



Department  
for Education

# **FE Commissioner Intervention Summary: Brooklands College**

**June 2019**

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## FE Commissioner Intervention Summary Report Brooklands College

<b>Name and address of college</b>	<b>Brooklands College Heath Road Weybridge KT13 8TT</b>
<b>Assessment undertaken by</b>	<b>Meredydd David - Deputy FE Commissioner  Bob Smith - FE Adviser</b>
<b>Chair of the college</b>	<b>Terry Lazenby</b>
<b>Principal / Chief Executive Officer of the college</b>	<b>Gail Walker  Interim Principal Christine Ricketts Interim CEO: Shereen Sameresinghe</b>
<b>Clerk to the Corporation</b>	<b>Josephine Carr</b>
<b>Date of assessment</b>	<b>21 and 22 January and 10 May 2019</b>

# Background to FE Commissioner Intervention Assessment

Brooklands College was identified for a diagnostic assessment visit by the FE Commissioner (FEC) team because it was assessed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to be in early intervention for financial health for 2018/19. This visit was undertaken by the FEC team in January 2019. The January visit made a number of recommendations which were followed up during a monitoring visit in May 2019.

Following the January diagnostic assessment visit, Brooklands College requested an FEC-led Structure and Prospects Appraisal (SPA).

The outcome of the May 2019 monitoring visit was that the college was escalated into formal intervention. The FEC team had significant concerns around the college's response to sub-contractor issues and the college leadership was in a state of flux as a result of the departure of the principal, which took place between 29 January and 31 July 2019.

The FEC's report is intended to advise the Minister and the chief executive of the ESFA on:

- The capacity and capability of the college's leadership and governance to secure a sustained financial recovery within an acceptable timetable
- Any actions that should be taken by Brooklands College to deliver a sustainable financial recovery within an acceptable timetable (considering the suite of interventions set out in Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills)
- How and when progress should be monitored and reviewed taking into account the agency's regular monitoring arrangements

The FE Commissioner has now assessed the position of the college in line with the government's intervention policy.

## Assessment and Methodology

This report follows on from a diagnostic assessment visit that took place at the college on 21 and 22 January 2019 and a subsequent monitoring visit on 10 May 2019. Both visits were undertaken by members of the FEC team who received, in advance, extensive briefing information from the ESFA. In addition, they reviewed a wide range of college documentation, interviewed board members, managers, staff and students and were supported by updated information provided for the monitoring visit.

College Oversight: Support and Intervention (April 2019) sets out the process by which, in exceptional cases, a college may be escalated from a diagnostic assessment into

formal intervention. In such cases the outcomes of the diagnostic visit and any follow up visit will be combined into the FE Commissioner intervention assessment report.

This report combines the findings of both the diagnostic assessment visit in January 2019 and the stocktake in May 2019.

## Overview of the college

Brooklands is a medium size general further education college which serves the community of North Surrey and Spelthorne in the neighbouring county of Middlesex. It has two campuses that are located close to the town centres of Weybridge and Ashford (Middlesex) and are in the areas of Elmbridge and Spelthorne respectively. Both campuses are within the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership area. Most full-time students attend the Weybridge campus, which contains a number of buildings some of which are of poor quality.

The college provides full and part-time education and training across a wide range of subject areas and course levels. The college has around 1,500 learners aged 16 to 19 years on study programmes, 1,600 apprentices, 875 adult learners and 90 learners attracting high-needs funding.

The proportion of pupils in Surrey schools attaining English and mathematics GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 or A\* to C is above the South East and national averages.

The volume of apprenticeship sub-contracting declined in 2017/18 and this contributed to the reduction in the college's income from 2016/17 to 2017/18. A 30% decline in apprenticeship starts was seen in 2017/18 in line with national trends. This has put severe pressure on the college's financial performance and position.

FE 16 to 19 enrolments have decreased by over 25% since 2013/14 and at a greater rate than the demographic downturn. This has added to the financial challenges. Current demographic data shows that school leaver numbers at 16 years of age are due to increase by around 6% by 2023.

