



**BRIGHTON HOVE AND SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE QUALITY AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 12th JUNE 2023 AT 6.00 P.M. – Room 20, Main Building**

Present: T.J Brackman (Governor – Student), William Baldwin (Governor/Principal), Mia Harrison (Governor – Student), Katy Hiles (Governor – Parent), Kathryn MacVarish (Governor – Teaching Staff), Alison Mansell (Governor), Daniel Osorio (Governor – Parent), Chris Piper (Governor), Sally Udeen (co-opted Teaching Staff Member), Jo Redfern (Governor), Andrew Wright (Governor and Chair of Q & C Committee Meeting)

In attendance: Sandra Prail (Chair of Governors), Kirstin Baker (Governor and Co-Chair Designate), Alison Cousens (Vice Principal – Student Services), James Moncrieff (Deputy Principal), Louise Pennington (Governance Director/Clerk) and Nikki Fabry (Guidance Manager) for item 2.1 only

CHRIS PIPER joined the meeting online via TEAMS.

The meeting was quorate.

Of the Co-Chairs of the Quality and Curriculum Committee Chris Piper and Andrew Wright, Andrew Wright chaired the meeting.

NOTE: FOR EASE OF REFERENCE QUESTIONS (AND RESPONSES) AND COMMENTS FROM GOVERNORS HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN BOLD ITALICS

It was resolved to take item 2.1 Student Destinations' Report at the start of the Meeting so that Nikki Fabry (Guidance Manager) could then leave – refer minute 2.1.

SECTION 1: ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies and Welcomes

Apologies: Jo Redfern

Welcomes: Student Governors – TJ Brackman and Mia Harrison, Kirstin Baker (Governor and Co-Chair Designate) - observer, Alison Mansell – External Governor.

1.2 Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 1st March 2023

The minutes were considered and approved by the Committee and the Chair authorised to sign them.

ACTION: Chair

1.3 Matters Arising

The contents of the actions' schedule were considered and updates were provided where necessary in respect of on-going and completed actions, together with references to other items which were on this meeting's agenda. It was noted that the schedule would be updated for the next meeting.

1.4 Declaration of Interests - None declared.

1.5 Principal's Update

William Baldwin reported the following key headline updates to Governors as summarised below:

a) Funding and Budget

- Funding for FE – adverse funding environment and reference was made to the draft 2023/2024 budget which will be presented to Corporation via the Resources Committee this term. However, SLT has with careful management (including increasing some class sizes and number of timetabled blocks, together with rationalisation of study programmes into the required 580 hours, in order to recruit additional Students), prepared a balanced budget with approximately £18M income, and giving a £50k cash surplus. Staff cost of living award in the budget is 4% and the ongoing national pay negotiations were noted, with the outcome remaining uncertain but noting that in respect of Schools, the pay award had been settled at a higher level; Colleges do not have funds available to agree a higher than 4% award this year, without Government funding and the DfE has been advised of this fact.
- The Committee were made aware of the increased demographics in Brighton and Hove and although the College has made adjustments as noted above, there was a limit on space and hence any increase in numbers has only been made available by various operational changes such as changing class sizes etc, as detailed above.
- Reference was made to the updated CDP noting that SLT had held a number of workshop strategy days, involving Managers, with the aim of focusing on financial sustainability.

b) DfE Reforms to BTECs

- It was noted that the proposed changes would have less of an impact upon BHASVIC, owing to BTECs forming in the region of 10% of the overall curriculum provision.
- Following a meeting with Gillian Keegan (Education Secretary) and the local College Principals, it was made clear that the Government was uninterested in seeing evidence and hearing feedback from leaders in education on the impact of discontinuing BTECs upon Students. Currently there are approximately 250,000 Students studying BTECs and no tested alternative is to be made available.
- The timeline for de-funding BTECs and is very tight and account will have to be taken for ensuring staffing etc is in place to cater for changes, including ensuring that newly enrolled Students have the information to make decisions regarding for this category of the curriculum offer, within the 18 month timeline.

c) Staff Recruitment

- Governors were updated on the staffing issues during this Summer Term peak season and despite difficulties recruiting the College has managed to fill all Teaching vacancies. Particular difficulty was experienced in recruitment psychology and criminology posts.
- Support Staff recruitment has also experienced some difficulty.



