

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Governing Body to discuss the concept of Expansion to Six Forms of Entry held at the School at 6.00pm on Tuesday 27th November 2018

Present:	Steve Miles Peter Cook Nicole Chapman Ros Cornish, Ruth Neave, Jason Oster, Mark Rowell, Lauren Smith, Richard Vass, Yvonne Wickers, Mike Worboys	Chair of Governors Vice Chair of Governors Headteacher
In Attendance:	Stephen Lawlor Maria French Susan Hoefling Wendy Newton	Deputy Head (Curriculum) Deputy Head (Pastoral) Business Manager Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Mary Argent, Richard Brown, Sarah Clements, Lee Palmer, Duncan Stevens	

1 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. The Chair opened by thanking Governors for their attendance at an additional meeting of the Governing Body. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mary Argent, Richard Brown, Sarah Clements, Lee Palmer and Duncan Stevens. Comments had been received from Duncan Stevens which were tabled.

2 – EXPANSION TO SIX FORMS OF ENTRY

2. The Chair stated that the aim of the meeting was to understand the implications that six forms of entry (6FE) would have on the School if it were to occur, not just financially but also operationally, and that other possible cost reduction options were to be received in Spring Term 2019. The SLT had prepared a paper entitled 'Possible Expansion to Six Forms of Entry' and the Business Manager explained the financial data presented in the report. Four forecast scenarios had been prepared showing both the current rate of Teacher's Pensions (TP) employer contributions and also the higher rate of TP employer contribution which was expected to come into effect in April 2019. It was suggested that the meeting should focus on the sets of figures using the higher TP contribution. The four options listed were:

- Option 1 - 6FE before cost savings
- Option 2 - 6FE with cost savings applied
- Option 3 - 5FE - the current scenario without any action, and
- Option 4 - 5FE with cost savings applied.

3. Option 3 showed the forecast figures for the current five forms of entry (5FE) and doing nothing to address the deficit situation; it showed a cumulative deficit increasing from £(92,907) for AY 2018-19 to £(1,246,897) by the end of AY 2022-23. Option 4 showed the current 5FE scenario but with a range of cost savings applied which had recently been discussed by the Facilities & Finance Committee. These were being refined for receipt by the Management Committee the following week and would be presented to the Full GB in the Spring Term, either the Governor Conference or the March Full GB meeting. Option 4 showed that with the proposed cost reduction actions the School could achieve a balanced budget by 2021-22 but this did include using all unrestricted income. Governors had previously stated an aim to return to a balanced budget using restricted income alone. The Head advised that any future cost reduction decisions affecting the curriculum would need to be discussed and agreed at the Governor Conference in January 2019 if they were to be in place by September 2019. The Head briefly summarised the cost reduction options available to the School, which included a possible change in the processing of Sixth Form options by way of the timetable blocking and a possible increase in teacher contact time.

ACTION

4. The Business Manager pointed out that the figures for Option 1 – 6FE without cost savings – showed that this alone would not balance the budget, additional cost reductions would still need to be implemented, as shown in Option 2 – 6FE with cost savings – which forecast a surplus of £112,317 by the end of AY2021-22. The meeting discussed the options presented and it was noted that unrestricted funds were still being used to balance the budget which was considered not ideal as it was preferable to use unrestricted funds to enhance the School rather than balance the budget. It was stated that balancing the budget using restricted funds alone was very unlikely based on current Government income levels. The meeting was reminded that the School currently held £411,000 in reserves set aside for curriculum restructuring. The Chair of the Facilities & Finance stressed that the figures presented were a first draft and that the assumptions needed further refinement before any decision was made, however the figures suggested that both Option 2 and 4 would be possible.

5. The meeting was advised that the decisions relating to the Selective Schools Expansion Fund (SSEF) had been made by the Government and were expected to be announced to schools very soon. It was noted that the advantage of having 6FE was that having more students in the Lower School was likely to ensure increased numbers flowing through to the Sixth Form. It was noted that the Sixth Form had not been full in recent years. It was confirmed that the figures presented did not go far enough ahead to account for the time when 6FE would reach the Sixth Form ie 2025-26. The cost of financing expansion to 6FE was raised and it was confirmed that the SSEF bid had been for £6.2million, including a School contribution of £200,000. It was stressed that the School must be able to fulfil the whole 6FE expansion project with the SSEF grant plus the School reserves even if there was a need to scale-back the project for financial reasons at a later date. The meeting was advised that the SSEF bid covered all the School's basic needs but without any luxury additions and that it was possible that increased building costs may need the School to adjust the project as it progressed. It was confirmed to the meeting that all additional revenue costs, such as increased heating and lighting, had been included and were listed in the assumptions. The figures presented were recognised as being the best possible for this moment in time.

