



MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Held At Esher College
Tuesday, 15th March 2016, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Clarissa Wilks (Chair)
Dan Dean
Ian Leigh
Jane Grenander

Damian O' Malley
Terry Price (Ex-officio)
Karin Rowsell
Clarissa Wilks

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

1. BUSINESS INTERESTS IN AGENDA ITEMS

There were no declarations.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Emma Cheney. Laila Hazara did not attend.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 30th November 2015 and those of the extraordinary meeting of 10th February 2016 were agreed as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Minutes of 30th November 2015

P2-001: Mission Statement. This was reviewed in March 2013. Governors noted that the Instrument & Articles stated that it should be reviewed "periodically," and agreed to consider an appropriate review point once the Area Based Review (ABR) process was complete.

P2-002: Changes were made to the Retention and Regression Report

Minutes of 10th February 2016

Actions to re-word the Strategic Plan and convey message to students and staff about the ABR process were completed.

5. ADMISSIONS POLICY (2017 Entry)

The Principal reported that changes had been made to the Admissions Policy as suggested at the previous Policy Committee meeting. Since then, some additional matters had emerged:

a) Age On Entry

An increasing number of applications from 17 year old students are being received partly stemming from poor educational decisions by students already enrolled at other institutions. Enquiries are also beginning to be received from 18 year olds, who may have already been through the sixth form process, and often do not settle with younger students, and consequently can underperform.

Governors agreed to clarify the wording in the Guide to Online Applications to state that “the college *normally* accepts applications from prospective students who will be aged 16 at the point of enrolment”. The meeting also agreed to clarify the fact that the Admissions Policy is for 2017 entry **to 6:1**.

b) Entry Requirements

The Principal sought advice as to the level of detail required in this section of the Policy. Following discussion, the meeting agreed that the table of entry requirements largely related to enrolment, and should be taken out of the document and lodged on the website. Furthermore, each time that the Admissions Policy is reviewed, the Corporation would be given oversight of content for the website to ensure that the policy of open access is upheld. Finally, it was agreed that a sentence should be retained in this section of the Policy to clarify the *minimum* entry requirement.

Governors also reviewed the information about the opportunity for high-performing students to do four courses at the College.

c) GCSE Short Courses

The meeting agreed that as short courses are less likely to be offered in the future, this section was now redundant, and should be removed.

Exceptional Applicant Status

The meeting agreed that the second bullet point should state “Applicants with an Education, Health and Care Plan which names Esher College as the preferred destination for post-16 study *will be offered a place at the College.*”

Subject to the above changes, the Committee agreed to recommend the Admissions Policy 2017 to the Corporation for approval.

ACTION: Principal to ensure that the above revisions are made to the Policy, and that the revised version is emailed to Governors (with a copy of these Minutes) prior to the Corporation meeting on 23rd March 2016.

6. AREA BASED REVIEW UPDATE

Site Visit

This had taken place on 1st March and had gone very smoothly. The two members of the Review Team had concluded that the college was strong and financially-sound going forward.

ABR Briefing (9th March)

At the Principals’ briefing it was announced that any colleges expressing an interest in academy status should lodge that interest by 10th May 2016 (the date of the third Steering Group meeting). Governors agreed that it was sensible to express an interest, subject to Corporation approval, as it was not a commitment to convert. The meeting also agreed that an open discussion should be held with staff (via a workshop planned by the Principal) to explain the implications of conversion and

reassure them that the Corporation retained an open mind, whilst refusing to rush into any final decision on a change of status.

ACTION: Principal to arrange a workshop discussion with staff.

Ian Leigh represented the Corporation at the briefing for governors that followed. There was nothing new to report.

ABR Steering Group Meeting (10th March)

The meeting received input from the Local Authorities, and the Local Enterprise Partnerships, and was largely focussed on the General Further Education colleges.

7. NATIONAL PAY NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

The meeting noted that the College had adopted the nationally-agreed pay settlement of a 1% inflationary rise for Teachers, and a 0.9% increase for support staff.

Governors enquired about the number of teaching staff on strike that day; around 40 out of 112 teaching staff had gone on strike.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A suggestion was made to consider remunerating the Chair in recognition of the fact that the exceptional circumstances of having to participate in the ABR process had generated a considerable extra workload for him in the implementation phase of this Review. (This opportunity for recognition was contained within the updated national ABR Guidance).

Governors agreed that the Chair was leading the Corporation through this process very well, and they were supportive of his efforts and recognised the exceptional level of work that he was undertaking. There was unanimous support for appreciation to be shown in some way, and for this matter to be put before the Corporation.

ACTION: The Principal agreed to conduct some research into how to take this forward.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Thursday, 5th May 2016

The meeting closed at 7.00pm.

Attendance was 75% (6 out of 8 members)

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

P3-001	Item 5: Admissions Policy - Principal to ensure that the agreed revisions to the Policy are made and that the Policy, together with these Minutes, are emailed to Governors prior to the Corporation meeting on 23 rd March 2016.
P3-002	Item 6: ABR – Principal to arrange a workshop for staff for open discussion of the academy conversion option.
P3-003	Item 8: AOB - Principal to research an appropriate means of showing appreciation to the Chair for undertaking the exceptional workload generated by the ABR process.

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

C/S	Minute	Topic
S	5	Support shown for the College's position on admissions via the suggested wording changes to strengthen the Admissions Policy for 2017 entry.
S	6	Agreement of the meeting that staff be involved in a discussion about options for academy status.
S	7	Governors' enquiry about the national support staff strike and the numbers of staff not at work.