



**MINUTES OF THE ESHER COLLEGE CORPORATION  
MEETING**

Held At Esher College  
Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017, at 6.00 pm.

**Present:**

Tim Oliver (Chair)	Daniel Loughlin
Darrell Bate	Damian O'Malley
Paul Collyer	Karin Rowsell
Dan Dean	Fran Stewart
David Irving	Clarissa Wilks
Robin John	Ben Williams
Ian Leigh	

Helen Odhams, Deputy Principal (Advising Officer)  
Stephanie Wiles, Director of Finance and Estates (Advising Officer)  
Rebecca De'Ath, Clerk

**1. REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest in items on tonight's agenda.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received (and accepted) from Jo Gardner and Adrian Mills. Emily Thomas did not attend.

**3. CONSTITUTION**

The following matters received the Corporation's consideration:

- Staff Governor – a member of the teaching staff had shown late interest in this vacancy and the deadline for nominations was being extended until Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December.
- Co-optee – the Corporation approved the recommendation that Simon D'Arcy should continue as a co-opted member of the Finance and Estates Committee for another year.
- Instrument and Articles of Government – had been amended to take account of a decrease in the size of the Corporation, and the fact that the review and search function was being subsumed into a new Strategy and Policy Committee. The Corporation approved the changes.
- Standing Orders – had been reviewed, and the amendments were accepted, with the addition of increasing the amount that the Corporation Chair and Chair of the Finance and Estates Committee could sanction for expenditure on urgent building matters from £250,000 to £500,000.
- Code of Conduct – had been reviewed and the one change was accepted; it was also agreed that the 7 Principles of Public Life required updating with the latest wording.

**ACTION:** Clerk to ensure that the wording in the Standing Orders and Governors' Code of Conduct reflected the additions agreed.

#### 4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (25<sup>th</sup> September 2017)

The minutes were approved as a true record.

#### 5. MATTERS ARISING

**C1-001** Actions completed: committee membership had been finalised; the Standing Orders and the Instrument and Articles of Government were on this agenda for changes to be approved; the numbering on the Terms of Reference of the Strategy and Policy Committee had been amended.

**C1-002** Actions completed: the S7 colleges that were canvassed did not carry out any additional external review of their governance SAR; the Governors' SAR was uploaded to the website.

#### 6. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal reported the following developments since this report had been written:

- Staffing - particularly challenging this term due to sickness absence, resignations for departure in December (for personal reasons) and maternity covers.
- The national pay agreement for support staff had been agreed, and this would be backdated to September 2017. The Teachers' pay agreement was expected to be resolved in January.
- Enumeration – total submitted figures were four more than initially reported (now at 1882).
- Quality of teaching and learning – the third phase of A level reform continues, with further subjects with new specifications being introduced in September 2017, involving a huge undertaking for Departments and the College as a whole. The meeting discussed whether the absence of the AS qualification was having an impact on university applications (not yet seen).
- Dan Hards was now trained as a College Nominee in an Ofsted inspection.
- The students and staff were choosing colours for lanyards.
- The College had submitted a CIF bid linked to fire safety (£166k in total, within which the College offered to contribute £40k). The result is expected at Easter. If unsuccessful, the College would spend the £40k on the most critical items.

#### Student Union Report

There was nothing to add to the report, other than that it was Christmas Jumper day on the 14<sup>th</sup> December and the disappointment that the catering company had cancelled a feedback meeting with students at the last minute. This was apparently due to a crisis in the kitchen, but was nevertheless unfortunate. The Director of Finance and Estates had conducted a student survey and received a good response from about 500 students as to improvements that could be made to the catering offering.

#### Review of Year Ended 31 July 2017

Income was above budget and salaries were under budget. EBITDA was above the budgeted figure. The College was on target to achieve a "Good" financial health rating providing that the current ESFA measure did not change.

#### Review of Three Months to 31 October 2017

There were no variances to cause concern. The College was on target to hit the budgeted surplus. Asked if there was enough money in the budget for maternity and sickness cover, the Director of Finance and Estates replied that there was, although there was less of a cushion built in. Salaries would be re-forecast in January, and the annual pay awards would be added in.

