



**BRIGHTON HOVE AND SUSSEX SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE QUALITY AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2020 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS – VIRTUAL MEETING**

Present: William Baldwin (Principal), Gillian Hampden-Thompson (Governor and Chair of Q & C Committee), Neil Jones (Governor – Teaching Staff), Ana MacEvilly (Governor – Student), Chris Piper (Governor), Jackie Punter (co-opted Teaching Staff Member and Digital Director), Lucas Watkin (Governor – Student)

In attendance: Alison Cousens (Assistant Principal – Student Services), James Moncrieff (Deputy Principal), Louise Pennington (Governance Director/Clerk).

The meeting was quorate.

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

Governors had been invited to submit questions prior to the meeting and it was noted that 1 Committee member and 1 other Governor not on the Committee had submitted questions which would be answered within the relevant agenda items and recorded accordingly. The questions from Governor 1 have been incorporated into a schedule and circulated to all Committee members prior to the meeting, including page references and some responses from SMT. The questions from Governor 2 were received on Sunday 15th November and circulated to the Committee Chair, Chair of Corporation and SMT.

SECTION 1: ROUTINE AND STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies and Welcomes

Apologies: Jo Redfern.

Amanda Law was unable to join the Teams' meeting owing to technical issues.

1.2 Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 15TH June 2020

The Committee 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 it was agreed that the updates would be recorded in the next version, noting also that the actions which had been completed since the last meeting, would be removed from the schedule. **ACTION: Louise Pennington**

The following updates were given:

- Ofsted Preparedness Meeting for Governors: The Chair of Governors, Chair of Q & C Committee, Principal and Deputy Principal met on Friday to have an initial discussion about preparing for a potential Ofsted Meeting next year. The Chair of Governors gave a further update to the Committee regarding the progress with the governance SAR and recommendation that governance be graded outstanding (currently self-assessed as good) and that S & G Committee would be discussing the final draft governance SAR at its meeting on Wednesday, before making a recommendation to Corporation.

- Covid 19 update – refer agenda item below.
- SU Constitution – refer consent agenda item and noting that the constitution has been reviewed by the Student Union and various changes have been proposed. Alison Cousens also confirmed that Louise Pennington had also suggested a few minor changes prior to the meeting which would be included in the final version, in respect of clauses 4.14.2 (Student Governors) and 5.16. (Shadow SU) and final date of Constitution approval – December 2020 (Corporation meeting).
- Prevent Duty Webinar – uploaded to the Governors' VLE.

1.4 Declaration of Interests - None declared.

Ana MacEvilly and Lucas Watkin gave the following update to Governors:

- Concern reported from Students regarding the fact that the wearing of masks by Staff is inconsistent and some are closer than 2 metres at times. The Principal agreed to send out a reminder to all Staff tomorrow to ensure that all Staff maintain the 2 metre distance between themselves and Students and also to where masks (except when teaching – unless closer to a Student/s than 2 metres). **ACTION: William Baldwin**
- ***In response to a question from Governors regarding feedback from Year 1 Students, the Student Governors reported that they'd had very limited opportunity owing to the pandemic restrictions and having less time on site at the same time as Year 1 Students, to obtain much feedback. However, it was reported that via the new BHASVIC Ambassadors' role, efforts would be made to make contact with Year 1s and Alison Cousens also agreed to incorporate this into the next Student Forum (25th November 2020); feedback from this may be available to report to Governors at the next Corporation meeting in December. ACTION: Student Governors/Alison Cousens.***
- Other issues raised by the Students include too much emphasis on rote learning; high workload, although this may have reduced to some extent, depending upon curriculum area; concerns by Students of how much work they should put towards all their ongoing assessments and homework, in case the year end external exams are cancelled. Some Students have reported that they have felt overwhelmed with the workload and also had to take into account finding time for university interviews' preparations, coursework deadlines, general revision and independent learning projects for some subjects.
- Canteen/catering matters: in the early days of the pandemic, the canteen appeared to be very busy with many large groups meeting up, but it's become much quieter and the marshals have helped manage numbers and social distancing/wearing masks. However, it was apparent there were still some Students not wearing masks who when challenged by the marshals and/or Estates Team were disrespectful and rude, which was disappointing to hear – this occurred in the Canteen and in some of the narrower corridors near the toilets. SMT also reported that on a few occasions the Marshals had had to seek help from Staff when there were issues of disrespectful behaviour in the Copper Café. It was noted that this experience occurred from a minority of Students and that the majority abided by the rules and were compliant.
- Headlines from recent College events: SU members were involved in the Virtual Parent/Open evenings. The SU suggested that more indoor seating would be useful and following the opening of the new Elms Building, this has been taken forward.