6. The Head advised that 6FE was the least inefficient school size and confirmed that the Sixth Form was not self-funding. It was suggested that the Sixth Form funding situation would improve with the proposed change to the blocking system. Some concern was raised over the issue of cross-subsidy of the Sixth Form by the Lower School but it was noted that the Sixth Form was totally necessary for the School. The meeting raised additional questions on the financial situation which were clarified by the Head and Business Manager. It was noted that staff costs had the biggest effect on expenditure and it was confirmed that a 2% annual cost-of-living pay increase had been assumed. The Chair thanked the Business Manager and the Finance Team for the compilation of the data.

7. The meeting was advised that if the SSEF bid was successful, 6FE would commence in September 2020 and that this would need to be reflected in the School's 2020 Admissions Policy. It was stated that a change in Admissions Policy would need to go out for public consultation and that the very latest one could start was 20th December as the statutory 6-week consultation had to be completed before 31st January 2019. Governors were reminded that they had received the Admissions Policy for 2020 at the Full GB meeting in October and that it had shown two options, one for 5FE and one with an increase to 6FE, and that the 6FE 2020 Admissions Policy option had contained a change giving significant prioritisation to Pupil Premium (PP) students. It was noted that the result of the SSEF bid had to be known before the School went out to consultation on the proposed 2020 Admissions Policy. Governors discussed the need for consultation and how it could be undertaken in light of the fact that the outcome of the SSEF bid may not be known. The current method of prioritising places for PP students was discussed and it was noted that the current system did not result in any significant uplift. The new proposal for 6FE was to allocate up to 30 places to PP applicants within the 12.5 mile priority area if their entrance test results fell in the top two bands of the entrance test. It was suggested that this could also be adopted for 5FE if the SSEF was unsuccessful. Indicative figures of how many PP students would achieve a place were given in relation to the proposed Admissions Policy changes. Additional entrance test data had been presented to Governors in the SLT 6FE paper and the data was discussed. The increasing demand for School places was evident and filling 6FE would not be a problem.

8. It was noted that increasing to 6FE would allocate 144 places to girls within the 12.5 mile priority area and 36 from outside, and it was suggested that the growth of Chelmsford and the increasing local demand for CCHS places warranted a review of the current priority area. The meeting discussed the suggestion in relation to the School being for students from the local community particularly when some students obtaining a place at the School had the opportunity to go to other grammar schools closer to their home address. It was suggested that there was a need for Governors to review the priority area concept and it was agreed the topic would be a discussion item at the next Governor Conference in January 2019.

9. The question of maintaining standards was raised in relation to the fact that the proposed PP entry criteria would significantly reduce the current lowest entry test score to the School. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) confirmed that the School did not know what the effect of the lower score PP entry would be as the School had never accepted nor taught students from such a low threshold. Information was received on student ability ranges as shown by the entrance test and the Year 7 CAT test and it was confirmed that there was always a tail of lower ability girls. The CCHS effect was to raise such students to an equal level by Year 11, therefore by having a lower entry point did not necessarily mean that such students would not progress to the same level. The effect on teaching staff was noted but it was noted that differentiation already existed to various degrees. Governors queried what the response of teachers would be, it was stated that addressing the teacher workload was being investigated. It was stated that the annual £935 PP grant per PP student may need to be used for additional basic tuition in the lower years instead of the current enrichment-type allocations such as school trips or music lessons. Governors queried the effect of having student entry with a much lower pass mark and it was stated that the effect on the School could not be judged until it happened. The issue of a future Government change adversely affecting education and PP funding in the future was noted and discussed.

3 – CONCLUSION

10. The Chair summarised that in the current absence of any SSEF bid outcome, it was necessary to obtain further advice on whether an Admissions Policy for 2020 could be put out for public consultation with the caveat that the consultation the result of which would be subject to the School receiving the SSEF grant. It was however expected that by early December the outcome of the SSEF bid would be known, before the consultation start date became critical, as DfE were aware of the consultation requirements of the Admissions Code.

11. **Decisions**. It was unanimously agreed that:

- a. The School would wait until the outcome of the SSEF bid was known before consulting on the Admissions Policy for 2020.
- b. The Admissions Policy 2020 presented to the Full GB in the October 2018 would be revised to state that:
 - (1) For an entry of 150 students, up to 10 PP students would be prioritised from the first two entrance test results bands, or
 - (2) For an entry of 180 students, up to 30 PP students would be prioritised from the first two entrance test results bands.
- c. The Clerk would send the revised Admissions Policy for 2020 for Governor approval by email.
- d. The issue of the priority area in the Admissions Policy would be a topic for discussion at the Governor Conference in January 2019, particularly looking at the option for using post code areas within Essex which do not overlap with the admissions areas for other grammar schools.
- e. Pending SSEF funding, the GB agreed to expansion to 6FE with effect from September 2020. Any later funding options would require future review to confirm viability by Governors.

Head**M French****Clerk
Head**

12. The meeting closed by thanking the SLT for their hard work, and Ros Cornish was presented with her Certificate of Governance.

7.35pm - The meeting closed.

Agreed as a true record.

S Miles, Chair of Governors

29th March 2019