



**Minutes of Corporation Meeting No 115
15th May 2019**

Chair: D Morran

Present: C Goldsworthy, R Wilson, J Johnson, S Nolan, M Atherton,
G Gardiner, J Owens, S Carmel, B Shahrabi, D Williams, P Barker

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

Clerk: T Johnson

Agenda Item

115.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from governors: A Beatty I MacNaughton (Principal), N Gerrard, M Perrin, I Hutchins, K Finnigan, J Leslie, I Vipond and observer, A Johnson.

115.2 Any other Business

None requested.

115.3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared.

115.4 Determination of Confidential items

Excepting the Part B agenda, no confidential items were identified.

115.5 Minutes of Previous Meetings

115.5.1 The minutes of meeting No. 114 held on 18th May 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

115.5.2 The confidential minutes of meeting No. 114 held on 18th May 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

115.5.3 Matters Arising

All matters arising were included on the agenda.

115.6 Principal's Report

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

115.6.1 Funding

The DfE instigated, '*Review of the Resilience of the FE sector*' is ongoing.

On March 29th the College hosted a visit from a Treasury Team, in relation to the review and preparations for the 2020-23 CSR exercises, which the DfE and the Treasury are currently undertaking. A team of eight officials meet with the Principal and Chair of Governors. During the visit to the College were able to communicate, in detail, the significant scale of the real terms reductions in the levels of recurrent resourcing in recent years, the simultaneous decline in allocated levels of capital resourcing and the extensive range of negative impacts upon provision/students experience and quality - the level of understanding of all the officials was felt to have increased as a result of this visit. The Treasury officials seemed well aware of the importance of achieving of a good level of increase in future 16-18 recurrent funding levels if further negative and undesirable impacts and outcomes are to be avoided. They also seemed keen to achieve improvements in 16-18 capital funding allocations, particularly to promote greater 'scale' of provision and to meet future demographic growth trends. The Officials asked a number of clarifying questions and showed a good appreciation of the College's situation in the FE sector. They thanked the College for the visit and discussion and for the information provided which was very relevant and a useful contribution to their knowledge and understanding.

The Chairman reported that shortly after the Treasury visit a debate had been held in Westminster re the impact and future impact re FE funding. Colchester MP Will Quince spoke of the struggles of FE providers during the debate. The Chairman has written to Mr Quince to thank him for his 'positive contribution to the debate'. A governor pointed out that Mr Quince has voted against increasing FE funding in the past.

Three of the reports prepared by the College for the Treasury visit had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the 'Trends in Government Recurrent Funding Allocation' document had been updated as a result of i) the DfE confirming that a compensatory grant (one year only) will be given to schools, academies and SFC's in 2019/20 year to meet the costs of the increases in Employers Contributions to Teacher's Pensions and ii) the recent agreement regarding the 2018/19 Teacher's Pay Award which clarifies the financial impact.

Although the Government decision to provide a compensatory grant to support the additional costs of the substantial increases in Employers Contributions to Teacher's Pensions (for a full twelve month period) is a relief, significant concern remains re the potential impact of these extra costs (approximately £400k p.a.) in the 2020/21 year.

The Chairman reminded those present that due to further resource cuts and cost increases the 2019/20 year will be the most fiscally challenging year thus far.

115.6.2 Recruitment

The College is very disappointed that Sixth Form Colleges have been excluded from participation in the new online DfE teacher vacancy advertising service that is being provided free of charge to schools and academies.¹ Governors suggested that the College should be pushing for recognition as a 'school' by the DfE teacher vacancy service. The HR Manager advised the meeting that a significant amount of 'pushing' has and continues to be done and the SFCA are also raising the exclusion of SFCs from the initiative with the DfE.

The Assistant Principal (Teaching & Learning) reminded those present that Sixth Form Colleges are, in many cases excluded from funding streams made readily available to schools and academies, such as the Golden Hello for secondary school teachers.²

Governors requested that the enduring inequality in the Government's treatment of the Sixth Form College sector re supplementary enhancements for teacher recruitment is raised with the local MP.

Action: College

115.6.3 Enrolments

Governors were pleased to note that applications/offers made and held, for September 2019 entry are over 100 'up' on last year – which represents a further potential increase in market share of 16 year olds locally. In response to governor questions re the teaching staff structure required to cater for the increase in student numbers the Assistant Principal (Admissions) reported that at this point no changes (beyond those already planned) to the number of teaching staff nor any major changes in class sizes were anticipated.

115.7 Mission Statement and Strategic Priorities

115.7.1 (a) Mission Statement

The Mission Statement was reviewed. It was noted that no comments from stakeholders had been received.³ It was unanimously agreed that the Mission Statement should not be revised.

