



THE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE, COLCHESTER

Minutes of Corporation Meeting No. 121
13th July 2020

[Virtual Meeting held via Microsoft Teams]

Chair: D Morran

Members Present: I MacNaughton (Principal), M Atherton, I Vipond, K Finnigan, R Wilson, G Gardiner, P Loveard, S Carmel, A Beatty, N Gerrard, C Goldsworthy, J Leslie, J Johnson, S Okpattah

In

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

Clerk: T Johnson

[The numbering of the minutes reflects the order of discussion]

121.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Corporation Members (governors): I Hutchins, J Owens, M Perrin and observer A Frost

121.2 Any other Business

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed those present of the following membership matters:

- There has been some delay in completing the necessary pre-appointment protocols for new governor E. Stock. These have now been undertaken and it is expected that governor induction will take place (remotely) over the coming weeks.
- Due to an increase in work responsibilities, Izabela Hutchins has tendered her resignation as a community governor with immediate effect. The Chair has written to Izabela to thank her for her work during her tenure as a governor.

Following notification of resignation from the post of community governor, the Chair led thanks to Gina Gardiner for her commitment and contribution to the governance of the College during her tenure.

121.3 Chairs Action

The Chair reported that he had taken emergency action, on behalf of the Corporation to approve for publication annexes to the Child Protection policy. The annexes, required due to the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid19) pandemic, serve the double function of formal policy to meet statutory requirements and sources of information for stakeholders and the wider college community. Corporation members duly endorsed the action of the Chair.

121.4 Declarations of Interest

None

121.5 Confidential Items

None

121.6 Minutes of Previous Meetings

121.6.1 The minutes of the following meetings were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

- Corporation meeting No.120 held 16.02.202
- Emergency Corporation meeting held 25.06.2020

121.6.2 Matters Arising

There were no urgent matters arising.¹

It was noted that the following resolutions had been passed by a majority of members

- 11.03.2020 amendments the I&As of Government resolution achieved 23.03.2020 [effective on 29.03.2020]
- 21.05.2020 wider opening of the College/increasing student participation resolution achieved 21.05.2020 [effective on 10th June 2020]

Governors were reminded that following each meeting, action point summaries are shared via SharePoint.

121.7 Principal's Strategic Matters

Governors considered the reports prepared by the Principal, including information detailing the impact of Covid19 on the College, the wider college community and the operational proposals for enrolment, induction and teaching and learning from September 2020.

121.7.1 Higher Education

The Government has recently indicated that it will be reviewing the current application process for Higher Education (HE) – with the possibility of making changes for the future. The outcomes could have potential implications for future timings of summer exams and school, college and university term dates affecting current arrangements re the preparation of student testimonials and references.

Coronavirus Pandemic

121.7.2 July 2020 Increasing participation

Surveys undertaken via Moodle and feedback from subject teachers and departments indicated that an average 70% attendance level in the 6-10 July classes offered had been expected (this percentage was expected to vary across the range of subjects - with a reasonable correlation with average GCSE point score). The actual percentage of pupils attending was approximately 60% with transport availability and capacity/social distancing having a big impact on attendance – particularly from those who reside further afield. Outcomes of the onsite student attendance in July, has informed the College's proposals for September 2020 [see minute no.122.7.7]

¹ All non-urgent matters arising from the minutes of meeting No. 121 were deferred to the autumn term 2020 to allow meeting time to be structure to concentrate on strategic discussions and where applicable strategic decisions about the College's direction and responses, during and after the Coronavirus (Covid19) crisis

121.7.3 Alternative to Summer Examinations 2020²

Following the Government's cancellation of the summer 2020 exams, students are to be given the opportunity to sit GCSE and A Level examinations during the 2020 autumn term. Until the summer results are published it is impossible to predict how many students will wish to sit their examinations. Nationally, there is growing concern re the logistics of administering these examinations including suitable room availability in schools and colleges when capacity is currently reduced by social distancing and the other public health requirements in place.³ The College will provide GCSE re-sit facilities for those students who wish to sit GCSE Maths and English Language re-sits (within their College programme). However, any current Year 11 students wishing to sit an exam in any other subject or wishing to improve relatively high grades achieved in Maths and English Language, will need to do so with their secondary provider.