The college works with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and has secured funding for investing in facilities and resources. It has good links with employers ranging from small local enterprises to multinational companies.

An Ofsted short inspection in November 2017 confirmed 'the college continues to be good'.

The Surrey area review that ended in July 2016 included ten colleges, six sixth form colleges and four general FE colleges. Recommendations relevant to Brooklands College were:

- Brooklands College to remain a stand-alone general FE college but to explore options for partnership that will deliver greater financial resilience in the longer term
- The four general FE colleges should develop a collaborative working model to deliver shared services, apprenticeships and higher education delivery
- Brooklands College to explore options for federation or other structural partnerships to include collaborative work around the curriculum to develop financial resilience Leadership and Governance

## **Role, Composition and Operation of the Board**

The college operates a traditional model of governance with the board meeting four times a year. The board has four standing committees that meet termly; audit; resources; curriculum and performance review; and planning, remuneration and governance. The other standing committee, capital strategy, meets every six weeks.

The board is chaired by Terry Lazenby who originally joined in 2013 as an associate governor, subsequently became vice chair and then was elected as chair in September 2018. He has considerable commercial experience and experience as chair and non-executive director of several businesses.

There are eleven independent board members with a good range of skills, knowledge and experience, the majority of whom have been appointed since 2014. One governor was in his fourth term during the January visit. There is one vacancy, and this is currently being advertised. Governors whom the FEC team met knew the college well and mostly understood the detail and scale of the challenges as well as the financial and curriculum performance strengths and weaknesses.

Since the January visit, two new associate governors, with relevant backgrounds and good experience were appointed. These will be converted to full governor status within 12 months if both parties are content. Governors would benefit from engagement with a National Leader of Governance especially considering the challenging period ahead.

Governors engage with managers, staff and students through various events and activities. These include attending self-assessment report validation events; termly focused quality performance meetings; attendance at teaching and learning development days; and occasionally, learning walks. The board has recognised a need to formalise 'link governor' arrangements, as this will further strengthen the existing approach.

Clerking arrangements are efficient. Members of the senior management team and governors whom the FEC met, spoke about robust and rigorous challenge at sub-committees and board meetings. This is, however, not consistently recorded in the minutes. An example of this was the minute at the July 2018 board meeting recording

approval of the deficit budget for 2018/19 that did not record enough detail of discussion or challenge that took place in agreeing such a budget.

Governors whom the FEC met knew the college well and understood its strengths and weaknesses. A more comprehensive self-evaluation of governance has been undertaken since the January visit at individual, sub-committee and board level. This will inform the college self-assessment report in 2018/19.

At the January visit, the FEC team identified that board papers are variable in their quality and consistency. Papers would benefit from improved executive summaries that immediately bring to the attention of governors and senior managers, areas of concern or areas that need further exploration and challenge. Appropriate detail should be included in the main report and referenced in the executive summary for ease of use and closer interrogation. Since the visit, some work on improving the clarity of senior leadership team (SLT) reports to governors is underway. More focus is required in this area to ensure governors receive high quality executive summaries for each report that will enable them to quickly and easily identify areas to prioritise.

The chair of governors and the board have accepted and acted upon most of the recommendations from the January 2019 diagnostic assessment report. Where appropriate these have been linked to the personal objectives and targets for senior postholders. Detailed delivery plans have been produced by the SLT and their delivery is monitored closely by governors. The above indicators have been used effectively to drive efficiency improvements and underpin the budget setting process. The most critical area of work – the detailed external audit of SCL Security sub-contracting, has not been progressed in a timely manner.

In autumn 2018, governors and the principal and chief executive (PCEO) commissioned consultants to undertake a review of the college and its future options. The report and recommendations were considered by governors and the SLT and it was decided to seek a merger partner through a SPA. The college wrote to the FE Commissioner requesting an FEC-led SPA in September 2018. This was not possible at that time.