### Cash Flow Forecast

There was no cause for concern. The half a million pounds on deposit was rolled over for another year and receives 0.9% interest. The million pounds in another account is due to end its term in March 2018 and the Director of Finance and Estates would review the position at that point.

Governors suggested that the College might explore the opportunity to invest in Savings Bonds. The Director of Finance and Estates agreed to look into this.

The Finance Reports were approved by the meeting.

**ACTION:** Director of Finance and Estates to research whether it is appropriate to invest in Savings Bonds.

## 7. FINANCIAL AND AUDIT REPORTS

The Chair of the Finance and Estates Committee summarised that the College's cash position was good – the College was solvent and in good financial health. That committee was exploring whether the College could spend some of its reserves on the estate to enhance the student experience. The pension scheme shortfall was a function of interest rates, and if interest rates increased, the deficit would decrease.

The Chair of the Audit Committee explained that the audit partner had walked that Committee through the audit report and was very complimentary about the financial controls that were in place. Governors queried the inconsistency in terminology in the Letter of Representation – governors were termed “directors” in paragraph 4, and “governors” in paragraph 2 (which should have a capital “G”). It was agreed that there was not time to change this at present, but in the future the College would raise this with the auditors. In terms of clause 4, governors had been made aware of relevant audit information via their signing of business interest forms and information given by the College at the relevant committee meetings. The letter was approved for signature.

The Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2017, the Audit Findings Report and Audit Committee Annual report were also approved by the Corporation.

The meeting discussed the Local Government Pensions Scheme Discretions Policy, and approved the document.

**ACTION:** Director of Finance and Estates to seek to ensure consistency in terminology in the Letter of Representation for 2018.

## 8. COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (SAR)

The Deputy Principal explained that the Self-assessment Report had been reviewed by the Strategy and Policy Committee and that Darrell Bate had also contributed helpful comments. It had been agreed that the content and format of the SAR would be reviewed and would be put before the Quality and Standards Committee in April 2018 for review. There was no standard format for a SAR and other S7 colleges had been consulted as to what they produce. It was important to follow the OFSTED criteria.

She brought the meeting's attention to the sections on progress reviews, assessment and feedback procedures, new ILT co-ordinator, British Values, and LV3A and HESA outcomes which were very impressive.

Governors asked her the following questions:

Q: Have you got the statistics for the destinations for leavers? We are looking into this.

Q: The value-added score for vulnerable groups is below that for other groups. What is your strategy to improve this? We look at all groups of learners at each reporting point in the year to see if they are performing to standard. As these students have such differing needs, it is difficult to put in place a strategy to meet the group as a whole. It is partly a function of the way the College defines 'vulnerable' and, overall, we are pleased with the outcome for this group.

Q: Do you have many students receiving Pupil Premium Grant? Post-16 students are not eligible for Pupil Premium, but we can identify those who have previously received this support. We only have a small number of students in this category. We have reviewed all the data for these students at the recent Quality and Standards Committee meeting.

Q: The College has assessed itself as Outstanding (grade 1) at every level. How do you know that this assessment is correct? Our last OFSTED inspection was graded Outstanding, and we are building on this. We also conduct External Quality Reviews which confirm our assessment, as do cross-college SARs. In addition, we have had our best ever exam results.

Governors discussed whether the College needed to assess itself against more challenging criteria (i.e not just national standards, but "best in league"). The meeting also discussed whether to engage an OFSTED consultant for a mock inspection, although one had been engaged to work with the College last year, and it was felt that an additional review now would adversely result in more work and stress for staff.

The College SAR was approved.

## 9. ACADEMY APPLICATION

The paperwork was submitted, as planned, to the Headteacher Board in September. However, due to the unavailability of the member who was to represent the College's application, this did not appear on the agenda for that meeting, and was not discussed. This was now due to be discussed at the next Board meeting in January or February and therefore the final decision as to whether to convert to become an academy would be deferred to the March Corporation meeting. Governors asked if they could receive an updated financial review and set of assumptions for that meeting, along with the latest position on the number of sixth form colleges that had converted to academy status to date.

### **ACTIONS:**

**Principal** to brief the corporation meeting about the number of sixth form college conversions to academy status.

**Director of Finance and Estates** to present the Corporation meeting with updated assumptions regarding the financial implications of changing status.