121.7.4 Transport

Public transport is a critical recruitment and retention factor for the College and therefore levels of public transport provision for students during the pandemic continues to be a concern. Following the recent Government announcements, re social distancing a number of the local public transport operators have increased the frequency and/or capacity levels of services. However, if the Government doesn't remove social distancing on public transport, many existing and potential students commencing study September 2020 will face significant transport difficulties.

The poor and deteriorating financial position of many of the private bus companies influencing the potential withdrawal of some services or reductions in levels of other services is also a concern. One local (Suffolk) bus company has recently announced that they will discontinue the Hadleigh to Colchester service due to 'viability' issues - which will create a difficulty for a small number of existing students and may remove the college as a viable post 16 option for some students residing in the Hadleigh area.

121.7.5 Induction & Open Evenings – 2020/21

An extensive range of e-induction materials (over 50 subject and cross college video briefings) have been brought to the attention of prospective students and parents.

In the context of the latest Government coronavirus guidance, the College will not be holding the usual October open evenings for prospective students. During the autumn and early winter period the College will provide prospective students, their parents and advisors with relevant information, electronically and also offer a number of small group information mornings. If possible, open evenings will be held in the late winter period.

121.7.6 2021 Examinations

The outcomes of the Ofqual consultation and resulting determinations re dates to be scheduled for Summer 2021 public exams and assessments will have an impact on autumn term planning and will impact a series of calendar entries including for example, the timing of mock exams.

121.7.7 **Proposed 2020/21 provision arrangements [Preparing for September 2020]**

Governors considered the detailed information circulated in advance of the meeting, re the College's proposed 3 phased re-opening plan (including revised and updated risk

² Please see subsequent documentation and press releases re [grading algorithm](#) and subsequent government decisions re the use of centre assessed grades to provide students with an A Level Grade.

³ A Levels – October GCSEs- November

assessment relating to Phase 1 opening 10th September onwards).

The Principal advised governors that senior staff are working through Government guidance including '[What FE colleges and providers will need to do from the start of the 2020 Autumn Term](#)'.⁴ Although there is recognition within the guidance that post 16 learners are likely to undertake some remote study, there is no specific guidance re social distancing for students or for example, to make smaller than normal class sizes, yet the guidance strongly emphasises the importance of public health and recognises that there could be issues with public transport availability.

Governors considered the proposed 3 phase provision plan in the context of maintaining the safety, health and wellbeing of students & staff, whilst striving in exceptional circumstances to meet the College's mission and provide students with the best possible educational experience. It was noted that the proposed 3 phase framework largely builds, progressively, upon the model and arrangements that had successfully been used in July with phase 1 commencing on 10th September - following an extended enrolment period.

In response to further governor questions the following points were elucidated:

Phase 1 will include:

- A timetable blocking system (as used 6-10 July)
- Students will be 'split' into 2 half week cohorts (bubbles). Most subject teaching groups will therefore be between 7 and 12 students in size - the small numbers in these half groups will allow for a good level of social distancing between students, usually exceeding "1 metre plus.
- A later start to the day will be instigated (to minimise use of public transport in peak times) and staggered start/end times for lessons and breaktimes will be introduced.

Students will be registered in each of their timetabled subject lessons and also have one weekly onsite central Registration/Tutorial relating to their Personal Tutor groups.

Most Additional Studies and many of the extra-curricular activities and experiences will commence on a remote basis. Some activities will need to be either delayed or postponed (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award).

Students will generally only be expected to be on the College site for their timetabled teaching lessons, their registration/tutorial arrangements or if they are vulnerable students or other students who gain Senior Tutor approval (who will be more fully accommodated with a wider range of facilities).

A range of PPE, social distancing and other mitigation measures will be in place. In addition to a thorough clean in the morning or evening, each classroom will be cleaned at lunchtime, between the morning and afternoon lesson. Teachers may ask students to wipe down desks at the beginning or end of lessons, and cleaning materials will be available in each classroom.

