

Minutes of Full Board

Date: 7th Dec 2023

Time: 4.30 - 6.10 pm

Location: Itchen College, S10

Present:	Mr B Jones (Chair) Mrs M Harris-Bridge Mr M McCauley Mr C Whitfield M Lico (virtual via teams)	Mr A Scott (Principal) Mr T Grant Mr D Batten Mrs S Hammett Mr E Unuigbo <i>[left 1734, item 7]</i>
In attendance:	Mrs R Stratton Mrs S Carter Mr M Wright <i>[left 1730, item 5]</i>	Mr M Jones Miss F McIntyre Mr D Oriordan <i>[left 1730, item 5]</i>
Apologies:	Miss S Duggan Mr R Parke Mr B Tyers Mrs L Court	Mr D Holloway Ms S Garner Mrs C Carpenter Mr C Breckenridge
Absent:	Ms D House	

1 Apologies

- 1.1 Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies received as above.

2 Declarations of interest

- 2.1 None in addition to those previously declared.

3 Minutes of the last meetings – June 2022

- 3.1 Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and agreed as a true record.

4 Chairs Update

- 4.1 Chair updated the governors on the successful governor recruitment with two new parent governors and two student governors. Still vacancies for external governors.
- 4.2 Principal's report details the governor's responsibilities with regards to the local skills statement.
- 4.3 Chair had a conversation with the Chair of the new South Hampshire College group. The Chair of new Colleges was appointed by the government, then took three governors from each of the three merging Colleges to form the governing board plus a few individuals who applied to be considered. BJ Planning to meet with South Hampshire College group Chair in person in February 2024.

- 4.4 Governance review - had difficulty finding an organisation to undertake review that was not asking too large a fee. Have gone with the Association of Colleges (AOC) with agreed a budget of £7000. This will be for 9.5 days work. A meeting will be held next week with AOC to start discussions on how the review will be undertaken. Review staff will be attending the March 2024 full board meeting in person.
- 4.5 Annual 'Conversation' held with the department of education staff, the Principal, RS and SC.. Received very little response from DfE, but Itchen team gave a full account of progress made at the College over the last year. One very interesting 'prompt' was offered to Itchen.. This matter discussed more fully in the governor meeting.
- 4.6 Chair introduced Mr Malcom Wright and Mr Declan Oriordan from Cliftons to update on the new build.

5 New build update

- 5.1 Governors referred to the paper regarding the new build. The re-tender information was submitted on Monday which was why the report was late.
- 5.2 Papers showed the current position regarding tenders. The original tenders returned were much higher than had been expected by Cliftons.
- 5.3 As a result Cliftons went back to the tendering organisations and asked them to review and resubmit.
- 5.4 College used a £2.6million build cost when they submitted their original bid for funding.

Cliftons Update

- 5.5.1 Originally Cliftons were in contact with three contractors but one dropped out due to illness in their office.
- 5.5.2 Reasons for the increase in bids submitted were the Breeam requirement and also changes in attitude in the market by contractors' on risk.
- 5.5.3 The pool of contractors in this market is also now smaller than it was 18 months ago with several companies going into administration.
- 5.5.4 Also subcontractors are fewer in number and thus they are demanding higher prices.
- 5.5.5 Once Cliftons received tenders back, spent time with each of the contractors and discussed how the construction costs could be lowered. Useful meetings and both said they could resubmit figures in a week.
- 5.5.6 Some savings were not as great as originally hoped for, with bids of £3.7million and £3.6 million.
- 5.5.7 Still higher than Cliftons hoped for but should prices could be improved by drilling down into design and investigating how further savings could be achieved
- 5.5.8 Recommendation that College enters into pre-construction agreement (PCSA) with one of the contractors which would allow the contractor to engage with the design team and look at the details that are being suggested with the architect.
- 5.5.9 One example is the first floor has an overhang and will cost £150,000. Reducing this in size would reduce the costs.
- 5.5.10 Have asked contractors to resubmit bids by next Tuesday and invited to interview next Wednesday and asked for attendance at director level. This will allow productive discussions and negotiations.

