, A level and A.G. level courses 2016-19.

The Lead Governor for Curriculum and Academic Achievement asked if , in order to help governors measure progress / get an overall progress picture, whether there could be some particular standardisation for example in the reporting of percentage measures. The Principal explained that in addition to points previously made this is problematic due to the uniqueness of each subject and their individualised assessment recording & reporting systems - designed to provide maximum benefit in terms of analysing student data. The Chair asked if the online Go4Schools reporting system could be utilised to provide a standard report from each department. Governors were advised that although Go4Schools may provide some progress commonality, its use to generate reports at departmental level would not provide the information governors required as the system is predominately used at micro level for individual student analysis (based on a student's latest assessments). Therefore, without a significant amount of supporting detail and explanation this data would not be particularly helpful for governors.

114.8.7 Departmental Grades for the 2017/18 year

Governors considered the report detailing departmental grades for the 2017/18 year under the headings of; Leadership and Management, Teaching & Learning, Personal Development Behaviour and Welfare and Outcomes for Learners.

The summary of overall grades was noted

Grade	Descriptor	Number of Departments / Curriculum Areas		% of Curriculum Provision	
		2017/18	2016/17	2017/18	2016/17
1	Outstanding	0	0	0%	0%
1/2 & 2/1	Very good	12	12	66.4%	60.4%
2	Good	6	5	33.6%	36.6%
2/3 & 3/2	Requires some improvement	0	1	0%	2.5%

3	Requires improvement	0	0	0%	0%
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The Assistant Principal (Teaching & Learning) reported that the COG team had internally graded 100% of the 2017-18 College curriculum provision as good or better [97.5% 2016-17 / 97.2% - 2015/16]. The IB Programme, Additional Studies and Extracurricular Programme had been assessed as Outstanding.

For the benefit of new governors, the Lead Governor for Curriculum and Academic Achievement explained that proportionality is very significant and the observation data provides governors with a helpful correlation between the quality of teaching & learning and outcomes for learners.

Lead Governors led thanks to the Assistant Principal (Curriculum & Quality Assurance) for her work in producing and presenting the strategic priority reports, furthering governor understanding and enabling governors to monitor and ask questions in a more informed way'.

114.9 Pastoral Matters

(i) Pastoral Report

The Pastoral report circulated in advance of the meeting was considered. The Assistant Principal (Pastoral) provided governors with a mid-year update pastoral developments (since September 2018). The following points were noted:

114.9.1 Safeguarding

- The number of safeguarding files held (current students) has continued to rise.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has introduced a new administration system with the aim of ensuring the highest risk students are regularly monitored and discussed. [see also confidential minutes 114]
- Over 100 staff attended Mental Health Awareness training. The Health and Welfare Coordinator has delivered Mental Health First Aid training to two new Mental Health First Aiders.
- The DSL has delivered initial safeguarding training to all new staff and new governors, as well as over 300 student mentors.

114.9.2 Health and Welfare

- The College is in the process of creating a "Welfare Hub"- a room which the welfare team will use as an office but will also function as a space for student drop-in support, as well as group sessions.
- The Coordinator has introduced a number of health-related initiatives, including: a smoking cessation programme, the C Card (providing free condoms), the Big Red Box (providing sanitary products).
- Multi-agency working has been promoted with visits from representatives

of: the Disorder Eating Team; Provide; the Drugs and Alcohol team from the Children's Society; Coram (children's legal services) and YES (the Youth Enquiry Service) visiting the College.

114.9.3 Counselling Service

- Senior Tutors and other pastoral/welfare staff have made 108 referrals to College counsellors. 69 students have attended counselling and 39 are either being seen currently or waiting to be seen.
- The counselling team has reduced in capacity this year and is set to reduce further as one member of the team, who has worked one day per week on a voluntary basis for 5 years, steps down at Easter.

114.9.4 SEND

- A member of staff has completed the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) training, which should be certificated in the summer. This will provide the College with a second qualified SENCO, to assist the Director of Learning Support.
- The Learning Support team have completed 122 full assessments for exam access arrangements and 59 triage appointments an increase on the 2017/18 year (114 and 40 respectively).