- d) **Local College Principals (BHASVIC, Varndean College and GBMet)** had their regular meeting with the Brighton and Hove MPs to discuss current issues affecting the area and also concern was expressed, it was recognized that there was little the MPs could do at present.
- e) **Future of stand alone SFCs - Sixth Form Colleges** - future uncertainty was raised in light of the reduction in SFC numbers over the last few years, following mergers and academisation, especially the move to large College groups/multi-academy trusts. This topic will be discussed at the October Governors' strategy event.
- f) **Operational Matter – Exams' Season:** The Committee was reminded of the difficulties experienced by the Students, who owing to Covid, were in experienced in sitting examinations and support is being provided by Staff. The pressure upon Staff was also noted owing to the increased cohort this year, sitting examinations (1,200 Students sitting exams last Wednesday). The increased demand for invigilators was also recognized. The Principal recorded that the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) Regulator also made a visit to College during this busy examination period, and picked some minor points.

Thanks were recorded to William Baldwin for his report.

1.6 Termly Update - Student Governor Perspectives

The Student Governors gave the following update to Governors based on feedback gained from Students which included references to the following subjects:

- a) SU/Ambassador Activity
 - b) Student Wellbeing
 - c) Student Studies
 - d) Examinations
 - e) Progression and Tutorial Activity
- Student Forum – the agenda for the event is being finalised with Alison Cousens and will include SU information and support available. Student Ambassadors will also be involved in the Forum.
 - Student Survey is due to be circulated to all Students to obtain input on how to improve Students' support and wellbeing needs, together with event suggestions and input regarding Student Ambassadors' role and involvement. Last year it was noted that lots of Students register their interest to become Student Ambassadors, but motivation wasn't sustained. Consequently, the SU Executive are investigating options to incentivise newly recruited Ambassadors to encourage participation throughout the year.
 - Citizens UK – continued support for improvements in the local transport campaign, following the work of last year's SU executive.
 - Various events – Information evening, Moving on Day.

It was noted that a Citizens UK presentation will be given to Corporation at the start of the July 2023 Meeting.

Thanks were recorded to the Student Governors for their Report.

SECTION 2: CURRICULUM AND GUIDANCE ITEMS

2.1 Student Destinations' Report – Nikky Fabry (Guidance Manager) joined the Meeting or this item only.

Papers: a) Front Sheet, b) Report

Nikky Fabry introduced the document and highlighted the following key aspects:

- Summary report has been provided to Governors for the first time this year (data in respect of latest year available – 2020) and should further information be required, the full report can be shared.
- Range of good practice is in evidence across the College was noted and reference was made to the College's teaching and learning, retention and recruitment.
- Extensive data provided by UCAS and incorporated into the Report, was referenced, which enables comparisons between different Student cohorts and range of subjects.
- New additions this year – focused on Gatsby Benchmarking data in respect of Higher Education and employment. Secondly, the report also reflects the analysis carried out relating to local skills and where Students have commenced employment in the City.
- UCAS applications increased to 1,650 Students this year, which is almost double the total achieved in 2015.
- Gap year Student data was highlighted, and noting that this was a more common option for high income Students, owing to the costs involved. The College guidance is that where Students are unsure what path to follow, to take a gap year and information, advice and guidance are provided on site for HE, employment and gap year options.
- The College has noted that few Students are attending HE open days this year, owing to the cost of living issue, which is a concern, although Governors were informed that many HE providers, issued travel vouchers to assist Students' needs.
- In addition to the UCAS analysis, the College includes internal destination information acquired from Students, for comparison purposes. Where Student destination is unknown internally by the College, the Guidance team contacts Students by telephone to acquire this information. In contrast the UCAS data will show a higher percentage in respect of the Unknown Student destinations %, which for the current year was listed as 5-6% and this comparison with the College's information, has been included in the Meeting paper front sheet.
- Progression score, introduced in the year before last. The College has a score of -1 which is average compared to other providers in the sector with a similar intake. The national average is +3 and it was noted that locally, BHASVIC compares better against local Brighton and Hove Schools.