## 10. REPORT BACK FROM COMMITTEES

**Audit** – the accounts were discussed at item 7, above. The Committee recommended that management conduct a crisis response exercise. The IT Director's Disaster Recovery Report had been received; the Risk Register had been reviewed; the extended audit theme for spring 2018 had been agreed (H&S); the LGPS Discretions Policy had been discussed.

**Finance and Estates** – see item 7, above.

**Quality and Standards** – this had been the first meeting of this newly-formed committee. The meeting had been able to refine their Terms of Reference and agree timings for future meetings that fitted in with the availability of information to review. They had agreed a list of information to scrutinise.

**Strategy and Policy** – see item 3, above.

**11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME DISCRETIONS POLICY**

This matter was taken under item 7, above.

**12. LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS**

Safeguarding – the link governor had met with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and had been briefed on changes being made to make the site more secure. He had also reviewed safeguarding matters. He reminded the meeting that the extended audit theme in the spring had been on safeguarding procedures, actions from which had already been implemented.

Equality and Diversity – the link governor had participated in the SAR process, and commented that equality and diversity was a strong area for the College. There was a strong Lead who was exploring ways to further empower the work being done in this area.

**13. GOVERNOR ATTENDANCE AT COLLEGE**

There are opportunities for governors to visit the College and sit in on lessons, meet students and attend events. A list of governors who attended the College this term is lodged below:

24 <sup>th</sup> August	Terry Price meeting with Dan Dean
21 <sup>st</sup> September	Adrian Mills – induction meeting with Dan Dean, Helen Odhams, Stephanie Wiles
25 <sup>th</sup> September	Terry Price meeting with Dan Dean
10 <sup>th</sup> October	Fran Stewart and Paul Collyer for Joint Review meetings
11 <sup>th</sup> October	Ian Leigh and Daniel Loughlin for Joint Review meetings
12 <sup>th</sup> October	David Irving and Damian O’Malley for Joint Review meetings
31 <sup>st</sup> October	Clarissa Wilks and Damian O’Malley for Joint Review meetings
3 <sup>rd</sup> November	Tim Oliver for Joint Review meetings and meeting with Dan Dean
12 <sup>th</sup> December	Ian Leigh and Fran Stewart for the Music Department Christmas Concert

**14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Principal explained that, for reasons of cost and time, he would no longer be sending Christmas cards to governors, and wished everyone a very merry Christmas in lieu. Governors lauded this decision. The Chair also wished everyone present at the meeting a happy Christmas.

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

*The meeting closed at 7.35 pm.  
Attendance was 80% (12 out of 15 members)*

Signed.....

Date.....

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

<b>C1-001</b>	Item 3: <u>Constitution</u> <b>Clerk</b> to ensure that the wording in the Standing Orders and Governors' Code of Conduct reflects the additions agreed by the meeting.
<b>C1-002</b>	Item 6: <u>Finance Reports</u> <b>Director of Finance and Estates</b> to research whether it was worth the College investing in Savings Bonds.
<b>C1-003</b>	Item 7: <u>Finance and Audit Reports</u> <b>Director of Finance and Estates</b> to seek to ensure consistency in terminology in the Letter of Representation for 2018.
<b>C1-004</b>	Item 9. <u>Academy status.</u> <b>Principal</b> to brief the corporation meeting about the number of sixth form college conversions to academy status. <b>Director of Finance and Estates</b> to present the Corporation meeting with updated assumptions regarding the financial implications of changing status.

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

<b>C/S</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Topic</b>
C	6	<u>Principal's Report:</u> Governors queried the effect of no AS qualifications on university entrants, and whether there was money budgeted to cover staff absences. They suggested that Savings Bonds might be a safe investment for College surplus funds.
C	7	<u>Finance and Audit Reports:</u> Governors' suggestions to ensure consistency within the Letter of Representation.
C	8	<u>College SAR:</u> Governors challenged the College on the results for vulnerable students, and on destinations for learners. Governors suggested external verification of the College's judgement that it was "Outstanding".
C	9	Request from governors for updated financial projections and data prior to the discussion on academy conversion in March.
C/S	12	Link governors support College staff and review key procedures.
S	13	Governors attend College events to show support.