

Full Board meeting minutes

FRIDAY 14 March 2025 AT 14.00
Princes' Street, Chelmsford and via MS Teams™

Members: Amanda Montague (Chair), Trevor Bolton (Vice Chair), Sarah Atkinson, Jan Church, Rachael Cornwall, Richard Davidson, Matt Dearsley, Daniel Holland, David Holmes, Christian Norman, Jaya Patten, David Peace, Rak Rehal, Paddy Reilly, Anabella Russell, Helen Russell, Sheila Salmon, Nadia Themis, David Warnes (CEO).

College Officers: Debbie Garroway, Debs Hurst,

Director of Governance: Ra Hamilton-Burns

Governance support officer: Ellie Lammiman

An item marked in **GREEN** on the left-hand column has been pre-scrutinised and is being recommended by a sub-committee. This delegation is designed to allow the Board to focus on key strategic issues on the agenda whilst still ensuring that they have sight of information and ultimate decision-making power. Items marked in **RED** are confidential

		Action						
1.	Apologies for absence and welcome to new Governors Apologies were received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rachael Cornwall Sarah Atkinson 							
2.	Declarations of interest and to notify any confidential items There were none.							
3.	i. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2024. AGREED: THE BOARD AGREED THAT THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2024 WERE A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD. ii. Electronic resolutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board noted that the appointment of Sheila Salmon was made by electronic resolution of the Board on 20 January 2025. The Board noted that the appointments of Matt Dearsley, Rak Rehal and Helen Russell were made by electronic resolution on 23 January 2025. 							
4.	Matters arising / actions All matters arising had been completed. <table border="1" data-bbox="252 1836 1316 2074"> <tr> <th></th><th>Action or matter arising</th><th>Follow up and status</th></tr> <tr> <td>5.</td><td> Student Governors' Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Student Governors will take a suggestion to upgrade the CC intranet to the Changemakers meeting on 7 January 2025. </td><td></td></tr> </table>		Action or matter arising	Follow up and status	5.	Student Governors' Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Student Governors will take a suggestion to upgrade the CC intranet to the Changemakers meeting on 7 January 2025. 		
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	<p>The DfE provider dashboard shows what percentage of College provision meets local needs. Chelmsford College ranks at 27% which is around national average. The College target is 90% and the CEO explained that the methodology uses the ILR to calculate this. It will be part of the strategic conversation currently scheduled for the 13 May 2025, and he will explain to the DfE the criteria by which the College regards itself as at 83%.</p> <p>Action: CEO to share the DfE source data for the provision of local needs document</p> <p>ii. Accountability Statement -,a draft Accountability Statement for 2025-26 was presented based on the updated LSIP. It is a requirement under the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 for the Board to review how well the College is meeting local needs and consider any further actions to be taken.</p> <p>College Principals, Chairs and Governance Professionals from FEDEC members will be meeting on 8 May to discharge their duty to work collaboratively to strengthen the quality of the regional offer.</p> <p>As the skills priorities, systems priorities and sector priorities have not changed, there are only a few minor amendments to this new version and the implementation of the resulting Action Plan will continue to be monitored by the Stakeholder Scrutiny Committee as is now the case.</p> <p>Any additions will be added to the action plan as required as it is a live document</p> <p>AGREED: THE BOARD AGREED THE ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT FOR 2025-6</p>	DW
7.	<p>Risk Management Report Risk Register and Dartboard</p> <p>Action: DPFCS will draft a paper on management of cyber security for the PSR Committee.</p> <p>Paul Goddard of Scrutton Bland had not been available for the Audit and Risk Committee meeting so the risk appetite will be visited in June 2025 at the next meeting.</p> <p>High risks are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting project future in terms of KPIs as there is no information about additional funding for NI increases or other items and none is expected before May 2025. • Agency cost control – the College is having to pay market supplements for hard to recruit to posts • Implementation of the new MIS system. An ILR has been replicated in the new system and there are 60 learners which do not match but this is being reviewed . • ESG will be added to the risk register. 	DH