- The lack of socialising opportunities has been very apparent, particularly impacting the new A1s, who haven't been able to get to know their peer group in the normal way. Various initiatives have been undertaken following suggestions from the SU, in order to facilitate socialising including – student input on seating plans, which is also kept under review and revised as necessary.
- Other SU suggestions which have been taken on board, include a more varied menu in the Café and Canteen with health hot food and sandwiches.
- Students have also complained about the temperature in classrooms now that winter is approaching, as the windows and doors are required to remain open for ventilation purposes during this pandemic, although there is no easy solution apart from wearing more clothes.
- At this point the Chair of Q & C and Chair of Corporation reported that they had had a tour of the new Elms Building, following a meeting on site last week and thought that the new building was an excellent space and good design.

SECTION 2: CURRICULUM AND GUIDANCE ITEMS

2.1 Covid-19 Update

William Baldwin presented his oral report to Governors, recording the following:

- Latest College Covid Dashboard was uploaded earlier today, to the Governors' VLE for all Governors to view and was also shown on screen for the meeting. In summary there were 35 positive Covid cases to date, including 2 reported at the weekend.
- Of the Students who have isolated (either as a result of BHASVIC requirements or external requirements), 461 Students have had to isolate to date, since September (in only 10 weeks of teaching time), which equates to 1/5th of the College's Students and all of which have had to isolate for 14 days. Of the Students who have isolated, approximately 101 has arisen as a result of contact with an infected person on the College site.
- 54 Staff members have had to isolate too which equates to 1/5th of the whole Staff body.
- As a result of the enforced absences this has therefore caused significant disruption and some Students have had more than one period of isolation, so have inevitably lost face to face (2/3) teaching in that time. This will have an impact on examinations and assessment and has consequently created inequalities within the Student body.
- None of those who have isolated by BHASVIC, have subsequently tested Covid positive which provides some assurance that the College's practices are robust and working well, with no onward transmission on site. Having noted that but also taking into account points raised above re mask wearing etc, there is no room for complacency and the College will continue to monitor guidelines and ensure compliance.
- Regarding the pie charts at the bottom of the dashboard which demonstrates attendance, this is slightly down compared to last year by about 2% which considering the nature of the disruption is quite remarkable. Referring to the bar charts in the middle of the dashboard, this demonstrate a consistent attendance level throughout each week, between the various Student cohorts. However, there were not unexpected lower attendance levels at tutorials which compared similarly to last year.
- Expenditure during the pandemic: additional costs to the College arising from the impact of Covid is approximately £1K per week and this largely comprises wipes, hand sanitisers, masks and

marshal costs. This expenditure does not include the additional costs arising from providing Teaching Staff with laptops, essential during Covid, together with other capital items. The latter costs are recorded elsewhere.