- 5.5.11 The contractor that 'pulled out' due to illness, is going to be able to bid by next Tuesday so will have a third tender. They have given a verbal assurance they think they can complete the project at £3.4million. Would require this in writing.
- 5.5.12 Closing date has been set at 4pm Tuesday and following procurement rules will go to DO (Cliftons) and SC.
- 5.5.13 Clifton stated their commitment to driving down the cost of this project. The market is dictating the prices currently.
- 5.5.14 It might be a possibility that by waiting for six months, the prices might come down but this would then have funding impacts for the College.
- 5.5.15 Having-- requirements that need to be met with planning conditions such as the Breeam (excellence requirement) do impact the cost.
- 5.5.16 PCSA costs will be in the region of £100,000 and will then get a contract sum and fully designed costed building.
- 5.5.17 £400,000 - £500,000 of costs is driven by sustainability which is driven by planners, to develop a net gain ecologically, which is expensive and adds to the cost of the building..
- 5.5.18 There are requirements with planning on sizes of trees.

5.6 Planning update

- 5.6.1 Discussion with planners yesterday. They came back on a few items and had a few questions on sustainability. Minor comments on changing room provision which has been addressed.
- 5.6.2 Hopefully it will be decided by delegated powers since there were few queries and these have been answered. Do not know when the decision will be made but optimistic that it will be before the end of current year.
- 5.6.3 Advice by Cliftons is that following the planning decision it may be possible to appeal the Breeam excellent condition to one of very good, which could save £100,000.
- 5.6.4 The reduction of the overhang of the building would be done post planning also.
- 5.6.5 *Q: What is Breeam?*
A: For ones submitted design, points are allocated on whether the building achieves sustainability through design, sound acoustics, insulation, light, better transport links. Have to be assessed by an independent consultant. Breeam excellent is around 80 marks whereas very good is 70/75.
- 5.6.6 Government guidance is to improve buildings and their environmental impact.
- 5.6.7 It would be difficult to challenge and would not want to incur a lot of costs and not be successful.
- 5.6.8 It does not just cover trees and planting. The internal walls are triple the price to achieve the excellence standard.
- 5.6.9 *Q: Is the new building stand alone?*
A: Yes. If it was connected it would incur VAT.
Q: The building plans look good, but with overhang are we incurring architect costs to design something more interesting where a simple box like structure would be cheaper?
A: There is an element of architect input over a simple design, but with the College history of planning issues with residents, approaching the planning department with

pre-planning requests would be risky. This approach used to get engagement from the planning committee. This was useful and stated that we should not just build a 'plain box like structure' but one with some architectural merit. The overhang will be reduced to use standard fittings. The type of cladding was left open ended, so not stipulated by planning, so we can keep options open. It is still a fairly simple designed building.

If one tried to compromise too much on architectural issues it could lead to further questions by the planners..

5.6.10 The increased costs are mainly market rates, not planning constraints.

5.6.11 *Q: Are we sure there are enough car parking spaces to make a difference to the local community as parking and traffic was one of the main issues?*

A: We are adding spaces but not enough to make a meaningful difference. Planners want less spaces not more.

Q: If we go with PCSA what does this do to timelines?

A: Proposing to interview next Wednesday, so would be starting by 4th Jan 2024. Assuming we enter into a PCSA for 6 weeks, the building will not be completed until the end of January 2025.

5.6.12 This would be beneficial in terms of cash flow for the College. The LRC was self funded this year which was £900,000.

5.6.13 The original match-funded amount of £200,000 did not put College at any risk. Now looking to increase the funding to a region of £1m that would put strain on College finances in one academic year and under a lot of pressure. If it goes into next academic year it would be funded by higher funded student numbers at higher rates... That eases the pressure.

5.6.14 The restrictions around the grant, state building should be used in by September 2024, so as long as demonstrating a clear plan as to when planning is completed, there should not be any issue. .

5.6.15 College can demonstrate the issues were due to additional costs.

5.6.16 It makes good sense of the management of public funds; splitting it over two years - it does not put the institution at any undue risk.

5.6.17 Assuming no additional funding will be received.

5.6.18 If the project does not go ahead the temp. classrooms would need to be replaced for similar structures at a cost in the region of £600,000 in next few years.

