

**CHELMSFORD COLLEGE
BOARD OF THE CORPORATION
8 July 2021**

Minutes

Minutes of a Meeting of the Board of the Corporation held in the Committee Room, Moulsham Street Campus, Chelmsford and via MS Teams on Thursday 8 July 2021 at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT:	Elaine Oddie (Chair)	
	Andy Sparks (Principal)	
	Jenny Beaumont	*
	Trevor Bolton (from 3.10 pm)	
	Susan Hughes	
	Sarah Noble (Vice Chair)	
	Christian Norman	*
	Jaya Patten	*
	Barbara Vohmann	
	Julie Williams	
	Doug Zeeman	*

IN ATTENDANCE:	Caroline Williams (Deputy Principal)
	Debs Hurst (Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Resources)
	Rob Millea (Clerk to the Corporation)
	Joanne Harrington (Assistant Clerk)

*Denotes attended through MS Teams – all other attendees present in person

1486. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOME TO OBSERVERS

Apologies for Absence were received from Nedas Lauranivicius (Staff Governor), who is on leave of absence from the Board, Natalie Devaney (Student Governor) and Amanda Montague.

The Chair welcomed Richard Davidson of Willmott Dixon (till 4.30 pm) and Paddy Reilly of UEL Students' Union (till 4.00 pm), who are attending this Meeting as Observers via MS Teams, as they have expressed an interest in becoming governors in the future.

1487. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Clerk to the Corporation renewed his declaration that he acts as Company Secretary of Essex Shared Services Limited.

Barbara Vohmann renewed her declaration as an employee of Anglia Ruskin University.

The Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Resources renewed her declaration as a Member Representative on the Essex LGPS Advisory Board.

The Chair and the Principal declared their interests as Directors of Essex Shared Services Limited.

Christian Norman declared his interest as an employee of Essex County Council – Adult Learning.

The following **confidential items** were notified: Agenda Item 6 (part) relating to the College Strategic Future – Minute **1491.1**- and Agenda Item 8 (part) relating to the College’s Cleaning Arrangements – Minute **1493.5**.

1488. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

1489. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2021

The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 26 March 2021 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

1490. MATTERS ARISING

The Clerk tabled a paper tracking actions arising from the last Meeting of the Board.

The Board **NOTED** the following:

- Dovedale Directors’ Meeting Minutes of 21 January 2021 have been signed
- The Gender Pay Report was submitted to Government before the deadline of 30 March 2021
- Pressure on middle managers is included within an AMBER risk on the Dartboard (see minute **1494.1**)
- The VPFCS confirmed that the selected Contractor for the new Princes Road Construction Centre is SEH French Limited of Ipswich
- The Principal confirmed, in response to Sarah Noble, that all new staff now have agreed targets

All other items appear elsewhere in the Agenda.

1491. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal presented a written Report for the information of governors, focusing on the following topics:

Overview

A very difficult year but staff have performed really well with the result that most learners have completed their programmes of study.

Recruitment for 2021/22 is up 9% on this time last year and accepted offers are very strong (up 23% as against last year).

Planning is in hand for 2021/22 despite lack of guidance from the DfE regarding Lateral Flow Testing en masse, social distancing, face coverings, isolation bubbles, etc.

It was further noted that Ofsted will commence visiting Colleges again from September using a new Inspection Handbook incorporating COVID 19 transitional arrangements and other update guidance concerning safeguarding and sexual harassment.

The local MP, Vicky Ford will visit on 17 September 2021 to look at progress on the new Construction Centre at Princes Road.

Recruitment of Vice Principal, Quality & Learners

Debbie Garroway (Assistant Principal, South Essex College) has accepted an offer for this position and her start date is confirmed as 1 September 2021. Induction is in hand.

Debs Hurst will take on the role of Deputy Principal from 1 August 2021, assuming some responsibilities currently handled by Caroline Williams.

Learner Numbers, Funding & Finance

The Board were informed that a small operating surplus of around £50K is currently projected for this year.