115.7.2 (b) Strategic Priorities & Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan – Vision Statement

The Chairman reported on the activities of the Strategic Planning Working Group re the formation of draft vision statements, underpinning assumptions and rationale (circulated in advance of the meeting). The Chairman reminded governors that the brief for the working group had been to produce draft vision statements for approval by the Board, that would subsequently inform the 3-5 year Strategic Plan, to be written by the College. The Chairman talked through

¹ <https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/> Schools also have access to the DfEs free commercial framework for agency supply teachers to support schools to get value for money when recruiting supply teachers and other temporary staff. Agencies that have signed up to the service have agreed to guarantee to schools that they have completed all necessary checks on their workers, have the relevant accreditation in place, be transparent about the rates and mark-up they charge, and give schools the chance to avoid paying 'temp-to-perm' fees. The agencies signed up to the service have all agreed to limit how much they charge in these circumstances, and they won't charge at all if the worker has been in post for more than 12 weeks and they are given four weeks' notice. This is not available to Sixth Form Colleges.

² Ranging from £2.5K to £5K for teachers of qualifying subjects

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706868/Golden_Hello_guidance_AY_2018-19_Local_authorities.pdf

³ The Corporation's section of the website contains a statement inviting comments on the Mission.

each of the 4 vision statements relating to; programmes of study, student numbers, quality of education, & resources.

Two members of the working group raised queries re the extended detail of the statements. In this context governors discussed the relationship between the Mission (what we do today) and Vision (future aspirations and strategic direction) and gave opinion on what would or would not be considered a 'vision statement'. Governors suggested that in order to ensure engagement with stakeholders the vision statement should be as concise as possible.

In order to progress the matter it was agreed that two members of the Strategic Planning Working Group, supported by the Clerk should prepare a revised vision statement for consideration at the next meeting of the working group and subsequent approval by the Board.

Action: JJo/JOw/Clerk

It was agreed that the underlying assumptions and rationale documentation should be used by the College to inform the development of the Strategic Plan which will be placed for Corporation approval at the next meeting.

Action: College

115.7.3 Strategic Priorities - 2019/20

The draft 2019-20 Strategic Priorities were received for comment, prior to approval at the July Corporation meeting. The Chairman reported that the draft is in line with discussions held by the Strategic Planning Working Group. In response to governor questions the Assistant Principal (Curriculum & Quality Assurance) reminded governors that the priorities are not listed in priority order, the priorities are interconnected and can be influenced by external variables for example, the local and national educational landscape.

The Chairman explained that although the progress made towards each priority is reported each term, the Board had previously decided to strategically focus on a select few priorities. Some governors expressed the view that this may not be the appropriate approach to take and that all of the priorities should be afforded the same due consideration and attention.⁴

115.8 Finance Matters

115.8.1 Repayment of College Loan

The report circulated in advance of the meeting was considered. Governors noted that early repayment of the loan would save approx. £1,772 per year. Although the loan could be repaid without damaging the cash flow of the College, governors agreed that for such a small financial gain it would be better to maintain the security of a higher level of cash reserves. It was therefore agreed not to pay off the loan at this time.

⁴ The summer term review of the 2018-19 strategic priorities and final approval of the 2019-20 priorities will be agenda items at the next meeting.

115.8.2 Cost Centre Review March 2019

The finance lead governor gave a verbal report on the current budgetary position. Governors noted that as at March 2019 the 2018-19 budget was showing a small in year deficit. The Cost Centre review reported an operating deficit of £426k for the month, giving a net operating deficit of £1,138k for the first eight months of the year. The 2018-19 agreed budget showed an expected deficit of £1,105k (for this point in the year) and therefore the year to date (YTD) actual against the 2018-19 budget, shows a variance of £33k.

The reforecast undertaken March 2019 shows a potential year end deficit of £173k.

At this point there are no major concerns and the financial health grading of the College remains 'Good'.

The indicative budget will be reviewed by the Finance Lead Governors before being placed for discussion and approval at the July Corporation meeting.

Action: CGo/NGe/Finance Manager

115.8.3 Financial Regulations

The 2018-19 Financial Regulations were approved.

115.8.4 Gift Aid

Following on from discussion at the last meeting, governors considered the paper prepared by the College detailing the rationale for not registering for Gift Aid at the present time. The College's advice that it would not be cost effective to register for Gift Aid was noted. In the context that some schools and colleges register and currently claim gift aid, a governor queried why it would not be cost effective for the College to also do so. It was noted that students at primary and secondary schools are on roll for 5-7 years (compared to an average 18 months at the College), and in this context parents/carers tend to be more engaged and for longer, with their child's school community and therefore more likely to positively respond to requests for monthly/regular donations which would likely make such a venture cost effective. Governors asked the College to bear in mind the comments expressed and to keep the gift aid registration situation under review.