5.6.19 College has a strong argument for why it needs to go into two academic years.

5.6.20 *Q: If money is paid out upfront and then grant is withdrawn due to not completing where would the college stand?*

A: The college would know before the work is started. Outlay at this point would be £300,000 which is not ideal.

5.6.21 The position is not strong until we have planning permission and a company onboard who can do the work at a price the college can afford..

5.6.22 In January the college could seek an increase in the grant offered. The college will do this but is not optimistic about a positive outcome..

5.6.23 Comment: important to have a building that is aesthetically pleasing as it will be a legacy.

5.6.24 Any value engineering during the works would need to be in line with the building submitted to planning. Such as a different cladding, so to keep the overall look the same.

- 5.6.25 Discussion on whether students take into consideration the look and style of buildings when selecting a College.
- 5.6.26 Student governor comment: The look of the College did influence their decision they made on which college to attend..
- 5.6.27 For the students that are signing up for public services courses, the new building will sell the courses and the College much better. Investing in buildings is important to get a 'wow' factor.
- 5.7 **Proposal:** Governors asked to approve the project continuing and committing further College funds.
 Entering into PCSA and potential for seeking additional funds.
 Contractor will be appointed through an interview and a decision will be made with Cliftons and College.
Vote: Approved.

[DW and MO left 1730]

6 Principal's Report

- 6.1 The principal highlighted the following from his report:
- Applications high, which offers reassurance
 - Strategic developments, Chair mentioned strategic conversation. It was useful and they left with a positive view of College. They were pushing for College to grade themselves as outstanding.
 - Raising aspirations - 250 will be attending Solent and Southampton Universities on 5th January.
 - Curriculum changes anticipated next year.
 - Enrichment programs are positive and inspiring.
 - Sporting success with students representing College at national level.
 - Staff changes, with long standing members of staff leaving at Christmas.
- 6.2 No questions.

7 Finance Report

- 7.1 Report went to the finance committee which was held at the end of September 2023. New report till the end of October does not have many changes.
[EU left 1734]
- 7.2 Income analysis on page three included the additional income for staff settlements from DfE. It was budgeted at 4% and came in at 6.5%.
- 7.3 The in-year growth funding is now included. Likely to be around £400,000 and confirmed February 2024 with payments from March or April 2024 spread to July.
- 7.4 Two months in, 91% of forecasted income has been received or confirmed which is positive news.
- 7.5 Additional income streams - adult education page 5.
- 7.5.1 There has been movement and additional funding identified. It is getting more difficult and less sub-contract work is being gained. It is more difficult this year to find additional income streams. Expecting to come in slightly less than budget which has been factored into cash flow.
- 7.6 International (page 6)

- 7.6.1 Positive and likely to be higher than budget
- 7.6.2 75 short courses
- 7.6.3 26 on A levels.
- 7.6.4 Taster program is more challenging and looking at holiday club ideas to plug ideas.
- 7.6.5 No major concerns.

7.7 Nursery

- 7.7.1 Was tracking under capacity and was a concern but is now improving.

7.8 Company

- 7.8.1 Looking positive and catering is overachieving. Poor weather is keeping students on site.

7.9 Capital expenditure (page 9)

- 7.9.1 Has changed with new build plans.
- 7.9.2 Boiler replacement - hoped to be able to afford next summer but going to need to delay. It is not urgent work with the upgrades work done in the last two years. Was given five or six years of working life. Did not want to over commit.
- 7.9.3 Going to submit a funding bid to cover boiler replacement.s.
- 7.9.4 In the last couple of years have invested highly in IT and estates. Have further IT investment planned but on a rolling program..

7.10 Cashflow

- 7.10.1 Included the in year funding and the increased match funding. The latest cash flow that was shared has less risk in it.

7.11 *Q: Is there likely to be any planning permission required for boiler replacement?*

A: Not aware of any. Cliftons are supporting the College with a bid being submitted for funding this work.

Q: Would the new boilers cost less to run and how much?

A: Do not know how much. Had a survey done this week and expected back shortly and should have elements of how much cheaper. Would want to include this in the bid which is a driving argument on efficiencies.

