



MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Held At Esher College
Thursday, 9th June 2016, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Terry Price (ex-officio)	Albert Berry
Dan Dean	Karin Rowsell
Ian Leigh	Emma Cheney
Jane Grenander	

Dan Lodge (Vice-Principal – Students and Staff Development)
Rebecca De’Ath (Clerk)

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME

The Committee Chair was unable to attend the meeting and it was agreed that Terry Price would fulfil this role on this occasion. He welcomed Albert Berry (newly-appointed Student Union President and Student Governor) to his first meeting.

2. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN AGENDA ITEMS

Terry Price declared an interest in agenda items 4 and 6 because his wife is a governor at Esher High School.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Clarissa Wilks and Damian O’Malley.

4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 15th March 2016 contained a duplication within the list of attendees, but were otherwise agreed as a true record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

P3-001: Completed. Revisions were made to the Admissions Policy.

P3-002: Completed. An ABR workshop was held for staff.

P3-003: Terry Price left the room while the Principal explained that, in order to show appreciation of his chairing the Corporation through the ABR process and undertaking this exceptional workload, it had been suggested that he purchase a new laptop to replace his ailing one (to the sum of £500) and claim this amount back from the College. The meeting agreed that this was suitable recompense.

6. AREA-BASED REVIEW - UPDATE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Principal reported that four of the Steering Group meetings had now taken place and the recommendation for Esher College out of this review process was for 'Esher College to explore academisation'.

The aim of this Policy meeting was to consider strategic options for the future status of the College; the committee's discussion and the preferred option would be presented to all governors at the Training Morning on 13th June and the July 5th Corporation meeting would record a final decision. (The Finance Committee would be exploring the financial implications of any conversion of status).

The Chair explained the context of the entire Surrey-based ABR and the likely options that the other nine colleges in the same review might pursue.

The meeting had reviewed the briefing paper prepared for the meeting and discussed the options of becoming a Single Academy Trust (SAT), "Empty" Multi-Academy Trust (empty MAT), a MAT or retaining the status quo.

Q: Can a college stay as an empty MAT indefinitely? Unlikely – there is an in-built assumption that the College would be seeking partners, or an underperforming institution might be pushed towards the College for partnership.

Q: If we became an empty MAT and the college's standing deteriorated, could it be swallowed up by another partnership? Yes, but this would happen if we were in a SAT, too.

Karin Rowsell arrived at 6.20pm

The meeting discussed the college remaining as it was, with the advantage of retaining independence and the benefit of current good governance and finances - although there was a concern that if many sixth form colleges converted to academy status, then Esher would be left behind as a member of a marginalised group of remaining colleges. The advantage of moving to a SAT would be to reclaim VAT (worth at least £200,000 to the college). Governors agreed that it would be difficult to agree to become a MAT, as this would lead to a loss of independence and control over Esher's assets and liabilities (although the VAT could be claimed). Additionally, Esher currently enjoys a diversification of students from many schools, which might be lost if it partnered with a limited number of local schools in a MAT.

7. AREA BASED REVIEW STRATEGIC OPTIONS

The meeting discussed the opportunities for future partnerships with local education establishments and the implications for Esher College.

Following on from discussion under item 6, above, there were two options open for consideration: academisation (Single Academy Trust), or retaining sixth form college status. In terms of the latter, the option of "no change" was deemed marginally riskier than converting.

The meeting therefore unanimously agreed that if the chosen route was academisation, then the preferred model within that would be a SAT in order to retain autonomy, reclaim VAT, comply with the ABR recommendation and move into the "protected" national academy mainstream. This preferred option would be put to the Corporation in July. It was noted that should any application

for academy status be rejected, or conditions are set that the Corporation would object to, then the College could change its mind.

ACTION: Principal to add a summary to this meeting’s briefing paper to present to the Corporation in July.

8. REVIEW OF TUITION FEES POLICY

This policy was deemed redundant as the college is not registered with the Home Office, it has no registered international students and changes to legislation means that it is unable to enrol such students. The meeting unanimously agreed that there was no longer a need for this policy.

9. ADMISSIONS ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

In order to increase transparency, it had been suggested at the previous Policy Committee meeting that the College clarify in the entry requirements for new students on the website, rather than in the Admissions Policy. The proposed text was agreed and the meeting noted that the website will be updated next term.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This meeting’s agenda had erroneously stated that the next meeting was scheduled for 9th October, rather than the 19th October. Two meetings are usually scheduled for the autumn term, with the first focussing on the Admissions Policy. As the approval date has moved to March there was no need for two meetings, and it would be suggested to the Corporation that a single meeting take place on Wednesday, 30th November 2016 (providing that the date was suitable for the Chair). This meeting would consider the Admissions Analysis 2016.

ACTION: Committee Chair to confirm the suitability of the revised meeting date.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

The meeting closed at 6.55pm.

Attendance was 75% (6 out of 8 members)

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

P3-001	Item 7: ABR – Principal to summarise the meeting’s preferred strategic option and add it to the briefing paper and present to the Corporation meeting in July.
P3-002	Item 10: Date of next meeting: Committee Chair to confirm the suitability of the revised meeting date.

SUMMARY OF GOVERNOR CHALLENGE [C] / SUPPORT [S]

C/S	Minute	Topic
S	6 & 7	Careful consideration of strategic ABR options in order to choose the most suitable way forward for the College.
S	8 & 9	Agreement to remove a now redundant policy and unnecessary meetings.