For 2021/22, the Budget is indicating a small surplus (see minute **1493**), with the £300K reduction in core funding being offset by an increase in College commercial income generation provided the College is able to fully open. A 1% salary award is included in the Budget (see Minute **1492.1**).

College core 16-18 income for 2021/22 will decrease by around £300K due to inability to run the short pre-apprenticeship course this year. This

reduction is expected to be recovered in 2022/23 under the lagged funding model for learners, assuming recruitment for 2021/22 is maintained.

Further detail was provided on recruitment for 2021/22 as noted in the overview. The Principal was optimistic that numbers could be high as 2400 16-19 learners in 2021/22.

The ESFA will not be publishing full official national data for provider performance for 2020/21 due to the pandemic, but performance of qualifications without calculated grades will be published.

For 2020/21, the College expects to meet the 90% tolerance level for Adult Education Budget income, thus avoiding any cash clawback.

In addition, Apprenticeships have remained stable this year despite uncertainty and should meet the forecast of £1.05 million.

COVID 19 arrangements

The Report explained in detail issues which had arisen this term:

- Assessment arrangements
- Professional Development Week
- Showcase events
- Student celebration week
- Self-assessment process (academic and business)

Curriculum Development

See Minute **1497** relating to approval of the Curriculum Plan for 2021/22.

There are two major developments for the medium term which are the roll out of T Levels and associated transition programmes and the five year plan to establish an Institute of Technology with a large number of partners in Essex under the leadership of South Essex College.

COVID measures emerging from Government as from 1 September

The Principal briefly summarised the measures likely from 1 September, but stressed that these could change. Further detailed guidance is likely during the summer.

- Working from home, mandatory wearing of face coverings and social distancing will end – there will be no curriculum bubbles
- Guidance from 1 September is awaited for staff and students
- 2 staff Lateral Flow Tests per week

- 2 onsite LFTs for students (this will be a logistical challenge)
- wholly face to face teaching for 16-19 students
- blended teaching for adults (on site and remote)
- retain the ability to teach on line (in case of another lockdown)
- No contact tracing or isolation for under 18s
- Must still follow specific industry guidance for work placements

The Principal noted that the College is reporting more positive COVID cases than for some time. It appears the greater number of cases are male students.

Barbara Vohmann asked about the current rise in positive cases and the Principal noted that they are all amongst students bar one. He further said that some staff might elect to wear masks voluntarily next term.

Risk Dartboard

The current iteration of the College Risk Dartboard, taken from the College Risk Register was provided to the Board. This had been discussed in detail by the Audit Committee at its Meeting on 22 June 2021 and is documented in the Minutes of that Meeting (see minute **1494.1**).

The two RED risks are

- Protection processes (public health) against COVID 19
- Functional Skills

There are two new risks, both AMBER:

- IT issues at Princes Road with impact on staff and students, if not satisfactorily resolved
- Recruitment of VP, Q&L leading to loss of continuity

Summer works and Major Projects

This is covered under the Finance Report (minute **1493.2**)

Other matters

- Staff survey planned this month
- Low staff turnover
- No staff significantly ill from COVID and no fatalities
- Ofsted inspection is still awaited for the Nursery
- Refectory service now being offered at both campuses, albeit on a reduced basis

The Report was **RECEIVED.**

1491.1. COLLEGE STRATEGIC FUTURE

This item was deemed to be a Confidential Item under the Instrument & Articles and a separate minute has been prepared and is attached to these Minutes.

1492. HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

The Board **RECEIVED** a Report from the Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Resources on Human Resources matters.

The key points were:

- **Turnover** to date for this academic year annualised is 14.79% (11.84% last year) against a target for the year of 18%. The overall trend has slightly increased from the last Report but remains below the AoC benchmark in the Eastern Region of 18.2% in 2017/18.
- Currently, there are 20 vacancies: since the last Report, 28 appointments to vacant positions have been made.
- **Sickness absence** is averaging 5.1 days in the 12 months to June 2021 (last year to 31 July: 6.16 days) against AoC benchmark in the Eastern Region of 5.4 days, which is also the College's KPI target. The rate is affected by a number of long term absences as the short term absence rate is only 1.95 days.
- **Employment relations** are good with the unions and staff generally. There are no extant employment grievances or actions.
- A recent Internal Audit of the College's online recruitment processes produced a 'strong' assurance.