	<p>The Board agreed that the MIS system migration should be kept as a high risk for now. The Chair passed the thanks and compliments of the Board to the team for their hard work on the MIS system. It was noted that the College is interviewing on 21 March 2025 for new roles.</p> <p>The Chair asked members to complete the risk appetite survey if they had not done so.</p> <p>ACTION: RHB to recirculate the link to the risk appetite survey.</p>	RHB
8.	<p>Finance Report</p> <p>a) Management Accounts January 2025</p> <p>The uncertainties on funding are making forecasting difficult.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under recruiting on T levels will result in a claw back but additional funding may offset this • Unknowns of NI uplift • No income for the 6.7% increase on national minimum wage • There will be no pay rise for other staff who have been informed, and this will be reviewed in August or September. • The College does not have to make deficit repair payments to the LGPS • The MIS costs of £35k will offset this saving • The College running costs are high. • Salaries are the largest cost for the College. • The cash balance contains restricted reserves that have been granted for specific projects so are not flexible. <p>The DPFCS is visiting Colchester Institute for the 'back to the floor' day to understand what information they share with the Board and staff.</p> <p>The bursary for the College is currently not spent and may have to be repaid. It was explained that the total figure of unspent funds is not in-year but compounded over the last few years. Governors asked if this can be used to support low-income learners. The College will revisit processes to see if the reason for it not being claimed is that the College is make it too hard to apply or may be not publicizing it well. It is currently linked to family income and the College will benchmark against other colleges to review its processes. Daniel Holland, student governor, commented that there may be a certain stigma to be seen applying for the funds. Jan Church commented that HTQ funds impact on a small number of learners and asked if this can be used cross-college. Paddy Reilly said that the messaging on student bursary must be better developed and offered to assist.</p> <p>Action: SLT to work with PR to develop the messaging around student bursary availability and processes.</p> <p>Governors noted that, as always. there are several moving parts which is not an unusual position but there are more uncertainties this year than has been the case. The CEO agreed and added that this was the worst year he has known on funding information in many years. Many FEDEC colleges will be hit by in-year additional income. The EBITDA is a conundrum and a 'requires improvement' would put the College within FEC scope for a SPA (Structure</p>	

[and Prospects Appraisal\)](#)

The DPFCS will put in place measures to secure the £200k of surplus required:

- Stopping engagement of agency staff as soon as possible.
- Focus on reducing costs for cleaning, gas electric will be managed.
- Colleagues will be advised to use up all stock which will contribute to hitting the £200k.

Governors cautioned that slowing expenditure might have an adverse effect on the student learning experience as the learning walks had demonstrated to governors. The Board added that it is vital that, in the future, grants with a deadline for expenditure should be better planned rather than waiting until the deadline approaches. The Board asked for an action plan and timetable for each grant when they are awarded. It was suggested that small savings will not create the necessary savings.

ACTION: PSR Committee will have a standing item on updates for the Dovedale Sports Centre

ACTION: SLT to draft a timetable for spending grants when received.

ACTION: Forecast on spend to end of year

ACTION: DPCFS to report on possible savings on estates

ACTION: DPCFS to provide a report on Cashflow to include of 'must', 'should' and 'need not' expenditure

ACTION: DPCQ to produce a report on curriculum areas and the relative profitability and contribution.

The CEO commented that apprenticeships are notoriously expensive to deliver, and it is important to review their contribution. He added that for Hospitality and catering – the College will continue to do L1 and L2 and not L3.

Governors noted that there was a shortfall in ASF of £40k and only five months left to achieve the target. The CEO confirmed that this target will be met, and the College needs to be wary as over recruitment will not be funded.

The Board asked if the FEC CEFFS support might offer practical support going forward. The CEO reminded governors that the focus for CEFFS last year was around staff utilization increasing it to 864 hours and monitoring this is being delivered.

Governors asked if the College expenditure is greater than other colleges. The DPFCS said it is hard to benchmark but that costs are closely monitored. The College generates income of £21m but only generates a £200k surplus and currently has no procurement resource but this is being considered. The College does not outsource but many others outsource estates, catering and

