



MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Virtual meeting on MS Teams
Wednesday 3rd November 2021, at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Tim Oliver (Chair)
Paul Collyer
Cindy Dawes
Dan Dean
Declan Mason
Ruth Seabrook

Dan Hards
Ken Kehoe (Clerk)

1. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests from Trustees.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Pooja Singh had sent her apologies. The committee accepted the apologies.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of 16th June 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee reviewed the actions arising from previous meetings:

S&P3-001 The Clerks to identify new possible training dates in September. **Done.**

S&P3-002 The Clerk to seek trustee views on the areas of Education Policy that they would wish to see covered at the training morning. **Done.**

S&P3-003 The Clerk to identify possible online training resources for use by the Trustees. **The Clerk informed the committee that the Sixth Form College's Association ran a webinar series that was a useful training resource. He also informed the committee of the resources available through the National Governance Association. The Clerk informed the committee of the costs. The committee agreed to subscribe to both resources, with the Clerk reviewing their use by Trustees.**

S&P3-004 The Clerk to amend the draft of the QIP in light of the committee's discussions. **Done.**

S&P3-005 The Clerk to circulate CVs of the successful External Trustee candidates to the other Trustees. **Done.**

S&P3-006 The Clerk to approach Trustees about taking on the roles of Chairs of the Audit and Quality and Standards committees. **Done.**

S&P3-007 The Clerk to investigate with one of the new External Trustees whether he would be willing to take on the role of Safeguarding Link Trustee, given his previous experience. **Done.**

S&P3-008 The Clerk to discuss with the co-opted Trustee his term of office. **Done.**

Action: Clerk to arrange subscription to the SFCA Webinar series and the NGA resource. Clerk to monitor usage.

5. POLICY UPDATE

The Principal updated the committee on strategic developments affecting the College:

Comprehensive Spending Review - The 2021 gains, relating to staff pensions and high cost/high value courses, had been protected.

BTEC – There was no further news on the development of Government policy relating to BTECs, following the Ministerial reshuffle and the growing political pressure to protect the BTEC offer.

2022 Exam Adaptions – The Government had announced that the exam adaptations for A levels would be published by 7 February 2022. The timing meant that staff may now be teaching material that will not be examined.

Enumeration – There had been 2092 students on roll on Enumeration day.

The committee thanked the Principal for his update.

6. ADMISSIONS ANALYSIS 2021 AND THE APPROACH TO THE ADMISSIONS POLICY 2023

The committee considered the admissions analysis for 2021. They asked whether the unpredictability of applications and enrolments was usual and whether the rise in numbers reflected demographic trends. The Principal explained that the unpredictability was a feature that the College had to manage; it reflected the fact that potential students did not have to commit to a particular provider until late in the process. The Principal and the Assistant Principal explained that the rise in numbers enrolling was not necessarily a reflection of demographics but rather a combination of factors, including how well the College was perceived to have operated during the COVID pandemic.

A Trustee challenged the assumption within the analysis that the College was at or just above its limit. The Principal noted that the size of the College had been discussed before by the committee and that the focus going forward should be on the quality of education, rather than finances. Even with the size of the 6.1 cohort, the exam season in 2023 would be a challenge. The Assistant Principal noted that, as the number of students scaled up, there could be a lag before the pastoral and safeguarding teams built up to meet the needs the larger student body. There was also an impact on the well-being of staff, if student numbers increased without increased staff resource; there would be a greater marking and assessment workload.

The committee agreed that it would look again at the question of the appropriate size of the College.

The Principal noted that he wanted to add detail on the Exceptional Applicant Status criterion and the order in which the College interviewed students as part of the Admissions Policy

Action: The Principal to bring forward a draft 2023 Admissions Policy.

Action: Clerk to add a discussion of College size to the next meeting agenda and to circulate the earlier paper on the subject, updated as necessary, to the committee.

7. POLICIES FOR REVIEW

The committee reviewed the following policies:

- Disciplinary Procedure for Senior Postholders
- Grievance Procedure for Senior Postholders
- Early Career Teacher Induction Policy

Regarding the first two policies, given the prominent role played by the Chair and Vice-Chair, they asked for assurances about how they would access the necessary legal advice. Trustees also asked how the policies would operate if there were allegations of fraud and a forensic accountant needed to be retained and an investigation carried out.

Action: Clerk to seek clarification on access to legal advice for the Chair and Vice-Chair under the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures for senior staff.

Action: Clerk to seek clarification of how the policies would operate in the case of allegations of fraud and the need for a forensic accountant investigation.

The committee approved the Early Career Teacher Induction Policy.

8. PRESENTATIONS AT ACADEMY TRUST MEETINGS 2021-22

The Principal proposed the following Board presentation:

March 2022 Careers Advice and Progression

July 2022 Teacher Training

In the following academic year, he proposed that Learning Support and Curriculum should be the subject of Board presentations.

The committee agreed.

9. CONSTITUTION

The committee considered the following procedures:

The Procedure for Appointing Staff Trustees - The committee agreed the policy, subject to any tied vote being decided by drawing lots and removing the requirement for the Board to consider whether it wished to appoint Staff Trustees.

The Procedure for Appointing Student Trustees – The committee agreed the procedure.

The Procedure for Appointing Parent Trustees – The committee asked to look at the draft policy at its next meeting, following further work on how online voting by parents could be securely carried out.

Action: Clerk to amend Procedure for Appointing Staff Trustees, as directed.

Action: Clerk to put the draft Procedure for Appointing Parent Trustees on the agenda of the next meeting, following further work on how online voting by parents could be securely carried out.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 2nd March 2022.

*The meeting closed at 7.12 pm.
Attendance was 86%.*

Signed.....

Date.....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

S&P1-001	Clerk to arrange subscription to the SFCA Webinar series and the NGA resource. Clerk to monitor usage.
S&P1-002	The Principal to bring forward a draft 2023 Admissions Policy.
S&P1-003	Clerk to add a discussion of College size to the next meeting agenda and to circulate the earlier paper on the subject, updated as necessary, to the committee.
S&P1-004	Clerk to seek clarification on access to legal advice for the Chair and Vice-Chair under the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures for Senior Postholders.

S&P1-005	Clerk to seek clarification of how the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures for Senior Postholders would operate in the case of allegations of fraud and the need for a forensic accountant investigation.
S&P1-006	Clerk to amend Procedure for Appointing Staff Trustees, as directed
S&P1-007	Clerk to put the draft Procedure for Appointing Parent Trustees on the agenda of the next meeting, following further work on how online voting by parents could be securely carried out.

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

C/S	Minute	Topic
C	6	ADMISSIONS ANALYSIS 2021 A Trustee challenged the assumption within the admissions analysis that the College was at, or just above, its limit for student numbers, asking for the rationale behind the assumption.