A Staff Wellbeing Survey has begun (concluding on 16 July) and the results will be reported at the September 2021 Board Meeting. The Report outlined in detail the College's Wellbeing initiatives to further meet the commitments made under the AoC Mental Health Charter.

The VPFCS advised that the free training from Peninsula (in reply to Jenny Beaumont) to middle managers will include how to manage disciplinaries, handle complaints and grievances from staff and how to enhance their man management techniques and styles. It is hoped that this could reduce the burden on HR. The training will be recorded for each manager.

The VPFCS advised that the College will meet with the College UNISON representative (support staff) next week. The representative is a new appointment.

The Report was **RECEIVED**.

1492.1 PAY AWARD 2021/22

The Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Resources proposed to the Board that a pay increase will be offered for staff for the financial year 2021/22, effective from 1 January 2022, in principle, subject to financial affordability which will be assessed finally in October.

The VPFCS also reported that there have been pay increases to 48 staff due to the increase from 1 April 2021 in the National Minimum Wage plus the National Living Wage. Increments will only be paid if there is a contractual requirement to do so and a budget of £25K is included in the 2021/22 budget.

The Principal advised that there have not yet been any national discussions between AoC and unions regarding pay bargaining. It is understood that a 10% rise is going to be the union claim.

Jenny Beaumont said the cost must be affordable. It may increase the % of pay to turnover. The VPFCS said that the College is expecting extra funding from ECC for High Needs in 2021/22 (back to levels of two years ago) so this should improve the ratio. It is also hoped that income from commercial sources (e.g refectory) should contribute to an improvement post pandemic.

The Board **APPROVED** a 1% pay increase for staff from 1 January 2022 in principle with it being finally decided at the Board Meeting in December 2021, once finances become clear (following recruitment for 2021/22 being completed).

ACTION: VPFCS

1493. FINANCE REPORT

1493.1 Management Accounts for the ten months to 31 May 2021

The Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services presented the Management Accounts for the ten months ended 31 May 2021 for discussion and comment by the Board.

For the period, the College is showing an operating surplus of £145K against a revised forecast of a deficit to that date of £25K, a favourable variance of £170K. To 31 May 2021, the Nursery contributed £1K of this total surplus and the balance was from the College.

Total income amounted to £13.066 million and total expenditure amounted to £12.921 million.

The Accounts were accompanied by a detailed commentary explaining the variances from budget. These management accounts do not consider any adjustments which will result from including year end FRS102 pension adjustments, either costs or any increase/decrease in the actuarial valuation.

The Management Accounts to 30 April 2021 had been reviewed by the Budget Working Party, which met on 22 June 2021 (see minute **1500**).

The May Accounts included an analysis of trade debtors which totalled £94K, which are all considered recoverable, save for a small number of Nursery debts which are unlikely to be collected. The main debt is £56K due from Chelmsford City Council for sports centre recharges.

At 31 May 2021, group net assets stood at £11.866 million, including cash of £2.261 million and revalued fixed assets of £29.275 million.

The College's Financial Health for 2020/21 to date, based on ESFA methodology, is Requires Improvement and will remain so at 31 July 2021. The forecast for the year to 31 July 2022 is that it will remain as Requires Improvement but improve to Good at 31 July 2023.

The bank covenants with both Lloyds and Barclays are both currently being met and this is expected to be maintained at 31 July 2021. It was noted that the Nursery holding a summer school during July/August will increase income.

1493.2 Financial Forecast to 31 July 2021

A revised forecast was prepared in March 2021, showing a loss for the year of £107K. Additional income received since then (and not anticipated) plus some reductions in expenditure have meant that an anticipated operating surplus of circa £50K against this forecasted deficit is expected – an improvement of around £150K.