Additional work will be carried out next year to increase information in respect of local skills' destinations; the details of this will be of particular interest to Ofsted and regarding the local skills sector, to see how we compare with other local providers. Furthermore, analysis will be extended to investigating whether Students sign up for Level 3 apprenticeships or employment, which will take account of the College's Flourish Scheme (mentoring and academic study skills programme for Students who meet the following criteria – low prior attainment at GCSE for entry to College, low income – free school meals, no additional



learning support or special educational needs. The programme via a specific tuition grant, enables 1 to 1 additional support to be provided to support Students, which equates to approximately 120 Students at College included in the Scheme, although approximately 250 Students are within scope).

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- A more detailed analysis of qualifications achieved and employment/courses etc will also be investigated.
- Despite the detailed report and summary, the information and analysis were welcomed by the Committee, providing a greater level of understanding for Governors in this area.
- The Committee was reminded that the Skills Link Governor, Jo Redfern, met with the Guidance Team to review and discuss the destinations report and it was also noted that during the recent Ofsted visit, both Jo Redfern and Sandra Prail, met with the Ofsted Inspectors to discuss the skills duty.
- In response to a question from the Committee relating to the chart provided on page 23 and the impact of the pandemic, the Principal explained that the gap year cycle had not been included, making the DfE data seem slightly below average. The lag in recording the gap year data, will be corrected in the following year's analysis in this area.
- Based on the disadvantaged Student data, it was noted that a higher proportion of BHASVIC Students remained in education (HE) compared to the national average, which suggested that the guidance and support at College, was having an impact.

Thanks were recorded to Nikky Fabry for the excellent report and presentation, after which she left the meeting.

2.2 College Development Plan (CDP) -

The contents of the paper were taken as read and questions were invited from the Committee, noting that no questions had been submitted to the Chair via the Q & C Team.

- a) **Quality of Education** - noted
 - b) **Behaviour and Attitude**
 - c. **Personal Development**
 - d. **Leadership and Management**
- ***In response to a question regarding the limitations of the College's estates particularly relating to Student Services, the College was disappointed not getting approval for the recent capital bid submission. However, SLT has prioritised essential summer works within the current budget, some of which relates to improvements within Student Services.*** The Principal added that the College has been awarded £470K to be used for the Estates over the next 2 years, following the ONS reclassification of SFCs. This will go towards the necessary structural works on the modular buildings to resolve damp issues within the constraints of the budget. The Committee questioned the Student Governors on Students' views about the Student Services Centre, and it was reported that they were unaware of any issues or complaints from Students, apart from signage as it can be confusing finding offices, or classrooms at times. At this point the Committee was made aware that Staff were finding it difficult to work in the modular building at times, where there was no or limited daylight, combined with toilet facilities not always working.