A SPA was then progressed independently by the college and one preferred college partner had been identified. During the January visit, the college halted this process following discussion with the FEC team.

At the end of January 2019, the then PCEO, Gail Walker, informed the chair of governors that she was resigning from the post and would work her six months' notice period. Governors considered next steps carefully and bearing in mind the impending SPA determined not to seek to appoint a permanent replacement and created two interim posts. Minutes of governor meetings did not appropriately record the discussion and options considered which evidently took place from discussions the FEC team had with governors. Unusually, Gail Walker worked through her six months notice period on a part time basis.

## Leadership and Senior Management team

At the FEC team's January visit the college was led by Gail Walker. At the end of January 2019, she announced her intention to resign and work her six months' notice period.

Interim principal and Interim CEO posts were created and filled internally, both formally in post from 1 August 2019. It was agreed these posts would be for nine months and reviewed after six months. Gail Walker remained in post as the senior post holder until the end of July 2019. During this interim period she was not in the college full time as governors agreed a flexible working pattern and her main role was to lead on the estate and capital strategy and support the two interim post holders. At the May visit, the FEC team were not aware of this unusual arrangement until arriving at the college and did not meet with Gail Walker. These unusual senior post arrangements were agreed by the board.

The interim CEO and Interim principal work well together and are knowledgeable and competent in their roles. However, due to the number of complex issues and risks, the FEC team recommendation is that the college would benefit from an experienced principal appointed on an interim basis as soon as possible. The interim CEO (vice principal, finance, planning and corporate services) joined the college in April 2016. The interim principal (deputy principal curriculum and quality) has been at the college since March 2016.

These roles as well as the assistant principal curriculum (since autumn 2018) were external appointments, which bring a good range of experience, skills and knowledge from different colleges to the team.

The PCEO was viewed as open and honest and an effective communicator by staff who were kept aware of the challenges faced by the college and the actions the SLT were taking. Board members whom the FEC team met, believed the relationship with the SLT was good and that reports were honest and contained necessary information and detail to enable appropriate discussion and challenge.

Excluding the clerk and PA to the directorate, the SLT was made up of nine people with a wider college management team of sixteen. This is a large team for a £16 million turnover college.

A review of the management structure at the college has recently been delivered. The structure is now a more appropriate size and provides clarity in reporting lines and function. There have been detailed discussions with staff and unions to ensure the necessary understanding as to why these savings are required.



## SCL Investigation

At the time of the January visit, the college were aware of an ongoing investigation by the ESFA into provision delivered by a contractor SCL Security.

The SLT and governors believed they had undertaken all necessary and appropriate checks and due diligence on all sub-contracted SCL Security provision and from the work they have done, believed that the risk of clawback was low. The FEC team saw this subcontract as a major risk and that it could be a potential block to a merger at least until the ESFA investigation is concluded.

The FEC team recommended that the college undertake further work themselves to understand the risk associated with this contractor and to immediately review subcontracted provision.

At the May visit, the FEC team found that governors had recently agreed additional days for the internal auditors to undertake further work to provide assurance regarding sub-contracted provision. Disappointingly, this work had not yet been undertaken and was only due to commence before the end of the academic year.

The governors whom the FEC team met re-emphasised that they had been given numerous assurances by the PCEO that the college's own testing and annual internal audits of its sub-contracted provision showed no issues regarding eligibility, existence of learners or their employment status. Governors showed too much trust in these assurances.

No thought had been given by governors to the development of a mitigation plan should the SCL investigation place a financial liability on the college.

The ESFA investigation is ongoing at the time of this report.

Governors should urgently consider appointing an experienced interim principal. The decision to make two interim posts must be constantly kept under review by governors.

# Curriculum and Quality Improvement

## Curriculum overview

Brooklands College provides full and part-time education and training across twelve of the fifteen sector subject areas. FE courses are delivered from entry to level 3 including access to HE. It has a small higher education provision validated by Oxford Brookes University and Kingston University with some provision awarded by BTEC/Edexcel.

