



**MINUTES OF THE ESHER COLLEGE CORPORATION  
MEETING**

Held At Esher College  
Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018, at 6.00 pm.

**Present:**

Tim Oliver (Chair)	Dan Loughlin
Darrell Bate	Hannah McKean
Dan Dean	Karin Rowsell
David Irving	Fran Stewart
Robin John	Clarissa Wilks
Ian Leigh	Ben Williams

Helen Odhams, Deputy Principal (Advising Officer)  
Rebecca De'Ath (Clerk)

**1. PRESENTATION ON COLLEGE LEADERSHIP TEAMS**

This presentation aimed to give Governors an overview of how the top level leadership teams at the College worked, and how they set the agenda for the College. The Principal explained that the senior leadership teams and the committees they sat on had been reviewed for 2017/18 in order to prevent duplication of agenda items, aid more effective decision-making at meetings, and involve a broader group of managers to extend decision-making and move away from a top-down approach. Over the last two years, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had reduced to three members from four and this was a further reason for reviewing the meetings structure. A handout listing team and committee membership was circulated and the work of the senior management committees was explained.

Governors asked the Principal the following questions:

Q: What is the quorum for the three committees? Four people.

Q: What is the College's approach to Learning Walks? The aim is to ensure that the SLT understands how teaching and learning takes place at root level. The SLT and Divisional Directors do the walks, choosing different Departments to look at each year. The Deputy Principal identifies common themes and feeds back to teaching staff. It is not about observing the quality of teaching. A separate process exists for this purpose.

Q: Has the remit of the committees changed? Yes, to some extent. The SLT agenda tends to be lighter, with some responsibilities transferred to the Operational Development Committee, for example.

Q: How long do you allocate to meetings? About one and a half hours each.

Q: Where does Risk Management get addressed? This is the responsibility of the SLT, and cascades to Departmental level. Risks are reflected in the Quality Improvement Plan and Self-Assessment Report.

Q: Other than Budget approval, where is Finance considered? Finance is considered by the Operational Development Committee.

Q: Why is the Director of Finance & Estates not on the SLT? This is partly historical, and also because the SLT focuses on teaching and learning. The Operational Development Committee is more appropriate for the Director as all development issues of the College have costs associated with them.

Q: How well does this new leadership model work? It works well, although one issue to be looked into further is the frequency of meetings. A review will be carried out at the end of the year.

The Chair thanked the Principal for his presentation.

## **2. REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

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

## **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received (and accepted) from Paul Collyer and Emily Thomas.

## **4. CONSTITUTION**

The Chair welcomed new Staff Governor, Hannah McKean. She explained that she was in her third year of teaching the Biology and Science BTEC course at the College.

Damian O'Malley had resigned from the Corporation on health grounds, and the Corporation noted and accepted his resignation with regret.

There was a vacancy for the Safeguarding Link role. Karin Rowsell volunteered to take this on.

**ACTION:** the Principal undertook to inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer (the Assistant Principal) so that he could make contact with Karin and send her the terms of reference for the role.

The Chair explained that this was the last Corporation meeting that the current Student Governors would attend. He thanked Ben Williams (and Emily Thomas, in her absence) for their input, and wished them well in their forthcoming exams.

## **5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (13<sup>th</sup> December 2017)**

The minutes were approved as a true record.

## **6. MATTERS ARISING**

Actions from the previous meeting had been completed, with the exception of C1-003 (Letter of Representation 2018), which would be addressed in the Autumn term.

## **7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principal drew the meeting's attention to the following main points in his Report:

- On 19<sup>th</sup> March, Anne Milton (Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills) had announced that the DfE would be carrying out an assessment of the resilience of the FE sector. This followed communication between her Department and the SFCA, with the latter sharing some of their evidence with her team.
- Staffing was becoming increasingly problematic due to the national shortage of teachers. Asked if there was any opportunity to increase the number of trainee teachers that attend the College, the Principal replied that three trainees were completing their Initial Teacher Training at Esher and the College does advertise for trainees.
- The College had put a lot of work into the progression exams and into changing mind-sets as AS exams no longer count to the final outcome and are no longer offered at the end of 6.1. It was expected that a higher proportion of students would progress to 6.2 and there may be staffing implications. Students not achieving as well as they expected in the progression exams are able to pick up an additional course in year 2.