The anticipated cash balance at year end is expected to be over £1million.

The forecast includes no adjustments for pension accounting noted in minute **1493.1** above.

The Board **APPROVED** the Management Accounts and Report to 31 May 2021 and **NOTED** the estimated Financial Outturn for the year ended 31 July 2021.

1493.3 Capital Expenditure and Estates Programme 2021/22

The Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services **PRESENTED** a Report on the programme of Capital Works proposed for 2021/22, itemising each specific major element.

Fuller explanations of the planned Capex for next year are included in the Budget Working Party Committee Minutes, noting the contributions from external sources (ESFA and SELEP) and are not repeated here. There will be some minor summer works carried out over the next few weeks.

It is proposed to report the actual capex outturn for 2020/21 to the Board Meeting in September with an update on plans for 2021/22.

The VPFCS explained that the capex programme over the next year is also designed to produce some cash savings.

The Board **NOTED** the Capital Update for 2021/22.

1493.4 Banking Arrangements

On the advice of the VPFCS, the Board **NOTED** that the College will continue to use Lloyds Bank for its day to day banking requirements, even though there has been a lack of management continuity from them over the last two years.

There would be a cost of moving to Barclays Bank because the interest rate on the Lloyds loan would rise by 0.5%, if day to day banking with them was withdrawn and therefore changing from Lloyds is not viable.

1493.5 Cleaning Arrangements

This was deemed to be a Confidential Item and a separate minute has been prepared and is attached to these Minutes.

1493.6 ESFA CFFR and Commentary (including 2021/22 Budget and draft Forecast for 2022/23)

The Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services presented the ESFA College Financial Forecasting Return (CFFR) for the College, in the form required by the ESFA and which has to be approved by the Board and submitted to the ESFA by 31 July 2021.

The CFFR incorporates the expected outturn for 2020/21, the Budget for 2021/22 and the Forecast for 2022/23

The Board noted the expected outturn for 2020/21 (see minute **1493.2** above).

The Board then considered the **Budget for 2021/22** and noted the scrutiny already provided to the draft Budget by the Budget Working Party (which most governors attended) on 22 June 2021, as recorded in the Notes of that Meeting (see minute **1500**). This includes a detailed Commentary of the elements of the Budget and the relevant risks and sensitivities and will be sent to governors, when completed.

The Board reviewed the Budget following the Working Party Meeting which shows a projected surplus of £25K.

The Board examined the cash flow forecast prepared through to 31 July 2022, noting that, at this stage, there is not expected to be a need for short term overdraft/financing facilities between February and April 2022.

The Board then considered the **Forecast for 2022/23**.

Because the lagged 16-18 learner funding is expected to increase by £350K and assuming conservative increases in other income streams, plus a 1% pay award and inflationary rises in other costs, a forecast surplus of around £300K is forecasted.

Accordingly, College Financial Health at 31 July 2023 is expected to rise to Good.

Key risks in the forecast:

- Income projections are not as predicted for Tuition Catch Up Funds.
- Inability to grow AEB delivery.
- Surge in COVID 19 infections affecting commercial income levels and adding to compliance costs.
- Inflation
- Student recruitment rising causing pressure on staff to deliver to greater numbers of students.

The Board **APPROVED** the Budget for the year ended 31 July 2022 and **APPROVED** submission of the CFFR, incorporating the draft Forecast for 2022/23 to the ESFA by 31 July 2021, noting that the CFFR will be signed by the Principal as Accounting Officer.

1493.7 Learner Numbers and Financial implications 2021/22

This is covered in the Principal's Report and the minutes of the Budget Working Party held on 22 June 2021, amplified by key

financial information shown in the written papers presented to the Board.