FE enrolments for 16 to 19 year-olds have decreased from over 2,000 in 2013 14 to 1,460 at the time of the January visit. The decrease in enrolments has been significantly greater than the catchment demographic downturn which hit its low point in 2018. Most of the provision delivered, around 80%, is up to and including level 2.

The college offers a broad range of apprenticeships delivered both directly and through ten sub-contracting partners. Increasing the number of sub-contractors was a strategic decision taken in order to decrease the college's dependency on one major subcontractor, SCL Security. SCL Security are being investigated by the ESFA.

Apprenticeship enrolments have decreased by around 30% since the introduction of the employer levy. The college plans to increase apprenticeship direct delivery and to gradually reduce its dependence on sub-contracting.

The deputy principal is reviewing the curriculum strategy on both campuses to better align the offer with local and employer needs and improve efficiency of delivery. This work is underway.

## Ofsted inspections

The Ofsted short inspection of Brooklands College in November 2017 concluded that it continued to be 'good'. It states that governors, leaders and managers 'have made sure the college continues to provide consistently good education and training for students and apprentices. The report also stated 'the new principal with your new senior leadership team, your governors and staff, provide a welcoming and safe environment for students'.

The report also stated:

- Senior leaders and governors are clear about the college's strengths and areas for improvement
- The college has maintained the strengths and successfully tackled the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection

- Clear plans are in place to raise standards in the few areas that require further improvement
- The leadership team has high expectations of staff and students

The next steps for the college identified by Ofsted are that leaders and those responsible for governance should make sure that:

- They improve achievement rates for the small minority of subjects and apprenticeships that are below national rates
- All students and apprentices are set high quality, challenging targets that help them achieve their full potential
- They support all vocational staff to develop students' and apprentices' English and mathematical skills and increase the proportion of learners that achieve high grades in GCSE mathematics
- Self-assessment reflects on and addresses identified strengths and weaknesses more fully

Ofsted identified that the self-assessment report (SAR) was too positive and needed to be more evaluative.

Progress has been made in this area however the SAR could be further improved through greater use of a wide range of performance indicators.

## Quality improvement

The SAR for 2017/18 grades all headline measures as 'good'. English and mathematics for the college were graded as 3, requires improvement. Overall performance has dipped from a high point in 2016/17 but remains above national averages for headline measures in most areas. The SAR correctly identifies hospitality and catering, engineering, and construction as underperforming areas which equate to around 12% of the college's overall provision. Mathematics outcomes were also identified as an area for improvement as is attendance across the college which decreased by 2% to 83% and is a further 17% lower for attendance at English and mathematics. Attendance is still a weakness this year 2018/19 and does not show much improvement.

Impact projects have been developed to address areas requiring improvement with these reported to governors on a regular basis. In addition to this, quality improvement challenge meetings are held termly, and governors are invited to attend. Governors also attend the SAR validation event. The quality improvement plan includes actions to address the Ofsted recommendations.

The curriculum management structure was reviewed, and a new structure implemented in 2017/18 with progression mentors working across the college reporting to a head of progression. Staff and managers met believed this would in future, help retention, attendance and outcomes. There was also a view shared by staff and managers that the slight drop in performance in many areas in 2017/18 may have been the result of the restructure and staff savings that had to be taken.

Due to staff restructuring the SLT are aware of the possible impact of this on morale and student outcomes. Every effort is being made to minimise this impact.

The FEC team were informed that around 90% of teachers hold a professional teaching qualification. Recently, the college has moved from a lesson observation process that allocates a grade to one which is developmental and supportive. This has been well received by staff who receive at least two observations a year.

## Outcomes

Overall, learner outcomes decreased slightly in 2017/18 in most headline areas including apprenticeships which decreased by around 4.6% for overall framework achievement. Overall headline performance remains above 2016/17 published national averages.

Performance in English high grades (9-4) dropped from 40% in 2016/17 to 18.4% in 2017/18 and there was a slight reduction in mathematics of around 1%. Attendance rates are below 70% in English and mathematics. These two factors are a significant concern and should be a priority for the college. Functional skills performance in English and mathematics shows improvement and is well above the national average.