Phase 2 is expected to commence from 5th October or later (dates to be kept under review) and will use the temporary timetable structure used in Phase 1 but with a move to 'whole academic groups' – students will therefore receive their full level of onsite 'in person' academic teaching classes and daily personal tutor registration/tutorial – in whole groups.

The Principal informed governors that it is hoped that phase 2 will be relatively short.

Phase 3 (commencement date to be kept under review).

⁴ July 2nd 2020 version

Move to a 'normal' timetable with students required to be onsite for 5 days a week.⁵

At this point E Gibson left the meeting

Governors were informed that a further revised and updated risk assessment will be prepared relating to phase 1 before the start of the academic year, and in due course further revisions and updates will be prepared for phases 2 and 3 including contingency planning in the event of local restrictions or lockdown. In response to governor queries, it was noted that there is no standard or externally assessed FE college risk assessment.

Having considered all the information presented Corporation Members **unanimously agreed the College's 3 phased re-opening plan** outlined in the documentation circulated in advance of the meeting.

121.8 Finance & Premises Matters

121.8.1 Cost Centre Review May 2020

In addition to the documentation circulated in advance the meeting, the Finance Lead Governors provided a verbal report on the current budgetary position.

Governors noted that the Cost Centre review reported a surplus of £500K for the month which has resulted in a net operating surplus of 21k for the first ten months of the financial year. The 2019-20 agreed budget showed an expected deficit of £137k (for this point in the year) and therefore the year to date (actual against budget), shows a positive variance of £158k.

It was noted that the back-dated, nationally negotiated support staffing salary rises have been processed in the June payroll. The costs were very close to the forecast calculation and therefore the salary costs for the year remain unchanged.

The ESFA financial health grading of the College remains 'Good'.

121.8.2 2020/21 budget - including the annual review of college charges

The finance lead governor advised the governors that the 2020/21 financial position is stronger than experienced for the last couple of years. The impact of the Coronavirus on the College's finances and the assumptions used in preparation of the 2020-2021 budget were considered and noted including:

- Staffing – budget assumes retention of current staffing levels
- Catering - a slight reduction in net turnover due to unknown reaction to social distancing measures and unknown student enrolment numbers.
- Miscellaneous Income – an increase of £18k compared to 2019/20, due to a presumption of receiving exam fee refunds of £50k offset by reduced income from First Essex Buses for the administration of bus passes £7.5k and reduction of letting income of £15k.
- Salaries - the year-end forecast had been adjusted to take account of the full-year effect of nationally negotiated pay rises, pensions contributions and reduced exam invigilation costs. Although it has been assumed there will not be any changes to staffing numbers, there will be a pay rise of 2.5% in January 2021.⁶

⁵ Students will be given their Phase 3 timetable in early September so that they are aware of the 'normal' framework that will apply in due course.

⁶ Support Staff unions have agreed this but teaching unions have yet to accept

- It is unlikely that 100% of the expenditure on trips and visits cancelled due to Coronavirus, will be recoverable.

The budget for 2020-21 therefore shows an Operating Deficit of £(56k) offset by a release from the Revaluation Reserve of £166k to give a Historical Cost Surplus of £110k.

Governors unanimously agreed the recommendation of the Finance Lead governors to approve the college charges and the 2020-21 Budget.

The 2020 condition improvement fund application was unsuccessful, however having prepared bids the CIF the documentation can be utilised for any future funding bids.⁷

121.9 Strategic Priorities 2019-2020 and 2020 -2021

Governors considered the summer term review of the 2019 -2020 strategic priorities. In response to governor queries the following points were expanded upon:

121.9.1 Ofsted

Ofsted have indicated that they will be resuming visits to schools and colleges in the autumn term, however these will be '[interim visits](#)' with the aim of helping stakeholders understand how providers are meeting the needs of students during the pandemic period. Ofsted will publish the outcomes of visits, in a brief report shared with the provider. Significant concerns identified on an interim visit could trigger an early inspection or a monitoring visit.

121.9.2 Year 1 Cohort 2020

Although attainment (CAG grades), are a significant and relevant element for a student commencing studies at the College, another critical element is whether these students will be 'ready and prepared' for post 16 study, in the context that since March 2020 they have experienced an extended period 'away from learning' and with varying degrees of student/teacher engagement. To support the new Year 1 cohort the College will, for example, be instigating an extended induction programme. The induction programme will also aid the identification of those students that require extra support and those that readily have the skills and knowledge needed to access their programmes. Of equal importance for this cohort of students will be, where relevant, reassurance that the College will work with them to fill any learning gaps they may have.