1493.8 2021/22 Proposed KPIs

The Board **AGREED** a suite of HR and Finance KPIs for 2021/22:

Finance

- Overall Financial Health and points score
- EBITDA
- Borrowings as a % of college reserves
- Adjusted current ratio
- Dependency on ESFA income
- Pay expenditure as a % of income
- Cash days in hand
- ESFA debt service cover (NEW)
- Contribution from other income generating activities (NEW)

HR

- Key expectations met in Lesson Observations
- Proportion of staff Progress Review targets on course to succeed
- % of staff with set performance targets agreed by manager (including new staff)
- Sickness absence days
- Annualized staff turnover

The Board noted high % of pay to turnover 67.5 set as KPI for 2021/22 (sector appears to be around 67% and sixth form colleges around 70%) – affected by income having dropped in the sector (and by the College) due to COVID, especially commercial income sources. It is hoped this will reduce during 2021/22.

The Principal explained the reason for data including 4 Key Expectations instead of 5KE next year as KE3 'developing skills' cannot be observed in an online session and therefore this expectation has been temporarily removed.

1494.RISK MANAGEMENT

The VPFCS presented this Report, the contents of which were discussed with the Audit Committee on 22 June 2021 (see minute **1500**).

1494.1 Risk Register and Dartboard

This is covered in the Principal's Report as to the current risks. The Board was provided with a copy of the current Risk Register. The two documents were discussed by the Audit Committee at their Meeting on 22 June 2021.

Two RED risks remain:

- Measures to protect staff from COVID
- Functional Skills

The Board noted that staff mental health and well being remains an AMBER risk (this includes middle managers – see Matters Arising).

The dartboard will need reviewing once final Government guidance from 1 September 2021 is received.

The position was **NOTED**.

1494.2 Internal Audit Plan 2021/22

The Board **NOTED** the Plan for the 2021/22 year as presented by Scrutton Bland, following discussion by the VPFCS and the Audit Committee.

- Risk Management
- Cyber Security
- Estates Management

The proposed financial audits at Essex Shared Services Limited are:

- Payroll
- Fixed Assets

This Plan was **APPROVED** by the Audit Committee on 22 June 2021.

The number of audit days is 15 and the cost is anticipated to be in the order of £20,000.

1495. SUB-CONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS 2021/22

The Board **RECEIVED** a briefing from the Principal on the College's Subcontracting Plans for 2021/22.

It is proposed that the level of this work will be similar to 2020/21 amounting to around £200K with the exact level of provision still to be determined and will be with Qube Learning (as last year).

The learners are likely to be unemployed people coming from JobCentrePlus, mainly in construction or warehousing. Final amounts will not be determined until recruitment is finalised for 2021/22. Before any contract is entered into, the Board will be notified to allow pre-contract scrutiny to take place and then approval sought.

The College will subcontract in the same way as before in line with its Subcontracting Fees & Charging Policy, which is presented for review. Only minor changes were required from last year.

This Policy is a contractual requirement of the ESFA before any subcontracting work can be agreed. The Internal Auditors review subcontracting controls every year in accordance with ESFA funding requirements.

Governor comments

The Principal mentioned the proposal for the College to work with Complete Dance Studios in Witham. This is a new venture and there are likely to be 20 new starts next year and 20 the following year. It is a niche area and has been submitted to but is not yet approved by ESFA, although that is expected to be forthcoming.

Susan Hughes disclosed that she is acquainted with the Manager of the studios and this **declaration of interest** was noted.

Sarah Noble asked whether the Studios have experience of delivering qualifications and queried the recruiting source for the students.

The Principal said that the studios have not delivered Level 3 qualifications in the past, but the College will supervise progress closely. The recruiting of students will be from within the Dance Academy itself as the learners seeking to achieve the qualification will be in the pipeline already.

The Principal said that the venture will provide extra income for the College and potential good outcomes but the wider benefits are still to be assessed. There will be no level 2 students. In response to Trevor Bolton, the management fee of 20% proposed to be charged will include the cost of pastoral aspects for the students so that the students will feel part of the College.

