



## MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Held At Esher College  
Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017, at 6.00 pm.

### Present:

Clarissa Wilks (Chair)  
Dan Dean  
Jo Gardner

Terry Price  
Ben Williams  
Karin Rowsell

Tim Oliver (Chair-Designate/Observer)  
Dan Lodge, Vice-Principal (Advising Officer)  
Rebecca De'Ath (Clerk)

### 1. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN AGENDA ITEMS

There were no declarations of business interests.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Darrell Bate and Damian O'Malley sent their apologies, which were accepted.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 were accepted as an accurate record.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

P2-001: The Vice-Principal had been asked to give an update about the retention issue of some students enrolling for 6.2, but then dropping out in the 6 weeks before enumeration. He informed the meeting that further scrutiny of the statistics revealed that there was a spike in the 2015/16 figures (22 leavers), as opposed to the trend of 9 leavers in 2014/15 and in 2016/17.

P2-002: Completed. The Admissions Policy had been amended as per Governors' previous suggestions.

P2-003: Completed. See items 4 and 5, below.

P2-004: Completed. See item 7, below.

P2-005: Completed. See items 8-10, below.

## 5. UPDATE ON ACADEMY CONVERSION AND FEEDBACK FROM ACADEMY WORKING GROUP

The Academy Working Group had received an update from the Chair of the Finance Committee as to their findings when determining the financial advantages or otherwise of conversion to academy status. The figures revealed a modest financial advantage to conversion – 3-year projections however showed that there was no pressing need to change the status quo. There were therefore 3 options open to the College:

- i) Become an academy;
- ii) Continue with the process to its completion, then pause until the political and financial situation becomes clearer;
- iii) Halt the process and remain as a Sixth Form College.

The Working Group had unanimously voted for option ii). This decision was made against a changing national landscape and lessening appetite for Sixth Form Colleges to convert. The meeting agreed that there was a lot to learn from completing the application process and nothing to be lost. However, the original motivators of significant financial gain and fear of marginalisation had receded.

In terms of timescales for the process, the Chair explained that the Corporation would make a final decision as to whether to accept option ii) to continue the application at its July meeting, but would not be in a position to decide whether to pause the process until the December meeting after the Headteacher Board (HTB) had met in the Autumn.

The Committee Chair was asked the following questions:

Q: Can we have more information about the financial differences between converting or remaining as we are? Without converting, we stay above the 1% surplus threshold to retain our “Good” financial health rating.

Q: Would you have to update all the forms again in the future if you pause the process, then take it up again at a later date? No one knows; there may be future incentives to become an academy, depending on the political context.

The Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the Corporation in July that it approve option ii).

## 6. REVIEW OF ESHER COLLEGE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Members discussed the details in the academy governance structure that needed to be submitted to the HTB. They agreed unanimously to retain the detail in the paper drafted by the Corporation Chair, including their preferred stance of two terms of office for Members as reflecting best practice. It would be recommended to the Corporation that it approves this decision in July.

In terms of the Corporation going forward irrespective of academy status, the committee structure proposed in the governance paper would be adopted and it was agreed that in addition, the Review & Search and Policy Committees be merged.

**ACTION:** Corporation Chair would populate the proposed new structure for the HTB (listed at Appendix 1) by proposing individual Governors for each of the posts. He would also revise the Committee structure as agreed.

## 7. REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Tuition Fees Policy had been removed from the TORs, and a responsibility added for the Committee to receive the findings and recommendations of any working group relevant to the Committee's work. Responsibility 11c) was discussed, and it was felt that it was not appropriate that this Committee was to "...decide, with the Principal, on appointments for teaching posts of Director of Division status and above...." The Principal agreed to review the wording of this responsibility.

*[Clerk's note: The Principal subsequently suggested that 11c be deleted, as it was not the remit of this Committee – for example, if a Director of Finance was being recruited, the Chair of the Finance Committee would sit on the selection panel. The Chair of the Corporation and Policy Committee Chair agreed with this suggestion, and decided that this change would be put before the Corporation at its July meeting, with a recommendation that the Terms of Reference be revised to exclude this, and approved.]*

## 8. REVIEW OF POLICIES FOR ADDRESSING BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT (Staff and Students)

It was explained that these policies had been updated in terms of language to reflect the Equalities Act 2010 and updated to mention social media. Each policy was also now aligned to the other. Both policies were approved by the meeting. The Vice-Principal was thanked for his work on these.

## 9. REVIEW OF PROCEDURES:

- Admission Appeals Procedure – one change was proposed in that **current** personal and medical circumstances would be considered only.  
The Principal explained that the Appeals Procedure had helped enormously in managing the number of appeals. Asked who was on the appeals panel, he replied that it was members of the Steering Group and the Admissions Manager. Asked how many appeals had been raised last year, he stated that there were 25, of which 14 were successful (this includes 6 appeals from twins). The committee approved the revised procedure.
- Complaints Against the Corporation – the meeting noted the cosmetic changes and approved the procedure.
- Complaints Procedure – the meeting noted the cosmetic changes, and approved the procedure.
- Complaints Panel Procedure and TOR – amend the approval date. This was approved by the Committee.

## 10. REVIEW OF PROCEDURE FOR APPEALS AGAINST SUSPENSION/EXCLUSION

It was understood that no one to date had appealed to the Chair of the Corporation. It was suggested that part 4 should align with the wording in part 1, and therefore in 4, "Deputy Principal" should be replaced with "delegated member of the senior team". Other than this change, the procedure was approved.

## 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Policy Committee Chair noted that this was the Vice-Principal's last meeting and thanked him for the enormous amount of work he had done for the Committee. His advice had always been very

clear and succinct to lay members. The Corporation Chair echoed these sentiments, thanking him and wishing him well in the future.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 tbc.**

*The meeting closed at 6.37pm.*

*Attendance was 75% (6 out of 8 members).*

Signed.....

Date.....

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

<b>P3-001</b>	<p><u>Item 6. Review of Governance Arrangements:</u>  <b>Corporation Chair</b> would populate the proposed new structure for the HTB (at Appendix 1) by proposing individual Governors for each of the posts. He would also amend the wording in the governance paper in relation to the changes in Committee structure as agreed.</p>
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**SUMMARY OF GOVERNOR CHALLENGE [C] / SUPPORT [S]**

<b>C/S</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Topic</b>
C	5.	Academy Conversion options – Governors challenged the assumptions on which the decision to choose option ii) were based, and sought more information.
C	6.	<u>Academy Governance Arrangements</u> – Questioning of national guidance as to the terms upon which Members were invited to join the Academy Board; determination that this would not reflect good governance arrangements for Esher College.
S		Decision to merge several committees to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the workload of the Governors or the College SLT.
C		Decision to establish a new Quality and Standards Committee to enable more opportunities for Governors to scrutinise College data and statistics.