- Since the last meeting, when the new timetable model was at its initial stages, progress and improvements have been made as practical issues have been resolved. The 2/3 model, whereby Students received 2 out of 3 lessons per subject per week has worked well, and has established a momentum for Students whereby they attend College every week, but with a reduced capacity on site. However, this model has placed a significant workload upon Staff and regular communication is in place to enable feedback from Staff, shared experiences and good practice and fortnightly meetings between Management and Union representatives. An Inset day has also been established per half term “coming up for air day”, to provide a brief break from teaching with the next one due on 30th November. SMT is encouraging Staff to “be kind to themselves” and not to compare the quality of their work with previous years; there is no doubt that one of the effects of the pandemic is a unavoidable impact upon quality, particularly where face to face teaching has had to be reduced from 3 lessons per subject per week, to 2.
- The Principal met with the City’s 3 MPS last Friday, along with the Principals from Brighton Met and Varndean College. Discussions included Student assessments and likely Summer examinations. The Principal explained that the views regarding assessments varied across the City and within each College but that his view was that there should be some form of Teacher assessed grade, weighted to the final outcome alongside the examination assessed outcomes, combined with more optionality this year within the examinations eg answer 4 questions out of 6, compared to previous years – answer all 6 questions etc. The latter would recognise the fact that Students’ learning has been significantly affected this year and that some adjustments should be made to accommodate this. It was thought that it would be unfair to Students to rely solely upon examinations for this year.
- Owing to the lack of social interactions, Students’ social lives, experiences and developments have been affected too during this year. Although the College’s guidance team are unable to provide the usual enrichment experience, various alternative options are being made available e.g. live webinars and the Association of Colleges has also provided webinars to some Students whereby professionals provide advice regarding their areas of expertise together with guidance on overcoming and managing challenges etc.
- SARAPs (Self-Assessment Report and Action Plans) – reference was made to the circulating of these to Governors (via Governors’ VLE) and input invited, noting also that Gillian Hampden-Thompson had attended 3 of the SARAP validation meetings, which she confirmed were very useful and informative. Thanks were recorded to those Governors who found the time to view the various SARAPs and submitted comments prior to the various SARAP validation meetings.
- End of Term – although it’s not yet been announced, SMT will be recommending that the last on site lessons this term will be on Friday 11th December, after which the College will move to remote teaching and learning from 14th December. This will provide a 2 week break from the College premises as a form of quarantine, prior to Christmas Day and it’s anticipated that this will be well-received by Staff, Students and Parents.

2.2 Digital Update



Reference was made to the Digital Director's Report and the following points were highlighted and further information provided.

- Covid has had a significant and positive impact on the progress of the College's digital plans with improvements implemented by the IT network team, including improving the wifi speed, log in project completed for Staff and Students.
- Progress continues with the move to Microsoft tools.
- In terms of challenges, the cost of updating the College's IT systems is significant and priorities are having to be made in order of need.
- Recruitment of appropriate IT/digital staff has been difficult particularly in the area of development owing to the College's limited budget to offer competitive salaries. The IT Team is understaffed by at least 1 member and there is an allocation to recruit within the budget. Governors were reminded that in the Summer 2019, a skills audit of the IT Team was completed; from this further work has been carried out to seek a suitable appointment and to ensure that the right skill set is obtained. In the interim there have been some external consultants and temporary contracts brought in to assist IT and keep the service on track. The focus will be on seeking a new member of the Team in 2021.
- The decision from Capita to sell their education software business has impacted Colleges, although it was noted that there had been some dissatisfaction for some time regarding certain elements such as the Advantage Project (Staff, Student, Parent portals), with updates to resolve issues being promised but not forthcoming. There remains uncertainty however, as Capita has not yet acquired a buyer so the transition process will be uncertain. The College's Digital Director and Information Manager are in the process of investigating other alternative platforms and it's worth noting that several large and medium sized Colleges also use Capita software, so it's unlikely to be allowed to collapse, giving time for Colleges to find alternatives. The College's key criteria for a successor will be that the software must be compatible, although the College will be investigating all options. Inevitably there will be an impact on the College's expenditure within this area.
- At this point there was some feedback regarding user experience of the remote tools utilised to facilitate Open Evenings, which were generally well received. The quality of engagement by Staff and Students was very good and the on line chat function enabled questions to be asked/voted upon and allowed more time for Students to hear about the various courses and guidance aspects. ***Following a question from Governors regarding the costs of this facility, together with software used for Parents' evenings, a verbal update will be given to the Resources Committee next week, detailing these exceptional Covid related costs. However, in summary, Open Evening costs have doubled as a result of utilising the remote software (£8K approx.).*** SMT will be reviewing the future structure and operation of Open and Parents Evenings and it's likely that future events will make use of the new format, but with the continuing option of prospective Students/Parents to come on site for Open evenings.
- ***In response to a question from the Committee regarding Staff and Student upskilling and management of the new way of remote/blended working, it was reported that a Staff survey had been completed in the Summer to assess how Staff were coping with the impact of the pandemic. Since then Teaching Staff have been equipped with "think pads" (lap tops) and other support, including professional learning partners – peer to peer support, 1 to 1 mentoring and***