Trevor Bolton asked whether the venture is worth it with sufficient reward for the risk involved. The Principal said that, in year two, with 40 learners the income will be in the order of £170K. There will not need to be any

extra College staff and management can manage the contract effectively – it is therefore relatively low risk.

Christian Norman felt that these new learners might present further opportunities through marketing other curriculum areas to them. For example, there could be maths & English courses needed by some of them.

The Board **APPROVED** the Subcontracting Fees & Charging Policy for 2021/22 and **APPROVED** the plans to deliver Sub-Contracting for 2021/22.

1496. FEES POLICY 2021/22

The Board **REVIEWED** the Draft Fees Policy for 2021-22, which is required each year by the ESFA.

The Principal introduced this item and commented that the Policy is fully compliant with HE and FE funding guidance and it is a contractual requirement from the ESFA. It also sets out ways in which the College can assist students where fees might prevent them from accessing provision.

Governors noted that the Policy makes clear that it does not apply to Dovedale Nursery and the VPFCS confirmed that a Policy for the Nursery is being developed.

ACTION: VPFCS

The Board **APPROVED** the Fees Policy for 2021-22.

1497. CURRICULUM PLAN 2021/22

The Deputy Principal **PRESENTED** the draft Plan for consideration and approval by the Board, having been presented and discussed at the Quality & Learners Committee on 11 May 2021.

The Plan refers to the College Strategic Priorities and outlines in detail the **areas of change for 2021-22**, including new courses and qualifications.

The Plan for next year incorporates COVID-19 aspects within the document, drawing from the COVID 19 separate Supplement that existed for 2020/21. The Plan also outlines the needs of the local economy which are stressed in the document. It is primarily an internal document but is shared where relevant with stakeholders.

The Plan will be reviewed at the end of 2021 as changes may flow from the revised College Strategic Plan, which is due to be completed by then.

The Deputy Principal emphasised that the biggest single challenge is the Development of T Levels and Transition programmes in Construction and Education and Childcare. In addition, the other main challenge is the development of a wider understanding of sexual harassment and abuse through the curriculum including the wider curriculum.

Both issues are included on the Risk Register (in answer to governor questions) – T Levels AMBER and sexual abuse issues currently GREEN.

Governor Comments

The Board were reminded, in response to a question from Jaya Patten, that all curriculum areas are costed and their contribution is measured in each departmental area. The Principal said it is important to make decisions with regard to the viability of curriculum areas on a commercial basis so far as is possible in meeting overall strategic objectives and government initiatives/instructions.

The Chair requested that the Board receives the contribution analysis on a quarterly basis in future.

ACTION: VPFCS

Christian Norman commented that there are no cash cows in FE these days. The Principal agreed and said that certain key curriculum areas have to be delivered otherwise funding could be at risk in other areas. In essence, the ESFA require certain courses to be delivered to secure funding.

Barbara Vohmann asked about supporting students who are intending to progress to HE with navigating the HE application process and the related living/financing arrangements for potential students as well as the cultural shift for students.

It was agreed that Marco Iciek would provide further detail to Barbara off line.

ACTION: MI

Governors raised several points, to which the Deputy Principal responded:

- Sustainability is really important and the College will ensure they are engaged in this area
- Some elements of 'bubbles' may be retained to respond to any local restrictions that might arise due to COVID
- Sexual harassment is a big issue now and it has to be embedded throughout the curriculum reinforcing culture and attitudes – it is a key risk and will be rated AMBER on the next iteration of the Register

- The developing curricula will be further considered over the next few months, informing the revised Strategic Plan

ACTION: DP

The Board **APPROVED** the Curriculum Plan 2021/22 (Version 2) incorporating COVID-19 issues.

The Deputy Principal indicated that the Plan is likely to need revision to encompass continuing changes such as sustainability, HE application support and cost analysis/benefit considerations.

1498. COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE 2020/21 (including Learner Progress and Assessment 2020/21)

The Deputy Principal **PRESENTED** a detailed written update of the CIP and further papers informing governors regarding Examinations and Assessment 2020/21 and the outcome of a recent student satisfaction survey carried out in April 2021.