- Governors questioned emerging future issues particularly in relation to mental health and more specifically, neurodiversity, including what support and facilities were in place to support Students.*** In response the Deputy Principal advised the Committee that up to 1.5 hours per week of additional learning support, was made available – with 1 teacher per 10 Students and the sessions initially focus upon identifying and evaluating Students’ specific challenges. Furthermore, if a Student has an official diagnosis, other support is available depending upon the nature of need. Training and support of Teachers is also provided with information sharing embedded and Staff are informed of adjustments which may be needed in class to support Students in their lessons. James Moncrieff also explained that the College was working on developing accessibility facilities from which all Students may benefit, rather than those with identified diagnoses. A working party has been established to explore neurodiversity issues with conclusions being fed back to Teachers regarding classroom experience of neurodiverse Students. It was recognised that neurodiversity was diverse, requiring Teachers/additional support to assess individual Student needs, but also taking account that the resources made accessible to such Students following an assessment, may also be useful to all other Students too. Progress reviews are embedded too, so that Students and Teachers can meet and review the Students’ needs and support. Much of the information is made available on Advantage which is accessible to all Students. The College also provides bitesize support sessions, with an emphasis on supporting the above Students and then sharing good practice with the wider community. At this point it was also noted that the recent Governor recruitment advertisements included reference to EDI including neurodiversity. Further work is required to develop the systems and procedures in place, to ensure prompt action is taken with the required support being put into place for Students as early as possible, following enrolment. James Moncrieff confirmed that on Moving on days Students have an opportunity to disclose information relating to any specific support needs. It was also recognised that the apparent increase in Students with neurodiversity support needs, may well be as a consequence of post pandemic times, where such issues had been masked during Covid lockdown, although increased awareness may also account for the increase. At present the majority of neuro-diversity referrals are disclosed by Teachers rather than Students.
- The College has a SENCO within its curriculum staffing team.
- In response to a suggestion from Student Governors, it was also confirmed that improved online digital support was being developed.
- SEND Link Governor – the new FE Governance Guidance recommends that Governing Bodies should consider appointing a SEND Link Governor, which the Search and Governance Committee will be reviewing this term. At this point Alison Mansell indicated that she may be interested in the role and it was resolved to suggest this to S & G Committee. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**
- In response to a request from the Committee, James Moncrieff agreed to provide an update on the referral rates for study support at the next meeting. **ACTION: James Moncrieff**
- In response from feedback received, it was agreed that it would be useful to provide a timeline and mechanisms available, for new parents regarding those Students who require additional support, subject to data protection guidelines. The College’s new Head of Admissions and Communications, James Barton, is due to review this aspect of communicating with parents to improve parents’ experience. **ACTION: SLT**
- Of the College’s 1800 plus Students in a year group, approximately 500 have registered for additional needs.



2.3 Update on DfE Post-16 Qualification Reform, including timelines and implications for different functions

James Moncrieff introduced the paper and referenced the information already given in the earlier Principal's Report. He drew Governors' attention to the following:

- There has been a lack of consultation by the DfE with FE providers or a willingness to listen to evidence and experience offered by FE institutions.
- The Government's agenda appears to focus upon fewer Students going to University and to ensure that more technical and vocational opportunities are made available to Students. This does not fit with Students' demand from BHASVIC for academic pathways. Furthermore, the timeframe is short and it's difficult to predict how the current plans will be treated if there is a change in Government next year, noting that both Labour and the Liberal Democrats have a different approach to FE education.
- The impact on the College's curriculum offer was noted and the difficulties for primarily A Level providers highlighted, noting that it would not be possible to offer courses such as engineering etc, and bearing in mind the College's existing limited premises, without a significant increase in funding.
- The College curriculum offer will continue to be based upon the significant demand for academic A Levels which have proved popular and very successful. The College will look to offer a course most closely related to any current course which the Government will be discontinuing and reference was made to Law BTEC, of which the College currently offers 3 groups. It was explained that the Law A Level, would generally not be suitable for Students who would usually enrol on Law BTEC. SLT and the curriculum team are monitoring this, with the aim of mitigating any negative impact upon Students and Staff.
- Other concerns regarding the changes were discussed, including the impact this may have on Students who have not yet decided upon their preferred career, unlike academic students who can enrol on 3 A Levels. T levels have been designed based broadly on Students achieving a GCSE score of 6, whereas the current BTEC courses are based upon Students with a GCSE score of 4 or 5, so there is concern that the needs of some Students may not be met.
- Regarding alternative options for the current BTEC Law offer, it was noted that an alternative course was under consideration – Uniform Protected Services (incorporates criminology), but to attract Students to this, the course would need to be effectively marketed.
- The College is progressing its strategy for the engagement of local employers in order to ensure that local employment needs will be met. There will also be a need to find sufficient work experience placements with local employers.
- The timing difficulties were highlighted bearing in mind prospective Students were being interviewed at present, November 2024 General Election, with September 2024 entries for 2 year Students, whilst September 2025 entries will under the new offer, no longer enable the College's existing BTECs to be continued, making the timing and guidance for Students difficult to manage, combined with the need to have the appropriate Teaching Staff in place for the alternative courses.