some inset and video self-help training. The College's Learning Technologist, Julia Holgate Turner, has also been working with a Team of teachers to investigate initiatives to identify training needs. Within the various Departments, Staff are working to find a consistent and most useful technology, with advice and support from Digital and IT departments. Governors queried whether professional learning communities were staffed from different departments or whether they had a more cross-College approach, and the Digital Director explained that these were professional learning hubs on which all Teaching Staff were enrolled (plus some Support Staff), creating a general peer to peer support communication medium. There are currently 4 Teachers who have a combination of skills, arising from various software packages and techniques and who have time allocated to them within their normal Teaching hours, in order to focus on developing materials for all Teachers to use.

- There continue to be workload implications and the majority of Teachers describe the changes as being similar to that of a newly qualified Teacher, with every lesson being approached as new
- There is no data analysis available of the various implications described above, but anecdotally, some curriculum areas are better suited to delivering their Teaching and Learning remotely. Further surveying and analysis could be carried out if this was a preferred course of action, so that benchmarking could be developed in order to determine whether Students' experience was as equal as possible.

2.3 College Development Plan

Governors were reminded that the document was presented to the Committee for the final time, noting also that the pandemic had impacted on all aspects of delivery. Reference was made to the details included in the meeting paper front sheet, noting in particular that some aspects had not been progressed owing to Covid and would therefore be carried forward to next year.

The Committee reviewed the 4 areas of the Plan, noting the following highlights and recording the questions raised by Governors, together with the responses:

SECTION 1 QUALITY OF EDUCATION

- *In response to a question regarding the curriculum intent document and when it would be ready to share with Governors, the Deputy Principal explained that currently this was a work in progress and that SMT had drafted the document but that this still had to be circulated to Staff for consultation. The document will be brought to the next Q & C Committee for consideration. It was agreed that should the document be finalised prior to next term's Q & C meeting, then it would be circulated to Committee Members. ACTION: James Moncrieff*
- The Committee was informed that the Chair of Governors, Chair of Q & C Committee, Principal and Deputy Principal would be meeting on Friday to discuss Ofsted preparedness in light of the likelihood that the College may have an inspection in 2021. The intention would be to identify a core group of Governors who would expect to be involved directly in the Ofsted Inspection.
- Section 1 Quality of Education – the contents of the section were noted and questions invited. *Referring to row 13 regarding disadvantaged Students' outcomes, a request was made for more information regarding future plans regarding this.* James Moncrieff explained that additional funding (£9.5K) had been awarded to the College which will be used for the development of the College's "Flourish" project and that a service level agreement was in the process of being



finalised for this. He explained that the College was in the process of recruitment 2 mentors and a coordinator (deadline for applications is today), to provide mentoring and study skills for vulnerable Students and that the primary objective of the project was to focus on improving retention in respect of vulnerable Students. The project is aiming for 40 Students in the first year of the project. Disadvantaged Students will be identified via postcode, low GCSE Point Score and economic disadvantage. It's expected that as the project develops, the expertise acquired will be extended and shared for the benefit of wider curriculum and tutorial delivery, and possibly outreach work with feeder schools. The project is fully funded from the Sussex Learning Network and the College is required to submit monthly activity reports and termly progress/impact report with a final evidence-based report at the end of July (student voice, retention, attendance and attainment etc). The College is progressing another social mobility project a Vulnerable Learner Index, to help identify and target students for support. The College will be bringing together the various project strands into a coherent overarching strategy and action plan to better inform at all levels including at the admissions stage (eg ensuring appropriate entry requirements/course allocation etc), together with outreach work. In response to a question from the Chair, James Moncrieff agreed to present this to the Committee in due course. **ACTION: James Moncrieff**