### **Student Union Report**

The meeting noted that £1k had been raised for the Esher College Africa Trust. The current focus was now on the imminent SU elections and the transitioning to a new team. The Student Governor was asked the following questions:

Q: How do you elect SU representatives? Via application forms and some candidates submit PowerPoint slides. Those applying for SU President and Vice President make speeches at hustings. Once elections are completed, there follows a transitional period before new members formally take up their roles.

Q: How many students are interested in the SU President's role this year? There are about 7 applications for the roles of President and Vice President.

Q: Is the SU self-funded, or does it get a grant? We raise funds through events such as Freshers' Week.

The Chair thanked the Student Governor for his input.

### **Finance Reports**

See item 10, below.

### **Review of Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)**

The Deputy Principal reported that good progress was being made towards meeting the targets in the Plan, and provided the following updates:

- Target 8 deadline of February 2018 was too early; moved to May 2018.
- Target 18 deadline has been extended to accommodate further staff training due to recent developments at another S7 college.
- Target 20 – a week has been set aside for students to gain work experience should they so wish.

Governors sought the following additional information from the Principal:

Q: What processes does the College engage in to develop social mobility and assist students in minority groups (e.g. women, higher achievers etc)? Should more emphasis be given to monitoring the attainment of different groups of students and where they go on to after the College? Our aim is to make sure that *everybody* progresses. Value Added data from the DfE last year indicated that the College was in a really strong position.

The Equality & Diversity Link Governor added that the College had done a lot of work looking at vulnerable minority groups of students, and she was comfortable that Equality and Diversity was being addressed in a structured, creative way. She invited governors to speak with her outside the meeting should they require further information.

Finally, as a side issue, it was noted that the catering company used plastic cups, platters and bottles. Governors wondered whether the company was exploring alternative more environmentally-friendly materials.

**ACTION:** Clerk to ask the Principal's PA to raise this matter with the catering providers.

## 8. ACADEMY APPLICATION UPDATE

The Head Teachers' Review Board had approved the College's application to become an academy. If converting, the College was expected to do so within a "reasonable" time. The meeting agreed that the situation had not changed since academy conversion was last discussed by the Corporation. The finance considerations were the same – a VAT gain, but no other compelling educational or financial argument to change status to become a SAT.

Governors noted that of the S7 colleges, only a few had converted - Woking and Godalming had become SATs, and Reigate was now an "empty" MAT. Finally, they sought assurance that there would be no financial penalty imposed on the College if it did not convert, and this was given by the Principal.

The Corporation agreed not to proceed to a change of status at this time. The Principal would write to the ESFA to explain the College's decision, and parents would be informed via Newsletter.

## 9. ADMISSIONS POLICY (2019 Entry)

The Principal proposed an amendment to include some flexibility to respond to exceptional requests from vulnerable and deserving cases after the application process has closed. This amendment had been considered by members of the Strategy & Policy Committee, and would likely apply to only one or two cases.

Governors sought clarification from the Principal as follows:

Q: Is the mechanism for a managed move beyond the remit of the Admissions Policy? Yes.

Q: How would Head teachers know that they could make an application? They would approach the Principal directly.

Q: How would you explain what an "exceptional circumstance" was? This would be a judgement call.

Q: Do such students have to be considering Esher College as their only choice? Yes, to prove that they really want to attend this college.

Q: In such cases, is admission still dependant on meeting entry requirements? Yes.

The meeting suggested that it should be made explicit to exceptional students that entry requirements must be met. In addition, the relevant College Committee should monitor exceptional and unforeseen applications to ensure that the process is equitable.

The Corporation agreed to the Admissions Policy for 2019 entry (incorporating the proposed amendment), and noted the additional wording in terms of exceptional applicants needing a *current* Education, Health and Care Plan if they fell into that category.

## 10. REPORT BACK FROM COMMITTEES

### FINANCE & ESTATES

Prior to the meeting in early March, members had received a presentation from the Architects on their proposals for additional campus buildings to meet an expanding student population – an extension to the LRC2 with a new Dance/Performance facility at the back, and an extension to the canteen with new classrooms above. (Discussions had yet to be held with the planning authorities for some aspects of the proposed work). Each extension would cost approximately £2m and would require capital grant funding, although they could be part-funded from the College's reserves.

Financial projections for the year showed that the College was on target. Projections going forward beyond this might be impacted by increases in salaries, and static income accompanied by rising costs would require the College to seek more funding, or more students.

Asked if the annual pay awards had already been agreed by this committee, the Chair explained that they had been.