2.4 Skills Link Governor – Termly Update

As Jo Redfern, the Skills Link Governor was absent from the meeting, it was agreed to defer this.

ACTION: Jo Redfern

2.5 Risk Assurance

James Moncrieff referred the Committee to the document included on pages 90 to 96 and reported that the strategic risks would be reviewed over the Summer in line with recommendations arising from the forthcoming External Board Review (Report due to be presented to Corporation at its July 2023 meeting).

The Committee endorsed the contents of the Report and agreed that the necessary assurance regarding Q & C Committee risks, should be passed to the Audit Committee. **ACTION: James Moncrieff**

SECTION 3: CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were taken as read and endorsed where necessary, subject to the questions included in the items and recorded below.

Policies and other Documents

3.1 Admissions Policy

The Deputy Principal introduced the revised policy referring Governors to the executive summary and reminding them that a more significant review and revision had occurred 2 years ago, including input from a Governing Body Task and Finish Group.

Based on current indications, the likelihood is that the College won't be over-subscribed this year and James Moncrieff indicated that based on the next few years' demographics (until 2028), the Policy will cater adequately for admissions.

The next development to be focused upon will be the social mobility strategy and action plan whereby consideration will be given to introducing contextualised offers, which Universities have been offering for some time. Once the working group reviewing this has completed its investigations, proposals will be brought via SLT to Governors, probably next year. **ACTION: James Moncrieff**

3.2 Student Behaviour Policy (draft) with Sustainability Study – position statement (Appendix c)

Alison Cousens introduced the draft Policy proposed changes (as set out in the Executive Summary), and reminded Governors that a more substantial update was carried out at the last review. She referred to the proposed changes including the addition of Government guidelines relation to behaviours, already included in Schools' Policies.

Other proposed changes relate to sustainable study aspects which need addressing post Covid relating to attendance, where the importance of attending lessons on site are crucial. Since the pandemic the College has received an increase in the number of requests for remote lesson access owing to medical or mental health issues, but sadly this is not feasible to offer. Hence a position statement has been drafted which sets out the College offer, based on Students being onsite, but also confirming the support networks available to help Students to be on site for lessons. The expectation from the Department of Education is that reasonable adjustments only must be made to support Students.

The amendments to the above Policies were recommended to Corporation for approval. ACTION: SLT



SECTION 4: OTHER ITEMS

4.1 Any Other Business

- a) **Committee Annual Self-Assessment** - it was agreed that owing to the changes in the Committee membership including 2 new co-Chairs, together with various new members, this should be reviewed at the next meeting. **ACTION: Chair/Clerk**

- b) **Review of Committee terms of reference** – the revisions proposed were recommended to Corporation for approval. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

4.2 Date of Next Meeting – to be confirmed.

SECTION 5: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

TRANSFERED TO CONFIDENTIAL (PINK) MINUTE – refer separate confidential record.

- 5.1 **Confidential Minutes from the Last Meeting**
- 5.2 **Matters Arising - None**
- 5.3 **Termly Safeguarding Assurance Update**
- 5.4 **Any Other Business (Confidential Matters) - None**

Chair.....Date.....