121.9.3 Mental Health & Wellbeing

The College is very aware of the mental health & wellbeing issues that the pandemic has and is causing for young people and although this is very different for different students, some students suffering from social anxieties have been thriving during this time. Due to the withdraw of the summer 2020 examinations related anxieties have not occurred.

121.9.4 Remote Learning

In response to a governor question regarding whether it would be opportune to add a discrete priority addressing the issue of 'the impact of remote learning on the success of learners', the College explained that this point is fundamentally addressed in strategic

⁷ 05/08/2020 The Government announced that "Additional funding has been made available for CIF 2020 to 2021 projects. As a result, we can provide £182m to fund a further 580 high quality projects at 548 academies, sixth-form colleges and voluntary aided schools. These projects narrowly missed the threshold when the CIF funding outcomes were announced in June 2020" As a result of the additional funding the College was provided with part of the original bid funding for roofing works).

priority 1B - 'Employ robust systems to monitor the quality of provision and focus on development and improvement', in addition, the level of student engagement with remote working young people across the college has been phenomenal, even from weaker students. The College advised that it would be very difficult to have a specific strategic priority to address this point.

If required, the College is equipped to be able to fully support students remotely, however this is not sustainable long term. Both academically and pastorally students need to have face to face contact with their teachers and peers and to benefit from the motivation and stimulation that this contact provides. The student governors added that 'having somewhere to go, free from the distractions of home and providing a reason to 'get up and go' is vital for students – 'going into a building' is really helpful and a big part of the student experience'.

In response to governor suggestions that student voice surveys around remote learning would be beneficial and able identification and sharing of best practice, the college advised that this is routinely undertaken, there is also an opportunity for a further through the self-assessment and report writing processes

121.9.5 CPD

Due to the pandemic a significant amount of planned face to face CPD has not been able to take place. However, an additional 20 hours of CPD could be added to all teaching staff CPD records due to learning about and improving user skills re remote learning approaches. The Moodle manager will be rolling out training on the use of MS Teams. It is anticipated that by the end of September all teachers will be 'Teams' trained.

121.9.6 2020 - 2021 Strategic Priorities

The 2020 - 2021 Strategic Priorities, circulated in advance of the meeting were received. It was agreed that the priorities will be considered further at the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

121.10 Pastoral Report 2019-2020

The Assistant Principal (Pastoral) presented the annual pastoral report incorporating 2019-20 achievements and developments, challenges and responses and plans for the 2020-21 year. It was noted that the KCSiE guidance has recently been revised.⁸ The total number of safeguarding files held on current students has risen to 742 (350 in 2016-17, 464 in 2017-18, 690 in 2018-19). The following points were highlighted:

121.10.1 The timing of presentation of the report, usually received by the Corporation in the autumn has been changed to allow governors to consider pastoral matters in the summer term, in advance of August examination results. Where the impact of any development can be measured using examination results and longer-term trends can be considered.

121.10.2 Mental Health & Wellbeing

The College is exceptionally pleased to have been successful in its bid to help develop a Mental Health Team to be based at the College. This initiative, shared with Colchester Institute will significantly increase the mental health support available to College students.

The College's Welfare Hub supported 519 students between September 2019 and March 2020 - more than double the number of students seen in Welfare last year and confirms that the establishing and promoting of a central "hub" has encouraged more students to seek help when they need it.

⁸ A copy of the September 2020 KCSiE guidance was provided to governors on 17.06.2020. Copies of the guidance and other safeguarding documentation including the child protection policy are available to governors via SharePoint

121.10.3 ESCB Audit

It was noted that the 2021 annual pastoral report will contain the outcomes of the 2020 ESCB (Essex Safeguarding Children Board) however, should the audit raise anything of significance, governors will be notified immediately.