	<p>cleaning. This takes costs from the bottom line, but quality of service suffers. The College will seek best practice from Hartlepool and the Chair suggested that joint procurement via FEDEC may affect savings.</p> <p>These elements make for a challenging position and make getting to a Financial Health grade of 'Good' even more challenging.</p> <p>Governors recognized that the College has very limited room for manoeuvre. They simultaneously recognized that there had been little movement in the last four years and that the Board needs to be more ruthless on costs and make some difficult decisions. This is linked to the risk appetite. The Board also noted that the quality of provision is also critical, and focus will be given to maintain this and the student experience.</p> <p>The CEO informed the Board that he will present a paper outlining the options and required decisions on enrolments for 2025-6 given the indication that the DfE will not fund any growth. Difficult decisions might be required, particularly as the College recruits a high number of NEET learners.</p> <p>Lloyds Bank mandate update The DPFCS explained that the Board needed to approve an update to the College's bank mandate with Lloyds Bank Plc. The mandate will allow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any one of Executive Leadership Team or Executive Director to sign up to £2000. All transactions are online, and this is in accordance with our financial regulations. Two signatures are required for over £2001 which could be all from Panel A or one member from Panel A and one from Panel B. This allows for continuity of service especially during summer holidays. Only Executive Leadership Team members will be permitted to sign any bank documentation especially loans, sale of property, indemnities and will always be accommodated by a Board Resolution. <p>Panel A included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Warnes, CEO and Accounting officer Deborah Hurst, DP FCS Debbie Garroway, DP CQ Sarah Hamilton, Executive Director <p>Panel B included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jo Styles Penny Petch Beverley Mahoney Taofik Olowosale <p>AGREED: THE BOARD AGREED THE NEW SIGNATORIES FOR THE LLOYDS BANK MANDATE</p>	
Q	<p>Quality & Learners' Matters The DPCQ gave a verbal update to the Board:</p> <p>Our people: Senior Leadership Team - following the Departure of the Assistant Principal for Learner Experience and the Assistant Principal for Information and Digital, the Executive Leadership Team has restructured the</p>	

Senior Leadership Team, removed the 'Assistant Principal' level posts and replaced them with Directors. The Student experience post has been vacant for some time but interviews will take place on Monday 17 March.

In addition to Directors replacing the two vacant roles, there are two new **Directors of Campus**, with closer oversight of the curriculum, quality, well-being and operations of each campus. The current Assistant Principal for Curriculum has taken on one of these roles. The current Director of Business Development role has been widened to an Executive Director of Innovations and Partnerships in recognition of the wider remit and Ofsted second nominee role. In addition, all academic Directors will take up a teaching portfolio of 72 hours per year

Our Philosophy – managing quality is a key focus and safeguarding is still a challenge. The DPC is delivering a twilight session for Board members on 29 April at 17.30.

Curriculum planning – is on track despite the unknowns. The College continues to focus on those who are underperforming for example in electrical and engineering.

Our Performance – College is ambitious for learners, and this is a focus with the College holding regular boards for all departments to review and monitor their progress. Since the February strategy day, HoDs have met and drafted a strategy for attendance with a detailed action plan and now colleagues will be held to account. The College is making inroads on apprenticeships and their timely completion.

Governors asked why the new structure has directors of campus rather than heads of department. The DPCQ explained that there are heads and managers in the structure, and some have cross-college responsibilities. The College had tried an assistant principal model and on reflection it was found not to be the most effective for quality. Governors welcomed this practice and others mentioned that success is often due to individual postholders rather than the structure.

The Board asked if the senior colleagues who had left recently had done so for career progression that is not available at the College. This was certainly true in some cases, and this has to be accepted.

Governors asked if the College is reviewing its apprenticeship provision as per the FEC discussion to create efficiencies via streamlining. Sarah Hamilton is leading on this and part of the CEFFS work will support this aim. The target is to hit 'good' for electrical for completion for 27 students. The College is stopping provision of accounts apprenticeships and hairdressing is under review.

Governors commented that there are fewer statistics for the Board at this meeting and asked if this is due to lack of capacity to produce this? It is important to focus on all the charitable objects of the Board that cover the learning as well as finance. The CEO said a great deal of data had been presented at Quality and Learners' Committee and the Board KPIs will come to the June meeting.

ACTION: RHB to put these papers in a [KPI folder](#) in the GVO for all committees.

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Estates update

The Estate team to support the two campuses from 5.30am to 7.00pm on a daily basis and opening evenings on Tuesday and Thursday at Princes Road until 9.30pm. The budgeted cost of the team is £380k for the following personnel.

- Estates & Facilities Manager
- Estates & Facilities Supervisor
- 6 Estates Assistants
- 1 Health and Safety Administrator
- 1 Executive Assistant (Supports Deputy Principal Finance & Corporate Services)

Revenue costs of the College Estate

Table 1 shows actual costs for 2022/23 and 2023/24 and budget for 2024/25. The costs relate to both Princes Road and Moulsham Street as we do not currently separate the costs for each campus. However, we do separate out the costs for the Sports Hall as there is a 50% recharge to Chelmsford City Council as this is a joint use facility. For last year and this year there are increased costs for prevention and monitoring of legionella.