Action: College

115.8.5 College Charges

The charges as presented to the Principal by the Finance Manager, were received. The only charge to have increased slightly relates to music tuition provided by Essex Music Services (external service payable directly by students).

115.9 Audit Committee Matters

115.9.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10.05.2019 were received and noted. There were no questions or queries raised.

The Committee Vice Chair reported on the work of the Audit Committee including

the roll out across the College of Windows 10 and the tender process undertaken re appointment of audit firm for the 2019-20 external audit. The tender process had concluded with presentations from shortlisted audit firms to audit committee members (including Q&A sessions).⁵ The Vice Chair led thanks to the Clerk and Finance Manager for their diligence in administering the tender process.

115.9.2 Appointment of External Auditor

The Board unanimously approved the recommendation of the Audit Committee to appoint **Scrutton Bland as the external auditor for the 2019-20 year** for a fee of £13,850 plus VAT.

Action: Clerk

115.10 Policies and Procedures

115.10.1 The Health & Safety Report was received. It was noted that the Lead Governor for Health & Safety and the Board had received the full report at the end of the autumn term and had been afforded the opportunity of discussing any matters arising.

It was noted that all reported accidents were followed up and remedial action was taken if necessary, there were no RIDDOR reportable incidents. The low overall number of accidents demonstrates that College remains a very safe environment in which staff, students and visitors to learn and work.

115.11 Governance Matters

115.11.1 Committee Membership

The appointment of J.Leslie to the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee was unanimously approved.

115.11.2 Corporation Meeting Dates 2019-2020

The draft 2019-20 meeting dates circulated in advance of the meeting, were unanimously approved. It was noted that following the recent operational survey, the commencement times of meetings will be slightly earlier than the historical norm at 5pm/5.30pm. The meeting dates have been provided to College for inclusion in the College calendar.

115.11.3 Governor Visit Day 26.04.2019

Twelve external governors attended the recent governor visit day. The programme for the day included visits to academic & support departments, meetings with students, senior tutors and pastoral staff, and safeguarding training. Governors agreed that the day had been a positive and productive use of governor time, providing further opportunities to learn, observe the College in action and engage with stakeholders. It was agreed that the visit day should be repeated during the 2019-20 year. The Clerk was thanked for her work in organising and facilitating the day.

⁵ Full tender documentation including tender opening procedures and scoring criteria are available by contacting the clerk.

The Chair reminded governors that visit day reports should be returned to the Clerk as soon as possible. Governors were also reminded that visits to the College as part of the Link Governor/AP system are very much encouraged.

Action: All Governors

There being no other business the Chairman closed Part A of the meeting at 7.40pm

Signed

Dated



**Minutes of Corporation Meeting No. 115
18th March 2019**

Part B

Chair: D Morran

Present: C Goldsworthy, J Johnson, S Nolan, M Atherton, P Barker G Gardiner, J Owens,
S Carmel

In
Attendance: S Williams (HR Manager)

Clerk: T Johnson

Agenda Item

115.12 Consideration of National Pay Awards

The Chairman, for the benefit of new governors explained that the Search, Governance and Remuneration Committee considers annually the performance and pay of senior post holders. The agenda item 115.12 re national pay awards, relates only to the nationally agreed cost of living award for all staff.

Governors were reminded of and considered the following points:

- The Principal and Clerk are by definition Senior Post Holders. Senior Post Holder's pay is independently determined by the Corporation and therefore falls outside of any national pay negotiations.
- The nationally negotiated support staff pay award, to be applied from September 2018 has been agreed. [*Previously reported to governors as:*
 - *Pay point 13 and pay point 16 will be deleted*
 - *Pay points 15 to 20 inclusive will receive increases of up to 3.6%*
 - *Pay points 21 to 28 inclusive will receive increases of 1.5% with tapering at pay points 29 to 32 inclusive with increases of 1% to 1.4%*
 - *Pay point 33 and above will increase by 1%]*

The Human Resources & Administration Manager reminded governors that the Principal is resolute in his view that he would not want to be awarded an increase in excess of what had been agreed nationally for other staff.

It was accordingly agreed to apply a 1% increase to the salary of the Principal with effect from September 1st 2018.

It was accordingly agreed to apply a 1% increase to the salary of the Clerk with effect from September 1st 2018.

There being no other business the Chair closed Part B of the meeting at 7.50pm

Signed

Dated