College Improvement Plan

The Board **APPROVED** the current position of progress against the Plan with good progress being made against 4 of the 6 College priorities.

Priorities 3 (Implementation) and 4 (Impact) are AMBER areas because of uncertainties regarding examination outcomes for functional skills and other occupational qualifications.

Assessment and Examinations

The paper described the different methodology for different qualifications in detail between Vocational Technical Qualifications and GCSEs, which, depending on the qualifications, involves Teacher Assessed Grades or examinations, plus, where relevant, demonstration of practical knowledge.

Key points:

- Management of assessment for continuing learners, progressing learners across GCSE, Vocational and Technical qualifications and apprentices including 'off the job' assessment as well as End Point Assessments (EPAs)
- Quality Assurance process (grades and rankings across all curriculum areas)
- Close liaison with awarding organisations

The Board **NOTED** the position and **RECORDED** their appreciation of the efforts of staff in this area during this challenging year.

Student Survey April 2021

The paper summarised the three Student Satisfaction Surveys which have been conducted this academic year. The last of those in April 2021 was very positive, despite virtually all of the period covered by the survey being during lockdown with students not in College.

The survey focused on the learning experience (including home learning) and safeguarding and COVID 19 testing.

Positive responses varied from 84% (destinations) to 90% (home learning equipment and feeling safe in College) with the average being 87%. Approximately 1200 responses were received.

The exit Student survey will come to the September Board Meeting, together with an Employer Survey.

The Deputy Principal reported on digital technology progress and working with other companies and explained that the College's focus is on the quality of the delivery. It remains a work in progress.

The Report from the Deputy Principal was **RECEIVED**.

1499. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Board & Committee Membership

The Clerk **REPORTED** on a number of Governance matters:

1. The 2020/21 Governance Self-Assessment Questionnaire was circulated to all Governors by the Clerk and responses requested by the end of August. It follows the same format as last year with an additional series of questions pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic and its affect of the College's governance. A Report will be prepared by the Clerk for the September Board Meeting.

ACTION: Clerk

2. Following the election of Amanda Montague as Chair of the Board, she will leave the Audit Committee and join the Quality & Learners Committee and the Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee. In addition, as Vice Chair of the Board, Trevor Bolton will join the SG&R Committee. The Board **APPROVED** these changes.

3. The Board **APPROVED** the increase in the determined Membership of the SG&R Committee from 5 to 6 in order to facilitate Susan Hughes remaining as a Member of SG&R Committee. The quorum will remain at 3.
4. There remain two vacancies for independent governors (which will increase to three from 1 August 2021) and one student governor. There are two potential candidates at present for independent governors, both of whom are attending this Meeting as Observers. Their interest in joining the Board will be pursued after the Meeting. A candidate for student governor will also be identified. It is intended that potential new governors will be put to the Board for approval at the September Board Meeting and to determine their allocation to Committees.

The Board **AGREED** this approach.

ACTION: Clerk

5. The Board **NOTED** that it is desirable for the vacancy arising from Elaine Oddie's retirement to be filled by another qualified accountant, but observed that the Board does have considerable financial expertise.
6. There are no other changes proposed to the Membership of Committees at this stage. The Clerk provided the Board with a list of Board & Committee Memberships applicable from 1 August 2021, reflecting the retirements of Elaine Oddie and Natalie Devaney on 31 July 2021.

ACTION: Clerk

The Chair indicated that she would be prepared to assist the Board on financial and accounts review matters on a co-opted basis, if the Board felt that would be helpful. The Board thanked Elaine for her offer.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Board

The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Amanda Montague (Chair Designate) as Chair of the Board for a four year term with effect from 1 August 2021.

The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Trevor Bolton as Vice Chair of the Board for a four year term from 1 August 2021.

Director Appointments

The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Amanda Montague as a Director of Dovedale Nursery CIC and Chelmsford Training Services Limited (dormant) with effect from 1 August 2021, in succession to Elaine Oddie, who is retiring.