Table 1:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Sum of Amount	Sum of Amount	Sum of Budget
Salary costs	328,237	313,980	379,708
Cleaning	350,096	399,165	354,118
Furniture and Fittings Maintenance	4,778	2,761	4,500
Health and Safety	4,047	5,205	11,001
Other Operational Costs	2,914	3,769	12,000
Plant and Equipment Hire	5,441	3,678	1,149
Premises Repairs/Maintenance	109,278	76,959	88,021
Professional Fees	53,800	43,550	20,000
Rates	58,318	62,550	65,780
Security	2,872	3,662	2,320
Service Contract	56,551	120,748	99,477
Utilities	489,112	501,376	473,000
Vehicle Costs	7,063	9,169	10,000
Waste Disposal	42,179	46,844	39,300
Workwear and Safety wear	579	1,991	850
Non Recoverable VAT Account	149,565	174,154	200,000
Depreciation	721,540	734,923	817,000
Grand Total	2,386,370	2,504,483	2,578,223

The Dovedale Sports Hall refurbishment will commence on 16 June and will take place in each half term in 2025-26. Running costs will be reduced while this work is carried out. The outcome will be much improved facilities for learners from February 2026.

Dovedale Sports Centre

	<p>As the Committee is aware Chelmsford City Council and Chelmsford College are progressing the redevelopment of the Sports Hall and therefore some costs may increase in the future due to greater use e.g. cleaning but these are shared on a 50/50 basis. However, the introduction of new plant including heating and water systems and air source heat pumps will reduce running and maintenance costs. The legal agreements are being drawn up to ensure that the College is protected in the future in terms of warranties which also includes a revised Joint Use Agreement for the next 25 years. The Council will have the greater use of the facility for the 75% of the investment.</p> <p>Other capital works have been suspended. There will be a refurbishment at Princes Road to create a kitchen. The College is reviewing capital requests from the curriculum and it is known that the College Minibuses will have to be reviewed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DfE is carrying out a condition survey in the coming months. • The DfE only funds D or E .An assessment is in the estates strategy. <p>Governors asked about the costs of decanting of sports students – It will be 8k to erect a marquee and £800 a week . These costs will be offset by savings from the sports hall being out of use and is preferable to offsite hire.</p> <p>The progress, milestones and any issues will be monitored by the PSR Committee. It will be managed by the City Council. The College and Council have set a contingency of £50k each and this will be monitored There are risks to the student experience and the College will monitor this. Finance and Curriculum teams will work closely together.</p>	
	CONSENT ITEMS	
12	<p>Committee minutes</p> <p>The Board discussed the potential that each Chair could go through the key items discussed at their meetings but decided that members would read the minutes provided and ask questions if required. Chairs would only draw attention to key items not on the agenda elsewhere at their discretion.</p> <p>Governors noted minutes of the following committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Quality and learners' committee 11 February 2025 ii. PSR – 25 February 2025 iii. Audit - 4 March 2025 	
13	<p>Recommendations from Committees</p> <p>Quality and learners' committee - 11 February 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i - The equality and diversity policy. <p>PSR committee – 25 February 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii - Gender Pay Gap report <p>TB said that this gender pay gap report had accurately stated the position but in future the plan will include options for improvements and actions.</p> <p>Audit – 4 March 2025</p>	

	<p>iii. Risk management report iv. Appointment of Scrutton Bland to 2025-26 v. Appointment of MacIntyre Hudson 2024-27</p> <p>AGREED: THE BOARD AGREED THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEES NAMELY: THE BOARD AGREED THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY THE BOARD AGREED THE GENDER PAY GAP REPORT THE BOARD AGREED THE RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT THE BOARD AGREED TO THE APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTTON BLAND AS THE COLLEGE'S INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE FOR 2025-26 THE BOARD AGREED TO THE APPOINTMENT OF MACINTYRE HUDSON AS EXTERNAL AUDITOR AND REGULARITY AUDITOR FOR 2024-2027</p>	
14	<p>Board calendar 2025/6 AGREED: THE BOARD AGREED THE BOARD AND COMMITTEE DATES FOR 2025/6 WITH A CORRECTION TO THE DECEMBER AND JUNE BOARD DATES.</p> <p>Action: RHB to circulate corrected Board dates.</p>	RHB
15	<p>Any Other Business There was none.</p>	
16	<p>Date of Next Meeting Friday 27 June at 10.00 followed by an invitation to lunch at the Hive café in the Chelmsford Museum.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 16.25</p>	