### STRATEGY & POLICY

Discussion at this meeting had focussed on academy conversion and the Admissions Policy for 2019 entry. The committee Chair wanted it noted that members were sorry to hear about Damian O'Malley's resignation, and wanted to thank him for his support, and wished him well in the future.

The Corporation noted the minutes of both Committees.

## 11. LINK GOVERNOR REPORTS

### Safeguarding Link

There was no update due to the post being vacant since January 2018.

### Equality and Diversity Link

There was nothing new to report since the last meeting.

## 12. GOVERNOR ATTENDANCE AT COLLEGE

A list of Governors who attended College (and reasons for their visit) is captured below.

19 <sup>th</sup> January	Adrian Mills and Ian Leigh for College Production
20 <sup>th</sup> February	Tim Oliver meeting with Dan Dean
23 <sup>rd</sup> February	Adrian Mills – governor shadowing a student
12 <sup>th</sup> March	Tim Oliver for Divisional Director interviews
16 <sup>th</sup> March	Tim Oliver meeting with Dan Dean
20 <sup>th</sup> March	Adrian Mills meeting with Dan Dean
26 <sup>th</sup> March	Fran Stewart – governor shadowing a student

## 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Governors' visits to College – the Chair raised this matter on behalf of a governor colleague, who had attended a session for governors to sit in on some lessons. He had felt that the event was stage-managed and was unhappy not to be permitted to walk round the College freely, and to talk to students to gain their perspective on college life. Although governors receive enhanced DBS

checks, he felt that they should also be checked against the Barred List to enable unaccompanied access across the College. This was an issue of openness.

Governors discussed the potential danger of external governors over-stepping their remit in terms of the operational function of the SLT, against the need to approach students directly. It was felt by the majority of governors that there are opportunities to hear the student voice (e.g.at the Governors’ Training Morning), and for governors to attend college events. Asked for his opinion, the Student Governor felt that there was a fine line between leadership and management, which should not be crossed.

It was agreed by most that the present arrangements for governors’ visits to college were satisfactory, and that there was a spirit of openness. The Corporation needed to be confident that it had mechanisms to assess risk. If the Corporation felt that there were concerns, they would investigate these via the appropriate committee by looking at, for example, complaints made by parents.

**ACTION: Safeguarding Link Governor** to check the arrangements for vetting governors with the College’s Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- Thank you to staff – the Chair requested that the Corporation’s thanks be conveyed to staff for ensuring that the College remained open for business during the snow days.
- DfE Careers Strategy – approved on 1 January 2018, and now stipulates that OFSTED must comment on careers in their inspection reports. Asked if this had affected anything in the College, governors were informed that a new Progression Guidance Director would be taking up the post in May.
- Communications with parents – A governor raised a query over communication with parents and the Principal agreed to look into it.

**14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018**

*The meeting closed at 7.40 pm.*

*Attendance was 80% (12 out of 15 members)*

Signed.....

Date.....

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

<b>C3-001</b>	Item 4: Constitution - <b>Principal</b> to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer of the new Safeguarding Link Governor so that he could make contact with her and send her the terms of reference for the role.
<b>C3-002</b>	Item 7: Principal's Report - <b>Clerk</b> to ask the Principal's PA to raise the matter of providing more eco-friendly cups, trays and bottles with the caterers.
<b>C3-003</b>	Item 13: AOB - <b>Safeguarding Link Governor</b> to check the arrangements for vetting governors with the College's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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

<b>C/S</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Topic</b>
C	1	Presentation on Leadership Teams – Governors questioned what the quorum was for the senior committee meetings, whether risk management was adequately addressed, and whether the leadership model had been evaluated.
S C S	7	Principal's Report – Governors sought to extend their understanding of the Student Union election process and the funding of the SU. They also asked questions to ensure that all minority groups progressed satisfactorily, and were reassured on this matter by the findings of the E&D Link Governor.
C S	8	Academy conversion – assurance sought by Governors that the College would not be financially penalised should it not convert. Governors agreed that there were no compelling educational or financial reasons for the College to change its current status.
C/S	9	Admissions Policy – questioning from Governors to check the robustness of the principles behind the amendment being suggested to the policy.
C S S	13	AOB – the College was challenged for seemingly not being open enough with Governors. Most Governors felt that the College was open, and were happy with current procedures for visits to the College. The Corporation thanked staff for enabling the College to remain open on snow days.