The Board **APPROVED** the nomination of Jaya Patten as a Director of Essex Shared Services Limited with effect from 1 August 2021, in succession to Elaine Oddie, as one of the College's two Members of the ESS Board. The Board of ESS is required to approve this nomination, which the Clerk will arrange.

ACTION: Clerk

Meeting Planner and Schedules of Business 2021/22

The Board **APPROVED** the Meeting Planner for the 2021/22 academic year and the Schedules of Business for the Board, the Quality & Learners Committee and the Audit Committee for 2021/22.

Governance Documents

The Clerk **ADVISED** the Board that the College Governance Documents and Protocols had been reviewed and approved in July 2019 and no immediate changes were considered necessary at that time.

The Clerk has briefly reviewed the documents and no changes are considered necessary.

Governor Champions

The Board **APPROVED** the implementation of the proposal, together with related operational guidelines, on the recommendation of the Quality & Learners Committee.

It will be taken forward by the Clerk during the summer.

ACTION: Clerk

Appointment of External Auditors 2020/21

The Board **APPROVED** the appointment of Price Bailey as external auditors (financial and regularity) of the College Group for the year ended 31 July 2021. They have also been appointed as auditors of South Essex College and Essex Shared Services Limited under the joint tendering process.

Details of their duties and their quoted fee were provided to the Board. A copy of their Audit Plan has been sent to Members of the Audit Committee.

Leave of Absence

The Board **APPROVED** granting leave of absence from the Board for Nedas Lauranivicius (Staff Governor) for the period from 20 January 2021 until 31 July 2021.

Governor Visits

Governors were reminded to provide details of any visits they undertake to the College (either in person or on line) to the Assistant Clerk, who keeps a record.

Several governors attended a recent Student Voice Meeting via Teams.

1500. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Board **RECEIVED** copies of the unapproved Minutes of the following Committee Meetings which have taken place since the last Meeting of the Board:

- Quality & Learners Committee 11 May 2021
- Audit Committee 22 June 2021

The Board also **RECEIVED** copies of Notes of the Budget Working Party Meeting held on 22 June 2021.

1501. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Board **NOTED** progress, with commentary, against agreed KPIs for the year ended 31 July 2021.

The Principal commented that the forecast performance for this year, whilst slightly below target in some areas, is expected to be in line with last year's outcomes, despite the considerable effect of the COVID pandemic during this year. It is expected that the 2020/21 outturn will also be broadly in line with 2018/19, the last year with no COVID impact.

In the circumstances, this situation is quite encouraging.

The Board noted, in response to a governor question, the high retention rate of students who are young adult carers, who have been seriously impacted by lockdown. The Deputy Principal confirmed that these

students are being supported by the College and encouraged to continue with their studies.

1502. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Principal informed the Board that a grant application has been submitted to the ESFA, in conjunction with Harlow College, in respect of teaching & learning. If successful, the grant and the activity will require Board approval.

The Board **NOTED** the retirement of the Chair from the Board on 31 July 2021 after 20 years service as a governor and almost six years as Chair of the Board.

The Principal, on behalf of the Board paid tribute to the Chair's contribution to the College over that period and the Chair responded with a short speech outlining some of the highlights to her of the past twenty years.

The Board also **NOTED** the resignation of Caroline Williams as Deputy Principal of the College, after over thirty years service with the College and she was thanked for her contribution over this period.

There were no other items of AOB.

1503. MINUTES OF SEARCH, GOVERNANCE & REMUENRATION COMMITTEE (11 May 2021)

This item was deemed to be a Confidential Item under the Instrument & Articles and a separate minute has been prepared and is attached to these Minutes.

1504. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Friday 24 September 2021 at 2.00 pm.

Friday 10 December 2021 at 2.00 pm.

A Governors' Development Day is due to be held on Friday 15 October 2021 and it is hoped that this will broadly be able to follow past practice in its format.

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 5.30 pm.

Signed.....Dated.....