114.9.5 Equality and Diversity

- New enrolments indicate an increasing proportion of students enrolling at the College are female. The proportion of female students has now risen to 58% - reflective of the national trend.
- Work continues on the Financial Disadvantage Project, undertaken as an action research project in the Philosophy and Religious Studies department.

114.9.6 Prevent

- The Prevent agenda has been addressed in an information-giving tutorial for year 1 students and in a more searching, questioning style for year 2 students.
- There have been no Prevent issues raised at College so far this academic year.

114.9.7 In response to a governor questions re how the College knows that strategies deployed to support students are effective, governors were advised that retention, outcomes and destinations data along with student feedback provide strong evidence that the College's pastoral strategies are effectual.

Governors thanked the Assistant Principal for the informative update.

(ii) Student Voice & Stakeholder Feedback

114.9.8 Student Governors

The report from the Student Governors re their work as governors including attendance at board meetings, the annual strategic evening and providing new governors with a tour of the College, as circulated in advance of the meeting was noted.

114.9.9 College Council

See report on page 1

114.9.10 Ofsted Parent View

The link to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire has been sent out to parents and carers. The College does not see the outcomes or receive any feedback from Ofsted or other Government agencies.

114.9.11 College Friends

Parents are offered the opportunity to 'sign up' during student enrolment. Monies donated are used to fund projects that directly benefit all or a large proportion of the student body. Consideration will be given to the College Friends providing funding towards the creation of the new 'Student Welfare Hub'.

Action: ABe

114.9.12 Complaints & Compliments Report

The compliments & complaints report for the 2017-18 year & the first two terms of the 2018-19 year was noted.

- 2017-18
Governors agreed that for an institution the size of the college the number of complaints for was very low. i.e. 5 formal complaints (3 re the same issue) were received and investigated.
- 2018-19 (autumn & spring terms)
Four complaints have been received thus far. Including one that progressed to the appeal stage.

114.10 HR Matters

114.10.1 Gender Pay Gap Report⁸

Governors received the second annual report on the College's gender pay gap - figures as at 31st March 2018. The following points were discussed;

The College has a gender pay gap of +8%, which shows that on average across all staff men are paid a slightly higher hourly rate than women within the College.

⁸ Information about the College's gender pay gap is available in the Management Reports section of the public website: <https://www.colchsf.ac.uk/managementreports/>

The gap has closed slightly from 9% in 2017 to 8% for 2018.

A more significant proportion of the College workforce in the lower pay quartile are employed in areas compared to other colleges who 'contract out' (including cleaning/catering) and are lower paid positions.

The College employs more females than males, including in middle and lower levels of the organisation, which provides context to the 8% positive pay gap i.e. on average male employees are paid a higher hourly rate than women.

The bonus pay gap has significantly changed from a 0% mean pay gap to -9.3%. The change is due to the increase in the numbers of female support staff and a decrease in male staff eligible for and receiving the bonus (a national framework instigated over 10 years ago for support staff).

114.10.2 2018/19 Pay Awards

[See minute 114.6.2]

114.11 Governance Matters

114.11.1 Strategic Planning Evening

Governors agreed that the strategic planning evening was a positive and valuable horizon scanning exercise, aiding governors in their identification of future strategic issues and priorities.

I Vipond, J Johnson, J Owens and D Morran were appointed as members of the Governor Strategic Working Group, constituted to take forward the outcomes from the strategic evening and develop strategic vision statements for each of the priority headlines. The vision statements will inform the preparation of the College's 2019-24 strategic plan, to be prepared by management for governor consideration at the July 2019 Governing Body meeting.

Action: DMo, IVi, JOw, JJo

114.11.2 Governor Visit Day

The draft schedule for the governor visit day to be held on April 26th had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The schedule included visits to academic & support departments, meetings with students and staff and safeguarding training delivered by the DSL.

Action: Clerk

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10pm

Date of the next meeting 15.05.2019 @ 6pm

Signed

Dated