8 Approval of annual audit report from external auditors

- 8.1 College and Company - so group in total, then separate by Company. These have been finalised by auditors.
- 8.2 Also have the auditors final report. Usually have small errors such as mis-coding but this year none. Clean audit and very happy with everything seen.
- 8.3 **Vote: Approved.**

9 College SAR

- 9.1 Self assessment report is from the previous academic year and the quality improvement for the current year.
- 9.2 Looking at the self assessment reports that come through from facilities and considered how this would stand up as an overall grade for the College.
- 9.3 Overall graded as 2 but some areas as 1.

- 9.4 Behaviour and attitudes - graded 2. Seen improvement in attendance but not yet returned to pre-covid levels. Is common across all schools and colleges.
- 9.5 Personal development was a 1 which reflects the work done across College to support students. Also the improved work on progressions - supporting students in where they want to go when they leave Itchen..
- 9.6 Leadership / management 1 / 2
Want to reflect that cannot grade at grade 1 because e still have areas of grade 2 but making good progress.
- 9.7 Would like to move forward to be a grade 1 overall for College in next year.
- 9.8 Report has details on the statements that lead to these judgements. The areas through the report for improvements are in the quality improvement plan. Some of the areas are strong such as enrichment but further development is needed in a few areas.
- 9.9 **Vote approved.**

10 Strategic Plan and KPIs

- 10.1 KPI's emerge from the strategic plan.
- 10.2 Attendance is the main issue which is a national problem. At a similar level to local secondaries which is unusual for College.

11 Reports from committee Chairs

11.1 Audit

- 11.1.1 Report submitted in Chair's absence.

11.2 C&Q

- 11.2.1 Met last week and touched on issues discussed at this meeting.
- 11.2.3 QAR and value added. Discussed the College position which is unusual and cannot compare to all other sixth forms, as very different.
- 11.2.3 Value added is improving but not as good since covid. Still suffering covid effects
- 11.2.4 Destinations - good number of students being tracked for this time of year.
Good numbers of students going on to HE.
- 11.2.5 Questioned and discussed the number of students going to Russell group Universities and how the College pushes the students aspirations.
- 11.2.6 There was a long discussion on the College grading presented previously.

11.3 G&E

- 11.3.1 Number of students noted and the good work MJ and team does in schools to engage with potential students.
- 11.3.2 Meeting also covered tutorial programs and safeguarding.
- 11.3.4 Staff results. Very positive numbers. Impressed that so many College staff want to work and stay at Itchen.
- 11.3.4 Considered policies.
- 11.3.5 College have to fund a lot of the support for students as need does not go away especially with lack of external support.

11.4 S&G

11.4.1 Discussed the recruitment of governors, committee membership and governance review.

11.4.2 Annual review of Chair completed.

11.5 Remuneration committee met and fulfilled obligations.

12 Governance Matters:

12.1 Governor SAR

12.1.1 The S&G committee discussed the governor SAR and decided not to continue with the outcomes. The format had been changed to try and encourage more comments but this was not as successful as hoped.

12.1.2 The response rate from governors had been low so governors who had completed were given more time to do so to allow the report to be more useful.

13 Impact and action review

13.1 Good questions and debate around building program
Holding project managers to account to ensure value for money

14 AOB

14.1 Seeking approval to reinstate the third assistant principal role. Put in place an interim arrangement. The staff acting up have been good but the senior team feel stretched. Did not take this decision lightly and waited until the college knew they would receive the in- year funding.

14.2 Governors asked for approval to recruit but feedback received from a governor to amend person specification and job description.

Vote: Approved.

14.3 Students on HE+ program run by Cambridge. They have four evening lectures running 6 till 8pm at Peters Symonds. Requested the 25th Jan and 8th Feb meetings starting at 415pm so MJ can contribute and leave.

14.4 MHB - sent apologies 25th Jan.

14.5 Colin Witfield standing down so his last meeting. A pupil of the then school at Itchen. Chair thanked him for his input as a governor. All wished him well.

14.6 Governing body thanked all the staff for their hard work and successful recruitment this last year.