Performance in 2018/19 in most areas is in line with 2017/18 which is reassuring. However, English and mathematics performance are not showing improvement and are likely to remain below the National Averages (NA).

The SLT have been very aware of the risk and possible impact of this work on student outcomes. Student data is now more readily available, and a dashboard is under development. Regular, rigorous, curriculum performance management meetings, using appropriate KPIs are helping to develop a focus on student performance indicators.

Leaders and managers need to focus relentlessly on teaching, learning and assessment to ensure a high-quality student experience which will help prevent a further decline in student outcomes in 2018/19. This is especially important as the essential drive for efficiency may cause staffing and management disturbance that could impact on students.

## **Student views**

At the January visit twelve students studying on a range of programmes at different levels including apprenticeships met the commissioner team. Most lived within a thirty-minute commute to the college and one student travelled one and a half hours each end of the day to get to the Brooklands campus.

Students were very positive about the friendly atmosphere and felt safe at the college. They commented on the supportive, helpful and friendly staff who were always willing to help. They were positive about the skills they gained and pleased and proud to be at the college.

Many felt that their course and area lacked some of the necessary resources and investment and that this impacted on their learning and enjoyment on occasions. Examples given were minibuses frequently out of service or not available causing trips and study tours to be cancelled, very slow log on to computers which often took 30 minutes, and the football field not being properly maintained - they felt this could be unsafe.

## **Staff views**

Twelve staff including union representatives were met at the January visit. All were positive about the open and honest approach from the then PCEO and leadership team. Regular weekly updates from the PCEO were appreciated and these were in addition to termly all staff meetings where information is shared. Staff met were aware of the financial challenges and the SPA being undertaken and were supportive of this approach. Staff felt that the college needed to merge to survive and to be able to reinvest in the campus at Brooklands.

Staff savings and redundancies over recent years was felt to now be at risk of impacting on morale. It was understood however, why these savings were necessary. Staff had frequently gone without a pay award over several years and felt salaries were no longer competitive in the local market which made it difficult to retain and recruit staff.

All were proud of the college and its work especially the good Ofsted outcomes in recent inspections. Staff met were supportive of the then PCEO and SLT.

## **Effectiveness of the college to manage and improve quality**

The FEC team assessed that there was enough capacity, expertise and experience within the management team to drive necessary improvements to ensure student outcomes did not decline in 2018/19. Systems and processes are robust and supported by timely and accurate management information. The quality improvement 'impact

projects' and termly quality improvement plan monitoring should help to improve areas of weakness.

Learners' attendance is still too low across most areas but especially in English and mathematics.

It is imperative that there is a relentless focus on maintaining quality of teaching, learning and assessment and in improving areas of weakness. The essential drive to improve efficiency of delivery, staff utilisation and contribution to central must be managed and implemented carefully.

The self-assessment report continues to be too descriptive rather than evaluative in many areas and would benefit from enriching with an increased range of performance data which is available at programme level.

Governors engage well with the quality improvement agenda and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within curriculum areas.

## Finance and audit

### Financial performance 2017/18

In 2017/18 the college out turned a moderate deficit and less than the budgeted position. This was due to reduced income in apprenticeships although this was partly offset by the reduction in staff costs, franchise, partnership and subcontractor costs.

College borrowing, cash days and the current ratio were all within the FEC benchmarks. Pay as a percentage of income was above the benchmark. The college's financial health status forecast was 'Good'.

### Financial Performance 2018/19

Higher education income is below budget in 2018/19 due to a cap being placed on recruitment by a partner university. This will be removed before the next year and the college is working to grow its HE provision with a number of new programmes on offer. Applications however are broadly in-line with last year and care must be taken not to overestimate and therefore over-budget HE income for 2019/20.