121.10.4 Staff Training & Development

All staff attended an in-house safeguarding update, tailored either to teaching staff or support staff, and all staff were required to read *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, the College's Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct. In addition to undertaking other training and development opportunities. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and all Senior Tutors attended the mandatory Level 3 Safeguarding refresher course. Governors are also required to confirm each year that they have read the relevant *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, the College's Child Protection Policy and Corporation Code of Conduct

121.10.5 Retention

Governors commended the College on the high retention levels of students with additional and safeguarding needs. It was noted that all high level needs (HLN) students left with a planned destination, i.e. an FE college/ university/ employment or apprenticeship.

121.10.6 Coronavirus

In recognition that COVID-19 does not affect people equally, and in the context of the report issued by Public Health England [02.06.2020], confirming that 'a non-white background is a significant factor in determining the risk of Covid19 to an individual', the College published its response which aimed to raise awareness of the issues faced by BAME students, staff and their families and sought to identify strategies that may be useful in meeting some of the needs that arise.⁹

Student governors informed the Corporation on the work of the culture committee and in particular the work undertaken to prior to lockdown re the 'culture conversation' and raising awareness of the Black Lives Matters campaign.

121.11 Governance Matters

121.11.1 Election of Corporation Chair and Vice Chair

The election of Corporation Chair and Vice Chairs was undertaken via MS forms. The results were as follows:

- Election of Chair 13 votes cast.
K Finnigan was duly elected Chair of the Corporation for a 2 year term of office ending 31.08.2022
- Election of Vice Chair [1] 13 votes cast
M Atherton was duly elected Vice Chair of the Corporation for a 2 year term of office ending 31.08.2022
- Election of Vice Chair [2] 13 votes cast
D Morran was duly elected Vice Chair of the Corporation for a 2 year term of office ending 31.08.2022

121.11.2 Reappointment and Appointment of Corporation Members (Governors)

Voting on the appointment/ reappointment of members was undertaken electronically via MS forms

⁹ BAME : Black Asian and Minority Ethnic

On the recommendation of the Search & Governance Committee and in the context of the Corporation's skills audits, the Corporation agreed to re-appointment of the following members:

- N Gerrard, as a Community Governor, for a further term of 4 years commencing 1st September 2020
- D Morran, as a Community Governor, for a further term of 4 years commencing 1st September 2020

On the recommendation of the Search & Governance Committee and in the context of the Corporation's skills audits, the Corporation agreed to appointment of the following members:

- J Johnson, as a Community Governor, for a first term of 4 years commencing 1st September 2020

It was noted that as J Johnson's current term of office is served as a parent governor, an election for parent governor would be held during the autumn term following the Search and Governance's consideration of the constitution of the Corporation, in accordance with the Instruments & Articles of Government.

121.11.3 Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference for the 2020/21 academic year was approved

- Search & Governance Committee
- Remuneration Committee
- Audit Committee
- Special Committee (incl. special appeals committee)
- Appeals Committee

121.11.4 Committee Membership

Membership of the following committees for the 2020/21 academic year, as circulated in advance of the meeting, was unanimously approved

- Search & Governance Committee
- Remuneration Committee
- Audit Committee

121.11.5 Lead Governors

The following lead governors were appointed to serve for the 2019-20 year

- Human Resources - David Morran
- Curriculum & Academic Achievement - David Morran, Simon Carmel
- Pastoral incl. SEND - tbc
- Safeguarding - June Leslie
- Health & Safety - Chris Goldsworthy
- Finance - Chris Goldsworthy & Nick Gerrard
- Strategy - Ian Vipond
- IT - Jo Johnson

121.11.6 Schedule of Meeting Dates 2020-2021

The 2020-2021 meeting dates were unanimously agreed. It was noted that due to the continuing impact of the coronavirus pandemic some or all of the autumn term meetings may need to be held via MS Teams. The spring term meetings will be kept under review.

Governors and the Principal expressed their thanks to D Morran for his work during his tenure as Corporation Chair. Governors also asked the minutes to record their thanks and appreciation, to all the staff at the College for the work they are continuing to undertake during this unprecedented and challenging time.

There being no other business the Chair closed the meeting at 20.00

The above minutes were agreed by the Corporation to be a true record of the meeting
28 September 2020 [Minute No. 122.6(i)]