SECTION 2 BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

- Section 18 page 37 – attendance and punctuality: it was agreed that this heading should be revised to read "Attendance Report", although it was noted that the College's registration system does enable Staff to log punctuality along with attendance, but the former has not been reported.
- A1 and A2 attendance figures were noted and in response to a question, the Principal explained that the global attendance figure does show a higher attendance figure as this included all other ancillary areas such as GCSE and enrichment.
- Governors raised a question relating to Student Bursaries page 40) and Alison Cousens updated Governors on how the regulations had changed; previously Colleges received a blanket payment of £1,200 in termly instalments which the College could allocate as appropriate. This has since changed with new guidance for vulnerable bursaries, involving assessment of Student need, including necessary input from social workers. Most of Students who qualify as vulnerable Students are ESOL Students (English for Speakers of Other Languages), care leavers or those in care. Bursary application have taken longer to process and social workers have been querying why payments have reduced from last year's blanket allocation. Some other local providers have not caught up with the new rules, causing confusion, but the College has confirmed with the Department for Education that BHASVIC has followed the new guidelines correctly. There are indications that the process may change again in the future and that there will be a return to means testing by the Colleges. The funding methodology has also been revised in respect of the broader bursary allocations (based on post code deprivation index) and the College has lost out in light of this, with approximately £70k less funding than previous years; most of this category of bursary is awarded as travel bursaries for Students from outside the City (to date £149K of £178K allocation has been spent on travel bursaries and there only remains £5K left in this bursary fund for the rest of the year). There has also been a greater demand this year owing to Covid related issues.

SECTION 3 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Some aspects of this area of the Plan have not been achieved or partially achieved this year owing to the impact of Covid on the College's work, particularly work experience and

career/employability work, and wider enrichment, with few alternative provisions being available owing to the Covid restrictions. However, the College has been able to offer online careers' information delivery on line. There will be a greater focus on extending options in this area for the Spring and Summer terms, within the existing curriculum-based delivery. Where possible specific targets will be carried forward to next year.

SECTION 4 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Taking into account the impact of the pandemic, not all targets have been achieved and these will be carried forward to next year.
- Regarding outturn for the year, Governors were informed that there was some delay to finalising the audit work owing to the fact that the external auditors had been unable to come onto the site. Hence, not all the figures are ready, so haven't been able to the CDP will have to be updated, once the financial statements have been completed – Resources Committee – 23rd November and Audit Committee 25th November. The Principal also briefly summarised the main impacts on the accounts including the impact of the capital build, change in staff start/tracking dates from 1st September to 1st August (as previously reported) the impact of which is visible in the I and E accounts. The detailed financial statements will be discussed at Resources Committee and the copy draft minutes will be available to all and included in the Corporation meeting papers.
- Student enrolments – The Committee questioned whether there was any impact on numbers arising from the new Sixth Form provision at Haywards Heath and it was reported that the new provider had recruited 270 learners into their first year and will need to improve this figure quickly in the short term to at least 1,000 to ensure viability. The Principal was confident that BHASVIC's numbers were unlikely to be affected and that there had been no impact even during the difficult Covid-19 affected year, where it might have been thought that new Students may not have wanted to travel. It was also recorded that this year both BHASVIC and Varndean had achieved in excess of their target Student enrolments.