Sub-contracting volumes have increased in 2018/19 year to fill the AEB allocation. This must remain an area of key focus to ensure quality is maintained and to minimise the risk in this high-risk area of work with multiple sub-contractors. A plan should be urgently implemented in order to reduce dependency on sub-contracted provision.

In order to reduce the risk associated with the volume and value of provision sub-contracted to one main sub-contractor, SCL Security, it was decided to increase the number of sub-contractors engaged, which is now around ten. This increase in subcontractors is in itself an increased risk and requires diligent, detailed and robust monitoring. The college should consider commissioning its internal auditors to review subcontractor provision on a regular basis to provide additional assurance to SLT and governors.

The deputy and assistant principal curriculum are currently analysing and implementing efficiency measures in curriculum areas. Currently staff utilisation is at around 88%, below the FEC target of 95%. Average class size is 14, below the FEC target of 16. These shortfalls need to be urgently addressed.

The college has made good progress in reducing the deficit forecast at December, the SLT hope that it can be reduced further by the end of the year however this will only be included in the forecast outturn when the actions to achieve the savings are implemented.

The increase in the performance from the December forecast is due to 16 to 18 apprenticeship income, high needs income, HE income, pay expenditure reductions and increased sub-contracting.

## **Forecast financial performance 2019/20 and 2020/21**

A detailed review of the curriculum based on local need and demand as well as quality of provision and cost of delivery has been completed. This has informed the staffing and resource plan and is also informing the budget setting process. Several areas are supported by improvement plans and some provision will not be offered from September 2019. Whilst an overall contribution to central of c50% is achievable, some curriculum areas such as hospitality and catering, are not contributing as required. Further work is underway in order to understand the issues and determine the next steps.

The interim CEO was clear about the parameters set by governors in relation to the 2019/20 budget. Governors had set financial objectives in-line with the diagnostic assessment recommendations. The draft 2019/20 budget and the 2020/21 forecast show that the budgets would produce increases in cash.

The plans to get to a surplus excluding franchised provision is still being developed and the FEC team recommend that the college extend the financial forecast to include the year when this will be achieved. Governors will then be able to agree the underlying assumptions and monitor progress.

The planning for 2019/20 and 2020/21 was not complete at the time of the visit and has not yet approved by governors.

## **Financial (budgetary) control, management and record keeping**

The college financial (budgetary control), management and record keeping processes are good. The college ran an operating deficit in 2018/19 with large variances in the year most significantly concerning apprenticeship income. SLT were aware that this was a risk and took in year action to reduce costs and limit the size of the deficit.

Whilst the management accounts are comprehensive, timely and accurate there are several areas where they could be enhanced.

The college includes non-financial data on staff numbers in the management accounts which enables the reader to see the activity underpinning the pay expenditure. However, the accounts do not include student data that underpins the income. The FEC team recommend that the college develop this information for inclusion in the monthly management accounts.



The SLT is driving the change in approach which includes a stronger focus on student and people performance. Detailed curriculum planning is informing the staffing requirement and budget setting process for 2019/20. The focus on contribution to central analysis has identified some areas that are not contributing financially, and these are being addressed. Curriculum managers now have their own key targets to work towards and these are monitored and discussed at monthly 1 to 1's with the assistant principal.

## **Analysis/Summary of key financial problems**

The college core financial position is weak with deficits supported by subcontracting. As subcontracting has reduced this has exposed the underlying financial weakness of the core college business

The college has delayed adjusting its cost base in 2018/19 as it seeks a merger partner, resulting in a significant deficit. This is now being addressed.

The college's Weybridge Campus is underutilised and expensive to run with high levels of backlog maintenance. The capital plans being developed should address some of these issues

## **Estates and Capital Plans**

The college is developing an estate strategy involving potential land sales. The objectives of this strategy include addressing the backlog maintenance issues and refurbishing campuses. Whilst some detailed work is in progress, the review of the investment in the estate is at an early stage.

Professional fees and costs are difficult to estimate and keep control of on such projects. Governors and leaders need to robustly and diligently manage the costs and ensure they do not put additional strain on the diminishing cash reserves the college holds.