2.4 Risk Assurance

The Deputy Principal presented the paper the contents of which were noted and the following points and questions were recorded:

- Focus on risks having a score of 6 or 9 for which Q & C Committee has responsibility, are included in the Report, along with the other related risks which are included for information.
- Key risks listed on pages 58/59 include Key Risk 3 (Failure to maintain or improve teaching quality leading to a decline in results and reputation thus recruitment and financial viability). where the assurance level is Amber.
- Within the sector there are very limited and paired back External Quality Reviews (EQRs) taking place this year owing to the pandemic and Ofsted inspections have also been suspended until next year. With regard to quality assurance, on an internal level, Staff have had to manage the implementation of new blended learning methods, but the SARAP and PDR processes have continued. Operational demands have curtailed CQTs supportive curriculum improvement and intervention work with course teams and departments. At Heads of Faculty and Heads of Department levels, managers continue to work very closely, adapting delivery for Covid and



supporting course teams and individuals with a wide range of operational and staffing demands and risks.

The Committee agreed that taking into account the contents of the paper and the assurance provided by SMT at the meeting that they were able to recommend to the Audit Committee that assurances were in place in respect of the risks allocated to Q & C Committee and that there was adequate mitigated.

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 Student Union Constitution (front sheet within papers and Revised Constitution included as an Appendix to the papers).

Governors were reminded that the SU Constitution was only reviewed (unless required) every 5 years and there have been several updates following a review by the SU Executive. The Student Governors had also met with Alison Cousens to discuss and go through the proposed changes. Despite the fact that some of the changes have already been implemented by the SU, it was noted that the new document would not formally take effect until Corporation have approved the changes at its Corporation meeting in December 2020.

The following comments and questions were recorded:

- Job roles/titles have been revised following a re-branding of the Council as the Student Forum
- If there had been more time, the constitution would have been re-written as some of the content is in need of modernisation and simplification.
- In light of progress the College is making as a result of the Prevent Duty, Alison Cousens was keen to see a greater oversight by Staff of Student Organisations affiliated with BHASVIC, noting that in some instances there had been cases in the sector of Colleges failing to have sufficient oversight of Student Societies and Charities from a Prevent perspective and this has now been addressed in the text.
- Regarding the Shadow SU and also noting that last year 2 potential Student Governors at the time (including Ana MacEvilly) had attended the Spring Term Q & C Committee along with the then current Student Governors, to gain experience in advance of potentially taking on the role. The SU Executive has given more thought to this and proposed that for an effective Shadow SU to work, it would make more sense to bring the elections forward in the year to February. This would mean that the Shadow SU would commence in post, with the assistance from the outgoing SU Executive. Once elections have been held and the outcome is known, the various roles will be assigned and those appointed will shadow the existing SU Members. Last year, although Ana MacEvilly had shadowed one of the Student Governors, the other Student did not get appointed as one of the Student Governors going forward, hence the need to revise the timings of the elections.

- Question from Governors regarding the candidate election expenses item 3.1 being £2.50 – it was agreed that this was a nominal sum, but this recognised that the majority of advertising/publicity etc would in future be done electronically.
- Students are kept informed of SU Executive activities and elections etc via both the Forum and Tutor Groups as not all Students attend any or all of the Forum meetings.

The Committee suggested that if further changes were need at any time in the future, then the constitution should be brought back when necessary and that it shouldn't be necessary to wait for the 5 year review. **ACTION: Alison Cousens/Student Governors**

The revised document was recommended to Corporation for approval. **ACTION: Alison Cousens**

3.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy – It was noted that the Policy would be deferred until the Spring Term 2021. **ACTION: Alison Cousens**

SECTION 4: OTHER ITEMS

4.1 Any Other Business

The Committee reviewed the Teams meeting noting that Zoom meetings had worked more effectively, but they agreed to continue to test Teams to bring this into line with the College's preferred option. It was noted that the Chat function had not been working and it was queried whether if this can't be resolved for future meeting, whether a padlet (as per last meeting) should be re-introduced.

4.2 Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 6.00 p.m.

SECTION 5: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS – refer to confidential minutes

5.1 Confidential Minutes from the Last Meeting - None

5.2 Matters Arising - None

5.3 Safeguarding Update – refer to confidential minutes

5.4 Annual Complaints' Report – refer to confidential minutes

5.5 Any Other Business (Confidential Business) – None.

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