## Conclusions

Governors and leaders are dealing with multiple, difficult and high-risk challenges that are impacting on the college's future success and sustainability.

The ESFA investigation into one of the college's main sub-contractors SCL Security and the possible contingent liability is the most substantial risk facing the college.

The governing body's response to this risk has not been adequate and at the time of the visit, the recommended further internal audit of sub-contracted provision had yet to take place. Governors have placed too much trust on assurances provided by the PCEO. The board believed that systems and audits of the college's sub-contracting work were robust enough to identify issues relating to sub-contracting compliance. Governors have not considered or developed a mitigation plan should the ESFA, SCL investigation impact on both the finances and the reputation of the college.

The Weybridge campus requires major investment and re-sizing to meet future needs. The cost of low space utilisation, high running costs and backlog of planned maintenance adds further financial pressure and risk. Further 'mothballing' of space and alternative income generation from surplus space should be explored.

The estate strategy is complex and must be tightly managed and controlled by governors and senior leaders.

There has been a rapid decrease in the college turnover during recent years. This has been in the main due to the c25% decrease in 16 to 19 year-old enrolments coupled with the recent impact of the introduction of the employer levy on apprenticeship enrolments. Since the January visit, the college has made good progress in cost reduction.

It is imperative that there is a relentless focus on maintaining quality of teaching, learning and assessment and in improving areas of weakness. The essential drive to improve efficiency of delivery, staff utilisation and contribution to central must be managed and implemented carefully.

Student outcomes remain slightly above national and sector average in many areas although the slight decrease in performance in most areas in 2017/18 is a concern and must remain a high priority for governors and leaders.

Whilst governors and leaders have been effective in driving through change since the January 2019 diagnostic assessment, the college still faces many significant risks. Both the interim principal and interim CEO understand the college and its challenges well but are new in role. The college faces substantial and complex issues and its leadership could benefit from more experienced support.

## Recommendations

1. Governors need to urgently consider in detail, mitigating actions that may be necessary depending on the outcome of the SCL, ESFA investigation and take expert advice on managing this process.
2. Governors should urgently consider appointing a single interim CEO/principal with significant experience in the sector due to the additional work required in the implementation of a SPA and the implications and risks of possible ESFA claw-back on sub-contracted provision.
3. Governors would benefit from engaging with a National Leader of Governance. This will support governors and the clerk through the challenging period ahead and in their continued growth and development including for example, ensuring minutes record in appropriate detail governor discussion and challenge.
4. The college should extend its financial planning to 2021/22 in order to clearly set out how the 2% surplus target set by governors is to be achieved.
5. The FEC team recommends that an FEC led SPA should commence as soon as possible, depending upon the outcomes from the ESFA investigation into SCL Security Ltd
6. The college should be placed immediately into Supervised College Status.

## **Annex A - Information reviewed**

ESFA briefing

Organisation chart

Governor terms of office and appointments

Governor CVs

Governor skills matrix

Governor sub-committee membership

Board self-assessment and QIP

Board sub-committee self-assessments

Board meeting minutes and senior management team papers

Board sub-committee minutes and papers

College self-assessment report and QIP

Self-assessment performance data reports

Quality impact plans

Enrolment data Curriculum strategy

Costed curriculum plan

Estate strategy

Two-year financial plan

Financial statements 2017/18

Management accounts

Risk register 2018/19

Internal Audit report 2017/18

Strategic plan and key performance indicators

## **Annex B - Interviewees**

Chair of Governors

Principal and Chief Executive

Governors

Deputy Principal/Interim Principal

Vice Principal Finance and Resources/  
Interim CEO

Assistant Principal Progression

Head of Progression

Director of Finance

Head of Professional Development

Quality Coordinator

Assistant Principal Curriculum

Head of Curriculum

Head of Curriculum

Director of Estates and Property

Director of MIS and IT

HR Manager

Union Representatives

Ten staff

Twelve students



Department  
for Education

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